

Sydney Theatre Company Education 2007 presents
The Taming of the Shrew
by William Shakespeare



Teacher's Resource Kit

written and compiled by Jeffrey Dawson

Acknowledgements

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Contents

Sydney Theatre Company	3
Sydney Theatre Company Education	4
Cast and Production Team	5
Why Study Shakespeare?	6
Background Information	
Elizabethan Marriage Customs	7
The Elizabethan Playhouse	8
Shakespearean Theatre	9
The Bard's Life	10
Who Was Shakespeare	11
Blank Verse	12
Speak the Speech / Insults	13
Research Task - Elizabethan England	14
Background information on the Production	
Interview with Director – Rachel McDonald	15
Synopsis	17
List of Characters	18
Promotional Copy	18
Task - Letter Writing	19
Questions Before the Play	
Questions for students who haven't read the play	20
Questions for students who have read the play	20
Questions After the Play	
Questions for students who hadn't read the play	23
Questions for students who had read the play	23
References	25

Sydney Theatre Company

Sydney Theatre Company (STC) produces theatre of the highest standard that consistently illuminates, entertains and challenges. It is committed to the engagement between the imagination of its artists and its audiences, to the development of the art form of theatre, and to excellence in all its endeavours.

STC has been a major force in Australian drama since its establishment in 1978. It was created by the New South Wales Government, following the demise of the Old Tote Theatre Company. The original intention was to better utilise the Drama Theatre of the Sydney Opera House and the new Company comprised a small central administration staff, technical staff, workshop and rehearsal facilities. Richard Wherrett was appointed Artistic Director from 1979 to 1990.

The Wharf opened on 13 December, 1984 by Premier Neville Wran, which allowed all departments of the Company to be housed under one roof for the first time. The venue was to become the envy of the theatre world. From 1985, the Company could perform in two locations throughout the year, the Drama Theatre and The Wharf. From 1990 to 1999, Wayne Harrison served as Artistic Director. A third regular venue, Sydney Theatre, administered and operated by STC, opened in 2004.

The predominant financial commitment to STC is made by its audience. Of this audience, the Company's subscribers make a crucial commitment. The Company is also assisted annually by grants from the Federal Government through the Australia Council and the New South Wales Government through the Ministry for the Arts. STC also actively seeks sponsorship and donations from the corporate sector and from private individuals.

Under the leadership Artistic Director Robyn Nevin, STC's annual subscription season features up to 12 plays including: recent or new Australian works, interpretations of theatrical classics and contemporary foreign works. In addition STC regularly co-produces and tours productions throughout Australia, playing annually to audiences in excess of 300,000. STC actively fosters relationships and collaborations with international artists and companies. In 2006 STC began a new journey of artistic development with the inception of The Actors Company, the STC ensemble.

To access detailed information on Sydney Theatre Company, its history and productions please contact our Archivist Judith Seeff at jseeff@sydneytheatre.com.au

Sydney Theatre Company Education

Sydney Theatre Company is committed to education by programming original **productions** and **workshops** that enthuse and engage the next generation of theatre-goers. Within the education programme Sydney Theatre Company produces its own season of plays as well as collaborates with leading theatre-for-young-people companies across Australia.

Often a young person's first experience of theatre is facilitated by teachers. STC ensures access to all of its mainstage productions through the **schoolsdays** programme as well as produces and tours theatre specifically crafted to resonate with young people.

STC works to support educators in their Drama and English-teaching practices. Every year dynamic **workshops** are held by leading theatre practitioners to support curriculum content, detailed resources are provided for all productions and an extensive work-experience programme is available to students from across the state.

The annual Sydney Morning Herald and Sydney Theatre Company **Young Playwright's Award** continues to develop and encourage young writers. The winning students receive a cash prize and a two-day workshop with a professional director, dramaturg and cast – an invaluable opportunity and experience.

Sydney Theatre Company has an extensive **on-line resource** for teachers and students. Visit www.sydneytheatre.com.au/education.

