



Colm Feore

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# The Stratford Story

That Stratford, Ontario, is the home of the largest classical repertory theatre in North America is ultimately attributable to the dream of one man, Stratford-born journalist Tom Patterson.

In the early 1950s, seeing the economy of his home town endangered by the withdrawal of the railway industry that had sustained it for nearly 80 years, Patterson conceived the idea of a theatre festival devoted to the works of William Shakespeare. His vision won the support not only of Stratford City Council and an enthusiastic committee of citizens, but also of the legendary British actor and director Tyrone Guthrie, who agreed to become the proposed festival's first Artistic Director. The Stratford Shakespearean Festival of Canada was incorporated as a legal entity on October 31, 1952. A giant canvas tent was ordered from a firm in Chicago, and in the parklands by Stratford's Avon River work began on a concrete amphitheatre at the centre of which was to be a revolutionary thrust stage created to Guthrie's specifications by internationally renowned theatrical designer Tanya Moiseiwitsch.

From the balcony of that stage, on the night of July 13, 1953, actor Alec Guinness spoke the opening lines of Richard III: "Now is the winter of our

discontent/ Made glorious summer by this sun of York." Those words marked the triumphant end to what had sometimes seemed a hopeless struggle against the odds to turn Patterson's dream into a reality – and the beginning of an astonishing new chapter in Canadian theatre history. The other production of that inaugural six-week season, a modern-dress version of *All's Well That Ends Well*, opened the following night, confirming the opinion of celebrated novelist Robertson Davies that the new Festival was an achievement "of historic importance not only in Canada, but wherever theatre is taken seriously – that is to say, in every civilized country in the world."

Time proved the truth of Davies' words, for the Festival's pillared, porticoed thrust stage revolutionized the performance of classical and contemporary theatre in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and inspired the design of more than a dozen other major venues around the world, including the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis, the Beaumont Theatre at Lincoln Centre and, in England, the Chichester Festival Theatre, the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield and the Olivier Theatre at the Royal National Theatre in London. Over the years, the Festival has made some amendments to the original design of Moiseiwitsch's stage, without changing its essential format.



At the end of the 1956 season, the giant canvas tent that had housed the Festival's first four seasons was dismantled for the last time to make way for a new and permanent facility to be erected around the existing stage. Designed by architect Robert Fairfield, the new building would be one of the most distinctive in the world of the performing arts: its circular floor plan and crenellated roof paying striking tribute to the Festival's origins under canvas.

In the years since its first season, the Stratford Festival has set benchmarks for the production not only of Shakespeare, Molière, the ancient Greeks and other great dramatists of the past, but also of such 20<sup>th</sup>-century masters as Samuel Beckett, Bertolt Brecht, Anton Chekhov, Henrik Ibsen, Eugene O'Neill and Tennessee Williams. In addition to acclaimed productions of the best in operetta and musical theatre, it has also showcased—and in many cases premièred—works by outstanding Canadian and other contemporary playwrights.

Its artists have included the finest actors, directors and designers in Canada, as well as many from abroad. Among the internationally renowned

performers who have graced its stages are Alan Bates, Brian Bedford, Douglas Campbell, Len Cariou, Brent Carver, Hume Cronyn, Brian Dennehy, Colm Feore, Megan Follows, Lorne Greene, Paul Gross, Uta Hagen, Julie Harris, Martha Henry, William Hutt, James Mason, Eric McCormack, Loreena McKennitt, Richard Monette, John Neville, Nicholas Pennell, Christopher Plummer, Sarah Polley, Douglas Rain, Kate Reid, Jason Robards, Paul Scofield, William Shatner, Maggie Smith, Jessica Tandy, Peter Ustinov and Al Waxman.

Drawing audiences of more than 400,000 each year, the Festival season now runs from April to November, with productions being presented in four unique theatres. It offers an extensive program of educational and enrichment activities for students, teachers and other patrons, and operates its own in-house school of professional artist development: The Birmingham Conservatory for Classical Theatre.

***Stratford Festival Behind the Scenes App.*** Contains interactive set models, exclusive images and slideshows, special audio and video content and photos, stories and animations and insights into the world of theatre at the Festival. For more information see [www.stratfordfestival.ca/explore](http://www.stratfordfestival.ca/explore).

For interactive classroom activities related to the Stratford Festival, go to the CBC Digital Archives: <http://bit.ly/Yy7eK6>

# The Playwright: William Shakespeare

Born in Stratford-upon-Avon, a small Warwickshire town, in 1564, William Shakespeare was the eldest son of John Shakespeare, a glover, and Mary Arden, the daughter of a wealthy farmer. The exact date of his birth is unknown, but baptismal records point to it being the same as that of his death, April 23. He probably attended what is now the Edward VI Grammar School, where he would have studied Latin literature, and at 18, he married a farmer's daughter, Anne Hathaway, with whom he had three children: Susanna, born in 1583, and, two years later, the twins Hamnet (who died in childhood) and Judith.

Nothing further is known of his life until 1592, when his earliest known play, the first part of *Henry VI*, became a hit in London, where Shakespeare was now working as an actor. Soon afterwards, an outbreak of the plague forced the temporary closure of the theatres, and Shakespeare turned for a while to writing poetry. By 1594, however, he was back in the theatre, acting with the Lord Chamberlain's Men. He quickly established himself as one of London's most successful dramatists, with an income that enabled him, in 1597, to buy a mansion back in Stratford. In 1599 he became a shareholder in London's newly built Globe Theatre.

In 1603, Shakespeare's company was awarded a royal patent, becoming known as the King's Men. Possibly as early as 1610, the playwright retired to his home in Stratford-upon-Avon, living there – and continuing to invest in real estate – until

his death on April 23, 1616. He is buried in the town's Holy Trinity Church.

In the first collected edition of his works in 1623, fellow dramatist Ben Jonson called him a man “not of an age, but for all time”. Not only did Shakespeare write some of the most popular plays of all time, but he was a very prolific writer, writing 38 (canonically accepted) works in 23 years. His work covered many subjects and styles, including comedies, tragedies, histories and romances, all bearing his hallmark expansive plots, extraordinary language and humanist themes. Shakespeare enjoyed great popularity in his lifetime, and 400 years later, he is still the most produced playwright in the world.



## ABOUT KING LEAR

# A Shakespearean Timeline

- 1558 Elizabeth I crowned.
- 1564 William Shakespeare born.
- 1572 Actors not under the protection of a patron declared rogues and vagabonds.
- 1576 “The Theatre,” the first public playhouse in London, opens.
- 1577 “The Curtain,” London’s second playhouse, opens.
- 1578 James VI (later James I of England) takes over government of Scotland.
- 1579 Publication of North’s English translation of Plutarch’s *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*.
- 1580 Francis Drake returns in triumph from his voyage around the world; travelling players perform at Stratford.
- 1582 Shakespeare marries Anne Hathaway; Susanna is born six months later and the twins Hamnet and Judith in 1585.
- 1587 “The Rose” theatre opens in London. Mary Queen of Scots is executed.
- 1588 Spanish Armada defeated.
- 1589 Shakespeare finds work as an actor in London; he lives apart from his wife for 21 years.
- 1590-1591 *The Two Gentlemen of Verona, The Taming of the Shrew*.
- 1591 *2 Henry VI, 3 Henry VI*.
- 1592 Thousands die of plague in London; theatres closed. *1 Henry VI, Titus Andronicus, Richard III*.
- 1593 *The Comedy of Errors*.
- 1594 Shakespeare becomes a shareholder of his theatre company, The Lord Chamberlain’s Men.
- 1594 *Love’s Labour’s Lost*.
- 1595 *Richard II, Romeo and Juliet, A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.
- 1596 Shakespeare’s son, Hamnet, dies.
- 1596-1597 *King John, The Merchant of Venice, 1 Henry IV*.
- 1597-1598 *The Merry Wives of Windsor, 2 Henry IV, Much Ado About Nothing*.
- 1598 “The Globe” theatre built.
- 1598-1599 *Henry V, Julius Caesar*.
- 1599-1600 *As You Like It*.
- 1600-1601 *Hamlet, Twelfth Night*.
- 1601 Shakespeare’s patron arrested for treason following the Essex rebellion; he is later pardoned.

- 1602 *Troilus and Cressida.*
- 1603 Queen Elizabeth dies and is succeeded by James I; Shakespeare's theatre company becomes the King's Men.
- 1603 *Measure for Measure, Othello.*
- 1604 Work begins on the King James bible.
-  1604-1605 *All's Well That Ends Well, Timon of Athens, **King Lear** (Q)*
- 1606 *Macbeth, Antony and Cleopatra.*
- 1607 *Pericles, Prince of Tyre.*
- 1608 *Coriolanus.*
-  1609 *The Winter's Tale.*
- 1610 ***King Lear** (F), Cymbeline.*
- 1610 Shakespeare retires to Stratford-upon-Avon.
- 1611 *The Tempest.*
- 1611 King James version of the bible published.
- 1613 *Henry VIII (All is True), The Two Noble Kinsmen.*
- 1613 "The Globe" theatre burns down.
- 1616 Shakespeare dies in Stratford-upon-Avon.
- 1623 The first folio of Shakespeare's collected plays is published.

\* some dates are approximate

ABOUT KING LEAR

# Cast of Characters

*Lear, King of Britain*

*Goneril, his eldest daughter*

*Regan, his second daughter*

*Cordelia, his youngest daughter*

*Duke of Albany, married to Goneril*

*Duke of Cornwall, married to Regan*

*King of France, suitor and eventual husband to Cordelia*

*Duke of Burgundy, suitor to Cordelia*

*Earl of Gloucester*

*Edgar, Gloucester's elder son*

*Edmund, Gloucester's younger bastard son*

*Earl of Kent, loyal friend of Lear*

*Fool, attendant on Lear*

*Oswald, Goneril's steward*

*Curan, a follower of Gloucester*

*Old Man, Gloucester's tenant*

*A Herald, a Captain, an Officer, a Doctor, Knights, Gentlemen, Attendants, Servants and Messengers*

## ABOUT *KING LEAR*

# Synopsis of the Plot

As a prelude to dividing his kingdom among his three daughters, the aging Lear, King of Britain, demands that each declare how much she loves him. The two eldest, Goneril and Regan, make eloquent speeches and are rewarded accordingly; but when the third and youngest daughter, Cordelia, refuses to say more than that she loves her father according to her duty, the enraged Lear disinherits and banishes her.

Attended by his Fool and an entourage of knights, Lear plans to stay with each of his eldest daughters in turn, a month at a time. But now that he is king only in name, he finds that he no longer commands the respect of these hypocritical sisters. Received with contempt first by Goneril then by Regan, Lear vows a terrible vengeance on both before storming out into the night, his mind unhinged.

Meanwhile, the Earl of Gloucester has been falsely persuaded by his bastard son, Edmund, that his other son, Edgar, is conspiring against him. Donning the disguise of a mad beggar, the innocent Edgar has fled to a nearby heath. Finding Lear ranting on the same heath in the midst of a terrible storm, Lear's loyal follower the Earl of Kent persuades him to take shelter in the hovel where Edgar lies concealed.

Kent and Gloucester plan to reunite Lear with Cordelia, who has raised an army in France, but Edmund betrays them to Regan's husband, Cornwall, who arrests Gloucester and puts out both his eyes. Cordelia and Lear are captured, and though Edgar finally defeats Edmund in single combat, his victory comes too late for Cordelia, who has already been executed in prison. Cradling her lifeless body in his arms, the heartbroken Lear too expires, united in death with the loving daughter whom he had so tragically misjudged.

**Connect with Stratford:** For further exploration and interactive activities check out the following:

- The Forum**, a series of remarkable events to enrich the play-going experience: [www.stratfordfestival.ca/forum/](http://www.stratfordfestival.ca/forum/) .
- Stratford Festival's **YouTube channel** for behind-the-scenes videos, photos and interviews: [www.youtube.com/user/stratfordfestival](http://www.youtube.com/user/stratfordfestival)

## ABOUT KING LEAR

# SOURCES AND ORIGINS

### About the Play

One of Shakespeare's greatest tragedies (some say his best), the play was written sometime between early 1603 and early 1606 and first published in 1608.

### Sources and Origins

During Shakespeare's day there were at least 40 versions of the Lear story, but it is generally thought that Shakespeare based his play on an earlier play called *The True Chronicle History of King Leir and his Three Daughters* (first performed between 1588 and 1594 and published in 1605). Some scholars believe that Shakespeare acted in it, playing the character corresponding to Kent in his own play. Though he often echoes the language of the old play, Shakespeare freely changed the plot. In the old play, "Leir" and "Cordella" lived happily ever after.

The basic story was a well-known folk tale first appearing in the twelfth-century *History (Story of the British Kings)* by Geoffrey Monmouth. His tale featured a king with cruelly ungrateful children.

Shakespeare's main source for the play would have been Ralph Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland* (1587). Holinshed says that Lear reigned around 800 BC. A number of details also come from a story by John Higgins in *Mirror for Magistrates* (1587).

Other plot sources include: Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1589), Ben Jonson's *Sejanus* (1605), Gerard Legh's *Accedens of Armory* (1582), Warner's *Albion's England* (1586) and perhaps William Camden's *Remaines* (1605).

The Gloucester-Edmund-Edgar subplot comes from Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* (1590 (or 1581?)), which is set in Asia Minor. Two other sources: Samuel Harsnett's *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures* (1603) and John Florio's English translation of the *Essays of Michel de Montaigne* (1606).

### *King Lear* in Performance

The earliest known performance was at the court of King James I at Whitehall on Saint Stephen's Night, December 26, 1606. Richard Burbage was the original Lear and the daughters were played by boys. The play was not known to be popular: there are few references to it in contemporary documents.

The play was performed in 1660 by William Davenant, and again in 1675, while Nahum Tate adapted the text for a production called *History of King Lear* in 1681. Although much of the plot remained the same, at the end Lear retained his throne. Lear in this production was played by Thomas Betterton. This version of the play was extremely popular and was frequently performed until 1843 (and occasionally in modern times). Tate's version held the stage for 150 years until, in 1838, William Charles Macready finally presented Shakespeare's text in its entirety.

In 1742 David Garrick returned to Shakespeare's text. When King George was insane, the play's production was suppressed by the government (late eighteenth to early nineteenth century). Samuel Phelps produced a genuine version in 1845 while in a production in 1892, Henry Irving cut more than half the play.

*King Lear* has been very popular in the last century. Many leading actors have played King Lear, including John Gielgud, Donald Wolfit, Michael Redgrave, Orson Welles, Charles Laughton, Paul Scofield, James Earl Jones, Frederick Valk, Douglas Campbell, Peter Ustinov, William Hutt and Christopher Plummer. The role of Cordelia has been played by Ellen Terry, Peggy Ashcroft, Zoe Caldwell and Elizabeth Shepherd, among others.