We encourage teachers to subscribe to regular e-news to keep informed as well as access **heavily discounted** tickets and special offers.

For further information on STC Education programme, please contact the Education Manager Helen Hristofski at hristofski@sydneytheatre.com.au

Sydney Theatre Company Education 2007 presents

The Taming of the Shrew

By William Shakespeare

Cast

Petruchio **Rohan Nichol**

Katherine **Alice Parkinson**

Grumio/ Bianca **John Leary**

Lucentio **Scott Timmins**

Lord/Baptista **Andrew Crabbe**

Gremio/ Widow **Jonathan Gavin**

Tranio/ Tailor **Matt Moore**

Hortensio/ Page **Ben Borgia**

Production Team

Director **Rachel McDonald**

Designer **Genevieve Dugard**

Lighting Designer **Stephen Hawker**

Sound Designer **Steven Francis**

Production Manager **Janet Eades**

Stage Manager **Sarah Smith**

Assistant Stage Manager **Larna Burgess Munro**

Why Study Shakespeare?

To Consider

- Shakespeare's characters, stories and themes are a source of meaning and significance for every generation, including my own:
 - Familiar human relationships, eg. Father and daughter, husband and wife
 - Familiar emotions, eg jealousy and love
 - Familiar issues, eg. How should people live together? Why do humans go to war? The difference between private and public behaviour? The connection between the individual and society?
- Studying Shakespeare's plays gives us another view of the world – a strong educational reason to explore his plays
 - His plays appeal because they are unfamiliar and extraordinary
 - The plays give us characters with different ways of living and different values
 - We can use our imaginations to explore these different worlds, eg Venice, Scotland, Padua
- Shakespeare is a genius of significance in the development of the English language, literature and drama.
 - All students should have the opportunity to make up their own minds about Shakespeare
- Shakespeare's language gives students an opportunity to extend their own language.
 - Shakespeare's language can be studied, imitated, used for personal recreation
 - When students respond to the challenge of Shakespeare's language they understand the power of language

Background Information

Elizabethan Wedding Reception and Food

Wedding invitations were not issued. People lived in small communities and knew what was happening in common life. If there was an Elizabethan wedding then people would just attend. Gifts were occasionally given to the bride and groom. It was an Elizabethan wedding custom to celebrate the marriage with a wedding feast. The special feast had to be carefully planned. The menu was discussed and arrangements for acquiring the contents of the more exotic dishes, such as peacock, had to be made. The Elizabethans were keen on presenting dishes as attractively as possible – in the case of the peacock; its colourful feathers would adorn the dish. Bread and sweetmeats would also be prepared. The staple drink of the Elizabethans was ale (water was unclean) but wine was also available and would have been ordered for the wedding feast.

Elizabethan Wedding Customs – The Wedding Dresses

The bride did not wear a white wedding dress, this was a later tradition. Instead she would wear her best gown and Kirtle, or even a new gown if the money was available. The gown would cover most of the body and be full length. A cloak was used as an outer garment. Velvet, satins and corduroy were costly and therefore worn by the nobility. The wedding garments belonging to the majority of brides were generally made of flax, cotton and wool. Colours came in a variety of different shades: red, blue, greens, yellow, white, grey, black, orange and tan. Corsets were occasionally worn but any additional undergarments were rarely heard of. A shift, or chemise, would also be worn beneath the gown. Although the vast majority of the body was covered it was permissible for dresses to have plunging necklines. A necklace was often worn that drew even more attention to a woman's breasts. The necks and cuffs of gowns were decorated with silk or linen ruffs. Fresh flowers were central to the clothing. The bride would wear flowers in her hair and they would also adorn her gown. Unmarried girls were allowed to wear their hair loose but once married it had to be hidden beneath a bonnet. Wealthy brides had garments which were adorned with jewels and gold and silver thread. It was also traditional to carry a bouquet. A bride would have bridesmaids and these would be similarly attired.