# STRATFORD FESTIVAL PRODUCTION HISTORY

This is the tenth production of *King Lear* at Stratford. Six previous productions have been mounted on the Festival stage (in 1964, 1972, 1985, 1996, 2002 and 2007), two at the Avon Theatre (1979 and 1980) and one at the Tom Patterson Theatre (1988).

**1964** (Festival Theatre): Directed by Michael Langham, with John Colicos as Lear, Mervyn Blake as Gloucester, Leo Ciceri as Cornwall, Bruno Gerussi as Edmund, Martha Henry as Cordelia, Frances Hyland as Goneril, William Needles as Albany, Douglas Rain as Edgar, Joseph Shaw as Doctor and France, and Tony van Bridge as Kent. Designed by Leslie Hurry.

**1972** (Festival Theatre): Directed by David William, with William Hutt as Lear, Edward Atienza as the Fool, Mervyn Blake as Kent, Daniel Davis as Edmund, Eric Donkin as Oswald, Pat Galloway as Goneril, Roland Hewgill as Cornwall, William Needles as Albany, Carole Shelley as Regan, Elizabeth Shepherd as Cordelia and Kenneth Welsh as Edgar. Designed by Annena Stubbs.

**1972** (Tour): The same production with some changes in casting, including Jack Creley as Cornwall and Robin Gammell as Edmund. The tour went to Montreal, Copenhagen, Utrecht, The Hague, Warsaw, Krakow, Moscow and Leningrad from January 11 to March 4, 1973. 20 performances were presented in repertory with *The Taming of the Shrew*.

**1979** (Avon Theatre): Directed by Robin Phillips, with Peter Ustinov as Lear, William Hutt as the Fool, Marti Maraden as Regan, Richard Monette as Edmund, Douglas Rain as Gloucester and Tom Wood as Oswald. Designed by Daphne Dare.

**1980** (Avon Theatre): A remount of the 1979 production with similar casting.

**1985** (Festival Theatre): Directed by John Hirsch, with Douglas Campbell as King Lear, James Blendick as Kent, Benedict Campbell as Edmund, Patricia Collins as Goneril, Colm Feore as Oswald, Lewis Gordon as Gloucester, Seana McKenna as Cordelia, Richard McMillan as France, Nicholas Pennell as the Fool, Stephen Russell as Cornwall and Joseph Ziegler as Edgar. Designed by Chris Dyer and Judy Peyton Ward (costumes).

**1985** (Tour): The same production with several changes in casting, including John Bourgeois as France, William Dunlop as Burgundy and Richard McMillan as Edgar. The tour went to Los Angeles, Seattle, Chicago, Palm Beach, Fort Lauderdale and Washington, D.C., from November to February of 1986 with 49 performances. It appeared in repertory with *Twelfth Night*.

**1988** (Third Stage, now known as the Tom Patterson Theatre): A Young Company production directed by Robin Phillips, with William Hutt as King Lear, Susan Coyne as Regan, Peter Donaldson as Kent, Stuart Hughes as Edmund, Melanie Miller as Cordelia, Albert Schultz as Edgar and William Webster as Gloucester. Designed by Elis Y. Lam.

**1996** (Festival Theatre): Directed by Artistic Director Richard Monette, with William Hutt as Lear, Martha Burns as Regan, Colombe Demers as Cordelia, Diane D'Aquila as Goneril, Peter Donaldson as Edgar, Lewis Gordon as Kent and Geordie Johnson as Edmund. At some performances, Lewis Gordon played the role of Lear. Designed by Patrick Clark.

**2002** (Festival Theatre): Directed by Jonathan Miller, with Christopher Plummer as Lear, James Blendick as Gloucester, Domini Blythe as Goneril, Evan Buliung as Edgar, Benedict Campbell as Kent, Maurice Godin as Edmund, Barry MacGregor as the Fool, Sarah McVie as Cordelia, Lucy Peacock as Regan, Stephen Russell as Cornwall and Brian Tree as Oswald. Costumes designed by Clare Mitchell.

**2007** (Festival Theatre): Directed by Brian Bedford, with Brian Bedford as Lear, Peter Donaldson as Kent, Bernard Hopkins as the Fool, Dion Johnstone as Edmund, Gareth Potter as Edgar, Wendy Robie as Regan, Wenna Shaw as Goneril, Sara Topham as Cordelia and Scott Wentworth as Gloucester.

ABOUT *King Lear*  
2014 Stratford Festival Production

Director	Antoni Cimolino
Designer	Eo Sharp
Lighting Designer	Michael Walton
Composer	Keith Thomas
Sound Designer	Thomas Ryder Payne
Dramaturge	Toby Malone
Fight Director	John Stead
Movement	Shona Morris

**Cast by family**

King Lear	Colm Feore
Goneril	Maev Beaty
Cordelia	Sara Farb
Regan	Liisa Repo-Martell
Fool	Stephen Ouimette
Albany	Michael Blake
Cornwall	Mike Shara
Gloucester	Scott Wentworth
Edgar	Evan Buliung
Edmund	Brad Hodder
Earl of Kent	Jonathan Goad
Oswald	Thomas Olajide
King of France	Karl Ang
Burgundy	Derek Moran
Curan	Xuan Fraser
Old Man	Robert King
Captain	Josue Laboucane
Herald, Knight	Gordon S. Miller
Doctor	Michael Spencer-Davis

**Attendants, Gentlemen, Messengers, Servants, Soldiers:**

Karl Ang, Harper Charlton, David Collins, Victor Ertmanis, Xuan Fraser, Callum Hutchinson, Robert King, Josue Laboucane, Gordon S. Miller, Derek Moran, Laura Schutt, Michael Spencer-Davis

# Discussion Topics for Your Class

For classes reading the play before seeing it:

1. What do you expect to see on stage at the Stratford Festival? Have each student make a list of predictions about what they expect. Save these predictions. After your Stratford trip, revisit them to see how they compared to the actual production.
2. Have your students make a story map or a story board outlining the main events of the play. (This may be used later in group activities.)

After your Stratford trip:

1. *King Lear* has appealed to artists and audiences around the world for 400 years. What do you think the play's message is?
2. What parts did you respond to most?
3. Were there parts you wished were different? How?
4. Have your students create a character web showing how all the characters are connected to each other. Discuss the complexity of these relationships and how they affect the progression of the play.

For more classroom activities, complete with instructions, materials and Ontario curriculum expectation links, visit [stratfordfestival.ca/teachingmaterials](http://stratfordfestival.ca/teachingmaterials).

You can also check out the following:

- The Forum**, a series of remarkable events to enrich the play-going experience: [www.stratfordfestival.ca/forum/](http://www.stratfordfestival.ca/forum/) .
- Stratford Festival's **YouTube channel** for behind-the-scenes videos, photos and interviews: [www.youtube.com/user/stratfordfestival](http://www.youtube.com/user/stratfordfestival)
- Stratford Festival's **Flickr** pages: [www.flickr.com/photos/stratfest/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/stratfest/)
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- Stratford Festival Behind the Scenes App**: [www.stratfordfestival.ca/explore](http://www.stratfordfestival.ca/explore).

*Imaginative Ways to Approach the Text*

## ***KING LEAR - CUT TO...***

**Lesson Overview:**

In this lesson, the students will gain an understanding of character development by synthesizing the text and getting to the essence of its meaning.