Elizabethan Wedding Customs – The Bridegroom's Wedding Clothes

The bridegroom wore his best clothes which consisted of a doublet, breeches, hose, box, pleated neck ruff and a cod piece. A cloak might also be worn and a pair of boots. Elizabethan men usually wore a short shift as an undergarment. Velvet, satins and corduroy were costly and therefore worn by nobility. The garments belonging to the common man were generally made of flax, cotton and wool. Colours came in a variety of different shades: red, blue, greens, yellow, white, grey, black, orange and tan. The colour yellow would not be chosen for a wedding – it was a sign of mourning. A bridal procession would move from the family's house to the church. This was a particularly festive event and the procession would be accompanied by musicians.

Elizabethan Wedding Customs – The Ceremony

Once at the church the ceremony would be a solemn one. In Elizabethan times everyone would stand as there were no pews in churches. When the marriage ceremony was over the procession would return to their homes. The families of the couple would sometimes enjoy a wedding feast and were wished a long and happy life.

The Elizabethan Playhouse

It is believed that, at first, Elizabethan plays were acted out in animal baiting rings or the courtyard of the local inn. It was not until 1576 that the first playhouse, appropriately known as The Theatre, was built on the outskirts of the city of London.

The most famous of the London theatre of the time was the Globe. Shakespeare owned a one-tenth share of the Globe and it was here that the King's Men held most of their performances.

The stage was small and was not protected by a roof. Performances were held only in fine weather and only during the day as there was no artificial lighting.

Playbills were posted up around London to advertise each play and a flag was flown above the theatre to signal that a performance was to be held that day.

Though elaborate, costumes were usually Elizabethan in style, rather than from the period in which the play was set. There was little or no scenery, as it was considered the playwright's role to use powerful verbal imagery to paint a mental picture of each scene. Sometimes a canopy, painted underneath with stars and planets, was hung above the stage to represent the heavens. Trapdoors were used for ghostly entrances and a raised section of stage acted as castle walls, windows or, in the case of *Romeo and Juliet*, as a balcony.

Because of the nearness of the audience, Elizabethan theatre was very intimate. "Soliloquies" and "asides" were frequently used so that actors could speak directly to the audience.

The plays ran continuously, having no scene breaks or slow points in the action. It was not considered proper for women to become actors, so talented young boys took the female roles. Shakespeare often wrote parts in his plays specifically designed for members of his acting troupe. This allowed them to exhibit their high level of skill as orators, dancers, fencers, acrobats and sometimes as magicians.

Shakespearean Theatre

Although many _____ go to see plays nowadays, many more went to see them in _____ day. The theatre was immensely _____ both with ordinary people and the _____. The plays contained all the ingredients which today make them, and films appealing: action, _____, sex, _____, betrayal, _____ and, of course, fun.

The theatre in which the plays were performed were circular _____ buildings with an open courtyard in the _____. The stage on which the play was performed jutted out from the side of the building into the courtyard.

For a _____ those who were *groundlings* stood on the ground in the courtyard in der to watch the play. They were a little bit like a _____ crowd—noisy and involved—perhaps even a little _____. In the galleries which lined the building and which were roofed over, people who had paid a _____ entrance fee were able to sit in some comfort.

Those who paid the most were able to sit on a chair on the _____ itself.

Because the theatre was open to the sky, plays were usually only performed on _____ and, because there was no _____, during daylight hours only. The acting company advertised the fact that a play was to be performed that day by flying a _____ from the roof of the theatre.

Plays were not rigorously rehearsed in the way they are these days but the _____ were often elaborate and special effects were used. Cannonballs rolled along the floor of the hut above the stage (know as 'The Heavens') made do for _____, ghosts emerged from the area under the stage (known as _____) and meat purchased from the _____ provided blood and guts for the battle scenes.

Because, at this time, acting was frowned on by some, _____ people, and was regarded as a lowly profession, _____ were not allowed to act in plays. Instead, young boys—_____ to _____ years old—played the women's roles.