Grade Level(s)	9-12
Subject Area(s)	English, Drama
Curriculum Expectations & Learning Outcomes	<p>By the end of the lesson students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Analyse text, focusing on ways it communicates information and emotions and influences the listener’s/viewer’s response;<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>□ English<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>⇒ (Oral Communication): 1.7</li><li>⇒ (Reading &amp; Literature Studies): 1.3, 2.3</li><li>⇒ (Writing): 1.4</li></ul></li><li>□ Drama: A2.1, B1.1, C1.1</li></ul></li><li>• Make and explain inferences about the text and what it indirectly or implicitly reveals about the character;<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>□ English<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>⇒ (Oral Communication): 2.1</li><li>⇒ (Reading &amp; Literature Studies): 1.4</li><li>⇒ (Writing): 1.3</li></ul></li><li>□ Drama: B1.3</li></ul></li><li>• Explain how dramatic exploration helps develop awareness of a character’s emotional state.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>□ English<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>⇒ (Oral Communication): 1.1, 1.3</li><li>⇒ (Reading &amp; Literature Studies): 3.2</li><li>⇒ (Writing): 1.4, 2.4</li></ul></li><li>□ Drama: B2.2</li></ul></li></ul>
Time Needed	1 class period
Space	Desks in groups, then open spaces for exploring the text
Materials	Attached “Now Try This”

**The Activity:**

- Divide the students into groups of four and assign each group one of the speeches or soliloquies listed in the attached section “Now Try This” (Edmund, Edgar, or Lear).
- Have groups read through the speech for understanding.
- Next have the students cut the speech down to what they feel are the five most important lines while still preserving the essential meaning of the speech. (See attached example as a guide.)
  
- The group now takes their five lines and reduces it to three lines, while still trying to maintain the principal thought.

- Now the group will cut from three lines to five words (while still trying to maintain the principal thought).
- Now cut from five words to three words (while still trying to maintain the principal thought).
- And finally, they will cut to one word, the word that they feel best represents the speech.
- Choose one person from each group to read and explain to the rest of the class why they made the choices they did in each step.

**Post Activity:**

- After the activity, have the class discuss the following:
  - Where there any groups who used similar tactics?
  - What does this tell you about the character and his state of mind?

**Optional:**

- Each group will write a journal response on what they discovered/felt while doing the exercise.

**Extension # 1:**

- Once the above activity is completed – rather than presenting to the rest of the class, have each group make a copy of their five line version and pass their version to another group to complete the next section (cut to three lines).
- Pass the paper again for a new group to complete the next section (cut to five words).
- Pass once more to another group to complete the next two sections (cut to three words and to one word).
- The paper then makes its way back to its original group.
- Have groups compare their original to the version that the class has collectively cut.
  - Are the choices different?

**Extension # 2:**

- Using the same four groups, have groups one and two work together and groups three and four work together.
- Each group will divide into three sections and represent and analyse one of the characters in the excerpted scene of Act II, scene 4: Regan, Lear, and Goneril. Pare down the essence of what each character is saying to five crucial lines each, then three, then five words, down to three and finally one word.
- Have a trio of volunteers from each group (each representing one of the characters) read their version aloud to the rest of the class then switch groups. How are the versions different or similar?

**EXAMPLE** (from *Romeo and Juliet*, Act II, scene 2) :

**JULIET**

- 1.O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?
- 2.Deny thy father and refuse thy name;

3.Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,  
4.And I'll no longer be a Capulet.  
5.'Tis but thy name that is my enemy;  
6.Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.  
7.What's Montague? it is nor hand, nor foot,  
8.Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part  
9.Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!  
10.What's in a name? that which we call a rose  
11.By any other name would smell as sweet;  
12.So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,  
13.Retain that dear perfection which he owes  
14.Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name,  
15.And for that name which is no part of thee  
Take all myself.

#### **Cut to five lines**

1.Deny thy father and refuse thy name;  
2.Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,  
3.And I'll no longer be a Capulet.  
4.Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.  
5.And for that name which is no part of thee  
Take all myself.

#### **Cut to three lines**

1.Deny thy father and refuse thy name;  
2.And I'll no longer be a Capulet.  
3.And for that name which is no part of thee  
Take all myself.

#### **Cut to five words**

Deny father name take myself

#### **Cut to three words**

Deny take myself

#### **Cut to one word**

Myself

**NOW TRY THESE:**

*King Lear* - Act I, scene 2

**EDMUND**

Thou, nature, art my goddess; to thy law  
My services are bound. Wherefore should I  
Stand in the plague of custom, and permit  
The curiosity of nations to deprive me,  
For that I am some twelve or fourteen moon-shines  
Lag of a brother? Why bastard? Wherefore base?  
When my dimensions are as well compact,  
My mind as generous, and my shape as true,  
As honest madam's issue? Why brand they us  
With base? with baseness? bastardy? base, base?  
Who, in the lusty stealth of nature, take  
More composition and fierce quality  
Than doth, within a dull, stale, tired bed,  
Go to the creating a whole tribe of fops,  
Got 'tween asleep and wake? Well, then,  
Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land:  
Our father's love is to the bastard Edmund  
As to the legitimate: fine word,—legitimate!  
Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed,  
And my invention thrive, Edmund the base  
Shall top the legitimate. I grow; I prosper:  
Now, gods, stand up for bastards!

*King Lear* - Act II, scene 3

**EDGAR**

I heard myself proclaimed;  
And by the happy hollow of a tree  
Escaped the hunt. No port is free; no place,  
That guard, and most unusual vigilance,  
Does not attend my taking. Whiles I may 'scape,  
I will preserve myself: and am bethought  
To take the basest and most poorest shape  
That ever penury, in contempt of man,  
Brought near to beast: my face I'll grime with filth;  
Blanket my loins: elf all my hair in knots;  
And with presented nakedness out-face  
The winds and persecutions of the sky.  
The country gives me proof and precedent  
Of Bedlam beggars, who, with roaring voices,  
Strike in their numbed and mortified bare arms  
Pins, wooden pricks, nails, sprigs of rosemary;  
And with this horrible object, from low farms,  
Poor pelting villages, sheep-cotes, and mills,  
Sometime with lunatic bans, sometime with prayers,  
Enforce their charity. Poor Turlygod! Poor Tom!  
That's something yet: Edgar I nothing am.

*King Lear* - Act II, scene 4

**KING LEAR**

O, reason not the need: our basest beggars  
Are in the poorest thing superfluous:  
Allow not nature more than nature needs,  
Man's life's as cheap as beast's: thou art a lady;  
If only to go warm were gorgeous,  
Why, nature needs not what thou gorgeous wear'st,  
Which scarcely keeps thee warm. But, for true need,—  
You heavens, give me that patience, patience I need!  
You see me here, you gods, a poor old man,  
As full of grief as age; wretched in both!  
If it be you that stir these daughters' hearts  
Against their father, fool me not so much  
To bear it tamely; touch me with noble anger,  
And let not women's weapons, water-drops,  
Stain my man's cheeks! No, you unnatural hags,  
I will have such revenges on you both,  
That all the world shall—I will do such things,—  
What they are, yet I know not: but they shall be  
The terrors of the earth. You think I'll weep  
No, I'll not weep:  
I have full cause of weeping; but this heart  
Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws,  
Or ere I'll weep. O fool, I shall go mad!

*King Lear* – Act III, scene 2

**KING LEAR**

Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! Rage, blow!  
You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout  
Till you have drenched our steeples, drowned the cocks!  
You sulph'rous and thought-executing fires,  
Vaunt-couriers to oak-cleaving thunderbolts,  
Singe my white head; And thou, all-shaking thunder,  
Strike flat the thick rotundity o' th' world!  
Crack nature's moulds, an germens spill at once,  
That make ingrateful man.  
Rumble thy bellyful; spit, fire; spout, rain!  
Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters.  
I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness.  
I never gave you kingdom, called you children.  
You owe me no subscription. Then let fall  
Your horrible pleasure. Here I stand your slave,  
A poor, infirm, weak, and despised old man;  
But yet I call you servile ministers,  
That have with two pernicious daughters join  
Your high engendered battles 'gainst a head  
So old and white as this. O, ho! 'tis foul.

**REGAN**

I pray you, father, being weak, seem so.  
If, till the expiration of your month,  
You will return and sojourn with my sister,  
Dismissing half your train, come then to me:  
I am now from home, and out of that provision  
Which shall be needful for your entertainment.

**KING LEAR**

Return to her, and fifty men dismissed?  
No, rather I abjure all roofs, and choose  
To wage against the enmity o' the air;  
To be a comrade with the wolf and owl,—  
Necessity's sharp pinch! Return with her?  
Why, the hot-blooded France, that dowerless took  
Our youngest born, I could as well be brought  
To knee his throne, and, squire-like; pension beg  
To keep base life afoot. Return with her?  
Persuade me rather to be slave and sumpter  
To this detested groom.

*Pointing at OSWALD*

**GONERIL**

At your choice, sir.

**KING LEAR**

I prithee, daughter, do not make me mad:  
I will not trouble thee, my child; farewell:  
We'll no more meet, no more see one another:  
But yet thou art my flesh, my blood, my daughter;  
Or rather a disease that's in my flesh,  
Which I must needs call mine: thou art a boil,  
A plague-sore, an embossed carbuncle,  
In my corrupted blood. But I'll not chide thee;  
Let shame come when it will, I do not call it:  
I do not bid the thunder-bearer shoot,  
Nor tell tales of thee to high-judging Jove:  
Mend when thou canst; be better at thy leisure:  
I can be patient; I can stay with Regan,  
I and my hundred knights.

**REGAN**

Not altogether so:  
I looked not for you yet, nor am provided  
For your fit welcome. Give ear, sir, to my sister;  
For those that mingle reason with your passion  
Must be content to think you old, and so--  
But she knows what she does.

**KING LEAR**

Is this well spoken?

**REGAN**

I dare avouch it, sir: what, fifty followers?  
Is it not well? What should you need of more?  
Yea, or so many, sith that both charge and danger  
Speak 'gainst so great a number? How, in one house,  
Should many people, under two commands,  
Hold amity? 'Tis hard; almost impossible.

**GONERIL**

Why might not you, my lord, receive attendance  
From those that she calls servants or from mine?

**REGAN**

Why not, my lord? If then they chanced to slack you,  
We could control them. If you will come to me,--  
For now I spy a danger,--I entreat you  
To bring but five and twenty: to no more  
Will I give place or notice.

**KING LEAR**

I gave you all--

**REGAN**

And in good time you gave it.

**KING LEAR**

Made you my guardians, my depositaries;  
But kept a reservation to be followed  
With such a number. What, must I come to you  
With five and twenty, Regan? said you so?

**REGAN**

And speak't again, my lord; no more with me.

**KING LEAR**

Those wicked creatures yet do look well-favoured,  
When others are more wicked: not being the worst  
Stands in some rank of praise.

*To GONERIL*

I'll go with thee:  
Thy fifty yet doth double five and twenty,  
And thou art twice her love.

**GONERIL**

Hear me, my lord;  
What need you five and twenty, ten, or five,  
To follow in a house where twice so many  
Have a command to tend you?

**REGAN**

What need one?

*Imaginative Ways to Approach the Text*

## **KING LEAR – KENT’S RANT**

**Lesson Overview:**

In this lesson the students will explore a speech that expresses one idea, using colourful, energetic and expressive language.

Grade Level(s)	7-12
Subject Area(s)	English, Drama
Curriculum Expectations & Learning Outcomes	<p>By the end of the lesson students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify a variety of characteristics of literary forms and explain how they help communicate meaning; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ English <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ (Oral Communication): 1.6, 1.8, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5</li> <li>⇒ (Reading &amp; Literature Studies): 1.4, 2.1, 3.1</li> <li>⇒ (Writing): 1.5, 2.3</li> </ul> </li> <li>□ Drama: C1.1</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Evaluate the effectiveness of the speech using evidence from the text to support their opinions; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ English <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ (Oral Communication): 1.9, 3.2</li> <li>⇒ (Reading &amp; Literature Studies): 1.7,2.3, 4.1</li> <li>⇒ (Writing): 2.2, 2.3, 2.4</li> </ul> </li> <li>□ Drama: C2.1</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Creatively use the elements of drama to achieve a common purpose in ensemble presentation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ English <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ (Oral Communication): 1.5, 2.2</li> <li>⇒ (Reading &amp; Literature Studies): 1.5, 3.3</li> <li>⇒ (Writing): 2.5</li> </ul> </li> <li>□ Drama: A2.1, B2.2</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Time Needed	1 class period
Space	Open spaces for exploring the text
Materials	Handout: Kent’s Rant

**The Activity:**

- Distribute the handout to each student.
- Upon meeting Oswald (Goneril’s servant), Kent, disguised as Caius, goes into a blind rage and insults Oswald with much ferocity and vigour. Read the text several times and keep in mind the following:
  - It is one single sentence.
  - It is in prose, not verse.
  - Find out the meaning of “plosives” and how they are used in this text.
  - Find out the meaning of “fricatives” and how they are used in this text.
- Form a big circle and each person will take one word or phrase insult (if there are more than 24 people, share some of the longer phrases, if there are fewer than 24 people, take more than one word or phrase). Start slowly at first, then repeat, going a bit faster, establishing a rhythmic form when expressing the words. Listen closely to what comes before and jump in. Be creative!

- Repeat this several times with students experimenting with volume, projection, clarity, pitch and various ways to express their word or phrases.

**Post-Activity:**

- After performing the rant, discuss the following:
  - Why did Shakespeare write this as one single sentence?
  - Why is this written in prose and not verse? What purpose does it serve?
  - What did you notice when you were listening to the “b,” “p,” “f” and “s” sounds in the text? What were Shakespeare’s intentions in using plosives and fricatives?

**Extension:**

- Have the students create their own single-sentence rant (without resorting to actual swear words), utilizing plosives and fricatives, wherever possible. Have them explore the thesaurus to help them come up with colourful words.

## Kent's Rant

*King Lear*, Act II, scene 2

A knave<sup>1</sup>, a rascal<sup>2</sup>, an eater of broken meats<sup>3</sup>, a base<sup>4</sup>, proud<sup>5</sup>, shallow<sup>6</sup>, beggarly<sup>7</sup>, three-suited<sup>8</sup>, hundred-pound<sup>9</sup>, filthy worsted-stocking knave<sup>10</sup>, a lily-livered<sup>11</sup>, action-taking<sup>12</sup>, whoreson<sup>13</sup>, glass-gazing<sup>14</sup>, super-serviceable<sup>15</sup>, finical rogue<sup>16</sup>: one-trunk-inheriting slave<sup>17</sup>: one that wouldst be a bawd in way of good service<sup>18</sup>, and art nothing but the composition of a knave<sup>19</sup>, beggar<sup>20</sup>, coward<sup>21</sup>, pandar<sup>22</sup>, and the son and heir of a mongrel bitch<sup>23</sup>: one whom I will beat into clamorous whining if thou deniest the least syllable of thy addition<sup>24</sup>.

## **KING LEAR – MALEVOLENT OR BENEVOLENT: CHARTING THE NATURE OF TWO BROTHERS**

### **Lesson Overview:**

Using evidence from the text and dramatic conventions the students will analyse and determine the true natures of Edmund and Edgar.

Grade Level(s)	9-12
Subject Area(s)	English, Drama
Curriculum Expectations & Learning Outcomes	By the end of the lesson students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hone their critical literacy skills by identifying and analysing in detail the perspectives evident in the text;<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>□ English<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>⇒ (Oral Communication): 1.8, 2.1, 2.4</li><li>⇒ (Reading &amp; Literature Studies): 1.4, 1.8, 3.2, 4.1</li><li>⇒ (Writing): 1.3, 2.1</li></ul></li><li>□ Drama: B1.1</li></ul></li><li>• Develop and explain interpretations of the text through the use of dramatic conventions;<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>□ English<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>⇒ (Oral Communication): 1.5, 1.9, 2.2, 2.6</li><li>⇒ (Reading &amp; Literature Studies): 1.7, 3.3</li><li>⇒ (Writing): 1.4, 2.2, 2.5</li></ul></li><li>□ Drama: B2.4</li></ul></li><li>• Explain how dramatic exploration helps create awareness of a character's development.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>□ English<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>⇒ (Oral Communication): 1.4, 1.7, 2.3</li><li>⇒ (Reading &amp; Literature Studies): 1.3, 1.6, 2.1</li><li>⇒ (Writing): 1.2, 2.5</li></ul></li><li>□ Drama: A3.1</li></ul></li></ul>
Time Needed	2-3 class periods
Space	Desks in groups, then open spaces for exploring the text
Materials	Handouts: Edgar's Speeches and Soliloquies / Edmund's Speeches and Soliloquies / Charting the Character Arc

*[Post-reading Activity]*

### **The Activity:**

Pre-Activity Discussion ~

- How many times during the course of reading a play or seeing a movie or TV show did we assume at the start that the character was good or bad but halfway through we started to feel differently towards that person?
- Can you safely assume that a character is completely malevolent (bad) or benevolent (good) at all times? Are there exceptions to the rule? Name some characters that aren't completely black or white and have varying shades of grey.

- By studying the major speeches and soliloquies of a character we see a pattern or development that might change our initial assumption or perspective about that character. Are there any plays or novels you have read that have done that for you?
- Divide the class into two teams. With a flip of a coin, one of the teams will be assigned Edmund and the other will get Edgar. Distribute the appropriate handouts to each person.
- Each team will be responsible for analysing the various speeches and soliloquies of that character. To simplify the task, each group will sub-divide into five groups to analyse a particular speech/soliloquy or several smaller speeches/soliloquies.
- Read the speeches/soliloquies several times for clarity and understanding. Underline any words that may be unfamiliar and then look up their various meanings.
- Once the students are familiar with the meaning of the text, have the students move around the room, delivering the lines either as a choral piece or using tableaux, stylized movement or group sculpture. (Note: this does not have to be memorized as the students may deliver their lines using the handouts provided.)
- After an established appropriate time of rehearsal, have the students reassemble and have each team perform their speeches and soliloquies for the other team.

#### Post-Activity Discussion

- Were there early hints of the coming conflict in the early stages of the character's speeches and soliloquies?
- Was there a noticeable increase in tension at some point during these speeches and soliloquies?
- Did you notice if at one point if there was a reversal of fortune or circumstances?
- At what point was there a "realization" from the character?
- After seeing the development of these two characters can you label one as benevolent and the other as malevolent? Why or why not?

#### Post Activity:

- Distribute the handout "Charting the Character Arc" to the teams.
- Each team is to discuss the questions and their findings and write their responses.

## EDGAR'S SPEECHES AND SOLILOQUIES

Create five sub-groups (Part 1-5). Analyse the text. Read it several times, underline words you do not know and look them up. Once you have the meaning, move around the room and try delivering the lines as a choral piece, using tableaux or stylized movement.

### **PART 1 / Act II, sc. 3**

I heard myself proclaim'd,  
And by the happy hollow of a tree  
Escap'd the hunt. No port is free, no place  
That guard and most unusual vigilance  
Does not attend my taking. Whiles I may scape,  
I will preserve myself; and am bethought  
To take the basest and most poorest shape  
That ever penury, in contempt of man,  
Brought near to beast. My face I'll grime with filth,  
Blanket my loins, elf all my hair in knots,  
And with presented nakedness outface  
The winds and persecutions of the sky.  
The country gives me proof and precedent  
Of Bedlam beggars, who, with roaring voices,  
Strike in their numb'd and mortified bare arms  
Pins, wooden pricks, nails, sprigs of rosemary;  
And with this horrible object, from low farms,  
Poor pelting villages, sheepcotes, and mills,  
Sometime with lunatic bans, sometime with prayers,  
Enforce their charity. 'Poor Turlygod! poor Tom!'  
That's something yet! Edgar I nothing am.

### **PART 2 / Act III, sc. 4**

Who gives anything to poor Tom? whom the foul fiend hath led through fire and through flame, through ford and whirlpool, o'er bog and quagmire; that hath laid knives under his pillow and halts in his pew, set ratsbane by his porridge, made him proud of heart, to ride on a bay trotting horse over four-inch'd bridges, to course his own shadow for a traitor. Bless thy five wits! Tom 's acold. O, do de, do de, do de. Bless thee from whirlwinds, star-blasting, and taking! Do poor Tom some charity, whom the foul fiend vexes. There could I have him now- and there- and there again- and there!

### **PART 2 / Act III, sc. 6\***

*This soliloquy is from the Quarto version and is often omitted. It follows the last line in Act III, scene 6. After Lear has been taken to Dover, Edgar acknowledges that his sufferings are far less than the king's. He decides to observe what happens in Dover and once the charges against him have been disproved, he will reveal ("bewray") his true identity.*

When we our betters see bearing our woes,  
We scarcely think our miseries our foes.  
Who alone suffers, suffers most i' th' mind,  
Leaving free things and happy shows behind.  
But then the mind much sufferance doth o'erskip,  
When grief hath mates, and bearing, fellowship.  
How light and portable my pain seems now,  
When that which makes me bend makes the King bow.  
He childed as I fathered. Tom, away!  
Mark the high noises, and thyself bewray  
When false opinion, whose wrong thought defile thee,

In thy just proof repeals and reconciles thee.  
What will hap more tonight, safe 'scape the King!  
Lurk, lurk.

**PART 3 / Act IV, sc. 1**

Yet better thus, and known to be contemn'd,  
Than still contemn'd and flatter'd. To be worst,  
The lowest and most dejected thing of fortune,  
Stands still in esperance, lives not in fear.  
The lamentable change is from the best;  
The worst returns to laughter. Welcome then,  
Thou unsubstantial air that I embrace!  
The wretch that thou hast blown unto the worst  
Owes nothing to thy blasts.  
But who comes here?  
My father, poorly led? World, world, O world!  
But that thy strange mutations make us hate thee,  
Life would not yield to age.

*[Enter Gloucester, led by an Old Man.]*

**PART 3 / Act IV, sc. 5**

Sit you down, father; rest you.  
Let's see his pockets; these letters that he speaks of  
May be my friends. He's dead. I am only sorry  
He had no other deathsman. Let us see.  
Leave, gentle wax; and, manners, blame us not.  
To know our enemies' minds, we'd rip their hearts;  
Their papers, is more lawful. Reads the letter.  
'Let our reciprocal vows be rememb'red. You have many  
opportunities to cut him off. If your will want not, time and  
place will be fruitfully offer'd. There is nothing done, if he  
return the conqueror. Then am I the prisoner, and his bed my  
jail; from the loathed warmth whereof deliver me, and supply the  
place for your labour.  
'Your (wife, so I would say) affectionate servant, 'Goneril.'  
O indistinguish'd space of woman's will!  
A plot upon her virtuous husband's life,  
And the exchange my brother! Here in the sands  
Thee I'll rake up, the post unsanctified  
Of murtherous lechers; and in the mature time  
With this ungracious paper strike the sight  
Of the death-practis'd Duke, For him 'tis well  
That of thy death and business I can tell.

**PART 4 / Act V, sc. 1**

Before you fight the battle, ope this letter.  
If you have victory, let the trumpet sound  
For him that brought it. Wretched though I seem,  
I can produce a champion that will prove  
What is avouched there. If you miscarry,  
Your business of the world hath so an end,  
And machination ceases. Fortune love you!

**PART 4 / Act V, sc. 3**

Draw thy sword,  
That, if my speech offend a noble heart,  
Thy arm may do thee justice. Here is mine.  
Behold, it is the privilege of mine honours,  
My oath, and my profession. I protest-  
Maugre thy strength, youth, place, and eminence,  
Despite thy victor sword and fire-new fortune,  
Thy valour and thy heart- thou art a traitor;  
False to thy gods, thy brother, and thy father;  
Conspirant 'gainst this high illustrious prince;  
And from th' extremest upward of thy head  
To the descent and dust beneath thy foot,  
A most toad-spotted traitor. Say thou 'no,'  
This sword, this arm, and my best spirits are bent  
To prove upon thy heart, whereto I speak,  
Thou liest.

**PART 5 / Act V, sc. 3**

Let's exchange charity.  
I am no less in blood than thou art, Edmund;  
If more, the more th' hast wrong'd me.  
My name is Edgar and thy father's son.  
The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices  
Make instruments to scourge us.  
The dark and vicious place where thee he got  
Cost him his eyes.

**PART 5 / Act V, sc. 3**

By nursing them, my lord. List a brief tale;  
And when 'tis told, O that my heart would burst!  
The bloody proclamation to escape  
That follow'd me so near (O, our lives' sweetness!  
That with the pain of death would hourly die  
Rather than die at once!) taught me to shift  
Into a madman's rags, t' assume a semblance  
That very dogs disdain'd; and in this habit  
Met I my father with his bleeding rings,  
Their precious stones new lost; became his guide,  
Led him, begg'd for him, sav'd him from despair;  
Never (O fault!) reveal'd myself unto him  
Until some half hour past, when I was arm'd,  
Not sure, though hoping of this good success,  
I ask'd his blessing, and from first to last  
Told him my pilgrimage. But his flaw'd heart  
(Alack, too weak the conflict to support!)  
'Twixt two extremes of passion, joy and grief,  
Burst smilingly.

**PART 5 / Act V, sc. 3**

The weight of this sad time we must obey;  
Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.  
The oldest hath borne most: we that are young  
Shall never see so much, nor live so long.

## EDMUND'S SPEECHES AND SOLILOQUIES

*Divide your group into five sub-groups and each group will work on a section (Part 1-5). Analyse the text. Read it several times, underline words you do not know and look them up. Once you have the meaning, move around the room act it out and try delivering the lines as a choral piece, using tableaux or stylized movement.*

### **PART 1 / Act I, sc. 2**

Thou, Nature, art my goddess; to thy law  
My services are bound. Wherefore should I  
Stand in the plague of custom, and permit  
The curiosity of nations to deprive me,  
For that I am some twelve or fourteen moonshines  
Lag of a brother? Why bastard? wherefore base?  
When my dimensions are as well compact,  
My mind as generous, and my shape as true,  
As honest madam's issue? Why brand they us  
With base? with baseness? bastardy? base, base?  
Who, in the lusty stealth of nature, take  
More composition and fierce quality  
Than doth, within a dull, stale, tired bed,  
Go to th' creating a whole tribe of fops  
Got 'tween asleep and wake? Well then,  
Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land.  
Our father's love is to the bastard Edmund  
As to th' legitimate. Fine word- 'legitimate'!  
Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed,  
And my invention thrive, Edmund the base  
Shall top th' legitimate. I grow; I prosper.  
Now, gods, stand up for bastards!

### **PART 2 / Act I, sc. 2**

This is the excellent foppery of the world, that, when we are sick in fortune, often the surfeit of our own behaviour, we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars; as if we were villains on necessity; fools by heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves, and treachers by spherical pre-dominance; drunkards, liars, and adulterers by an enforc'd obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on. An admirable evasion of whore-master man, to lay his goatish disposition to the charge of a star! My father compounded with my mother under the Dragon's Tail, and my nativity was under Ursa Major, so that it follows I am rough and lecherous. Fut! I should have been that I am, had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my bastardizing.  
Edgar-

*[Enter Edgar.]*

and pat! he comes, like the catastrophe of the old comedy. My cue is villainous melancholy, with a sigh like Tom o' Bedlam. O, these eclipses do portend these divisions! Fa, sol, la, mi.

**PART 3 / Act II, sc. 1**

Persuade me to the murder of your lordship;  
But that I told him the revenging gods  
'Gainst parricides did all their thunders bend;  
Spoke with how manifold and strong a bond  
The child was bound to th' father- sir, in fine,  
Seeing how loathly opposite I stood  
To his unnatural purpose, in fell motion  
With his prepared sword he charges home  
My unprovided body, lanch'd mine arm;  
But when he saw my best alarum'd spirits,  
Bold in the quarrel's right, rous'd to th' encounter,  
Or whether gasted by the noise I made,  
Full suddenly he fled.

**PART 3 / Act II, sc. 1**

When I dissuaded him from his intent  
And found him pight to do it, with curst speech  
I threaten'd to discover him. He replied,  
'Thou unpossessing bastard, dost thou think,  
If I would stand against thee, would the reposal  
Of any trust, virtue, or worth in thee  
Make thy words faith'd? No. What I should deny  
(As this I would; ay, though thou didst produce  
My very character), I'd turn it all  
To thy suggestion, plot, and damned practice;  
And thou must make a dullard of the world,  
If they not thought the profits of my death  
Were very pregnant and potential spurs  
To make thee seek it.'

**PART 4 / Act V, sc. 1**

To both these sisters have I sworn my love;  
Each jealous of the other, as the stung  
Are of the adder. Which of them shall I take?  
Both? one? or neither? Neither can be enjoy'd,  
If both remain alive. To take the widow  
Exasperates, makes mad her sister Goneril;  
And hardly shall I carry out my side,  
Her husband being alive. Now then, we'll use  
His countenance for the battle, which being done,  
Let her who would be rid of him devise  
His speedy taking off. As for the mercy  
Which he intends to Lear and to Cordelia-  
The battle done, and they within our power,  
Shall never see his pardon; for my state  
Stands on me to defend, not to debate.

**PART 4 / Act V, sc. 3**

Sir, I thought it fit  
To send the old and miserable King  
To some retention and appointed guard;  
Whose age has charms in it, whose title more,  
To pluck the common bosom on his side  
And turn our impress'd lances in our eyes  
Which do command them. With him I sent the Queen,  
My reason all the same; and they are ready  
To-morrow, or at further space, t' appear  
Where you shall hold your session. At this time  
We sweat and bleed: the friend hath lost his friend;  
And the best quarrels, in the heat, are curs'd  
By those that feel their sharpness.  
The question of Cordelia and her father  
Requires a fitter place.

**PART 5 / Act V, sc. 3**

In wisdom I should ask thy name;  
But since thy outside looks so fair and warlike,  
And that thy tongue some say of breeding breathes,  
What safe and nicely I might well delay  
By rule of knighthood, I disdain and spurn.  
Back do I toss those treasons to thy head;  
With the hell-hated lie o'erwhelm thy heart;  
Which- for they yet glance by and scarcely bruise-  
This sword of mine shall give them instant way  
Where they shall rest for ever. Trumpets, speak!

**PART 5 / Act V, sc. 3**

What, you have charg'd me with, that have I done,  
And more, much more. The time will bring it out.  
'Tis past, and so am I.- But what art thou  
That hast this fortune on me? If thou'rt noble,  
I do forgive thee.

**PART 5 / Act V, sc. 3**

I pant for life. Some good I mean to do,  
Despite of mine own nature. Quickly send  
(Be brief in't) to the castle; for my writ  
Is on the life of Lear and on Cordelia.  
Nay, send in time.

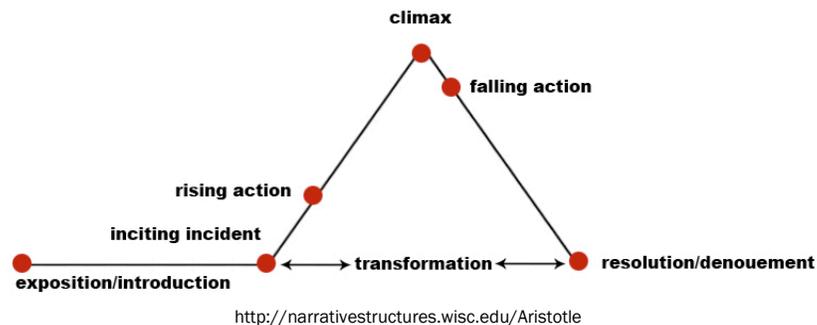
**PART 5 / Act V, sc. 3**

He hath commission from thy wife and me  
To hang Cordelia in the prison and  
To lay the blame upon her own despair  
That she fordid herself.

## Charting the Character Arc

As you watch the other team perform/read their character's selected speeches and soliloquies, look for the clues that will help answer the below-listed questions.

1. Chart the character as it progresses throughout the play. Does this follow the typical dramatic arc of six basic stages of development?
  - i. Exposition/Introduction
  - ii. Problem or Conflict Occurs (Inciting Incident)
  - iii. Rising Action
  - iv. Climax
  - v. Falling Action
  - vi. Resolution/Denouement



2. Does the character start with a certain viewpoint at the beginning and change over the course of the play?
3. Can we connect with this character?
4. Are there traits we can admire about this character?
5. How does this character (or does this character) transcend his own flaws and weaknesses?
6. Were there moments that truly defined this character in your opinion?
7. Did the character undergo personal growth and development?
8. What aspects "humanized" this character for you?

# Resources

## SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY for *King Lear*

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### TEACHING SHAKESPEARE:

- Asimov, Isaac. *Asimov's Guide to Shakespeare*. New York, 1970.  
Edens, Walter, et al. *Teaching Shakespeare*. New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1977.  
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### KING LEAR:

- Garfield, Leon. *Shakespeare Stories*. Puffin Books: 1985  
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Ginsler, Shira. "Shakespeare's greatest achievement". *Stratford for Students*. Spring 2007.  
Jackson, Andrea. "Imaginative Ways to Use the Text". *Stratford for Students*. Spring 2007.  
Shakespeare, William. *The Merchant of Venice*. 2nd Edition. Cambridge School. 1996.

### WEB RESOURCES:

- Mr. William Shakespeare and the Internet, [shakespeare.palomar.edu](http://shakespeare.palomar.edu)  
Sh:in:E Shakespeare in Europe, [www.unibas.ch/shine](http://www.unibas.ch/shine)

Feste: database of productions at the Royal Shakespeare Company and Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, [www.shakespeare.org.uk/content/view/339/339/](http://www.shakespeare.org.uk/content/view/339/339/)  
Encyclopaedia Britannica presents: Shakespeare and the Globe: Then and Now, [search.eb.com/shakespeare](http://search.eb.com/shakespeare)  
Shakespeare: Chill with Will, [library.thinkquest.org/19539/saam.htm](http://library.thinkquest.org/19539/saam.htm)  
Shakespeare's Life and Times, [web.uvic.ca/shakespeare/Library/SLT/intro/introsubj.html](http://web.uvic.ca/shakespeare/Library/SLT/intro/introsubj.html)  
Shakespeare Online, [www.shakespeare-online.com](http://www.shakespeare-online.com)  
Poor Yorick CD & Video Emporium, [www.bardcentral.com](http://www.bardcentral.com)  
Movie Review Query Engline, [www.mrqe.com](http://www.mrqe.com)  
Internet Movie Database, [www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com)

#### **KING LEAR ONLINE:**

MIT Shakespeare: The Complete Works of William Shakespeare:  
[shakespeare.mit.edu/lear/index.html](http://shakespeare.mit.edu/lear/index.html)  
BookRags.com Homepage: [www.bookrags.com/King\\_Lear](http://www.bookrags.com/King_Lear)  
SparkNotes: [www.sparknotes.com/shakespeare/lear/](http://www.sparknotes.com/shakespeare/lear/)  
The Literature Network: [www.online-literature.com/shakespeare/kinglear/](http://www.online-literature.com/shakespeare/kinglear/)  
*King Lear* Revision: [www.s-cool.co.uk/topic\\_index.asp?subject\\_id=4](http://www.s-cool.co.uk/topic_index.asp?subject_id=4)

#### **KING LEAR ON FILM, VIDEO and DVD:**

1974 (USA): *King Lear*. Directed by Edwin Sherin; starring James Earl Jones, Raul Julia, Paul Sorvino and René Auberjonois.

1976 (UK): *King Lear*. Directed by Tony Davenall; starring Patrick Magee, Ronald Radd and Patrick Mower.

1983 (UK): *King Lear*. Directed by Alan Cooke; starring Mike Kellen, David Groh, Kitty Winn, Darryl Hickman and Charles Hickman.

1984 (UK): *King Lear*. Directed by Michael Elliott; starring Laurence Olivier as King Lear, with Diana Rigg, John Hurt, Jeremy Kemp, Robert Lindsay and Colin Blakely.

1988 (UK), *King Lear*. Starring Patrick Magee, Ray Smith, Wendy Allnut, Ann Lynn, Beth Harris and Ronald Radd.

1998 (UK): *King Lear*. Directed by Richard Eyre; starring Ian Holm as King Lear, with Barbara Flynn, Amanda Redman, David Lyon, Michael Simkins and Victoria Hamilton.

2005 (UK), *BBC Shakespeare Tragedy II Set*. Starring Brenda Blethyn as Cordelia, Michael Horndern as King Lear, Michael Kitchen as Edmund and Penelope Wilton as Regan.