LOVE	THUNDER	PEOPLE	STAGE	UPPER CLASSES
		MIDDLE		
THIRTEEN	COSTUMES	HIGHER	ELECTRICITY	
	POPULAR			
REVENGE	PENNY	VIOLENCE	DRUNK	"HELL"
	SHAKESPEARE'S			
FINE DAYS	FOOTBALL	BUTCHER	WOODEN	RELIGIOUS
	FLAG			

EIGHT

The Bard's Life

Shakespeare is one of the greatest writers of all time. He is so famous he is often called "The Bard" – the storyteller.

William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-on-Avon, England, in April 1564. While his early life remains a mystery, official documents, his plays and what others wrote about him tell us a good deal about his adult life. In 1582, aged 18, he married Anne Hathaway. During the next year their first child, Susanna, was born, and in 1585 Anne gave birth to twins, Hamnet and Judith.

During the next seven or eight years, commonly known as "the missing years", little is known about Shakespeare's life except that he moved to London and began a career as an actor and a playwright. In 1592 Robert Greene, another London playwright, wrote a scathing attack on Shakespeare claiming he was an "upstart crow" who was foolishly attempting to write plays.

In 1594 he became a charter member of the "Chamberlains' Men" which soon became London's leading theatre troupe. The success of the troupe was in part due to Shakespeare's skill as a playwright but also the skills of talented actors such as Richard Burbage and Will Kempe. In 1603, when King James I succeeded Queen Elizabeth I to the throne, the troupe changed its name to the "King's Men". Over the next few years Shakespeare's popularity and wealth grew. He bought property in Stratford-on-Avon and a share of a London theatre, The Globe.

In 1610 Shakespeare retired and returned to Stratford-on-Avon. He died on 23 April 1616, aged 52. A plaque placed on a wall near his grave marks his passing.

Perhaps these are the last words he ever wrote:

*Good Friend, for Jesus sake forbear
To dig the dust enclosed here.
Blessed be the man that spares these stones,
And cursed be he that moves my bones.*

The first folio edition of his plays was not published until 1623, seven years after his death.

Who Was Shakespeare?

What we know about his life...	What else was happening at the time...
<p>Shakespeare was baptised on April 26</p> <p>Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway Birth of Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway's daughter, Susanna Birth of Hamnet and Judith, their twins Somewhere around this time Shakespeare left Stratford for London. Rumour has it he left in order to avoid prosecuted for poaching deer</p> <p>Production of Shakespeare's <i>Henry V, Part I</i></p> <p>Shakespeare joined the Lord Chamberlain's company. A group of actors who performed at Court. <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> is thought to have been written around this time</p> <p>Burial of Hamnet Shakespeare Shakespeare bought New Place, one of the largest houses in Stratford Opening of the Globe Theatre, London where many of Shakespeare's plays were performed</p> <p>Shakespeare retired to New Place, Stratford Death of Shakespeare on 23 April First folio edition of Shakespeare's plays published. This was a collection of 35 plays</p>	<p>Elizabeth I became Queen of England Birth of Galileo, inventor and astronomer</p> <p>Sir Francis Drake Sailed around the world</p> <p>Execution of Mary Queen of Scots</p> <p>Defeat of the Spanish Armada</p> <p>Plague in London</p> <p>Death of Queen Elizabeth I Plague in London Gunpowder Plot (Guy Fawkes) First English settlement in Jamestown, Virginia (America)</p>

Blank Verse

If you look at a typical speech from a Shakespearean play, you will see that it is set out like this:

**Say that she rail; why, then I'll
tell her plain
She sings as sweetly as a
nightingale.
Say that she frown; I'll say that
she looks as clear
As morning roses newly wash'd
with dew**

The lines are roughly the same length, but they do not cover the width of the page, as they would if they were written in prose. They are, in fact, written in verse form and each line contains exactly ten syllables. Count them.

The ten syllables can be divided into five that are stressed (*) and five that are unstressed (^) alternating with each other.

**S^ay tha*t sh^e r*ail; ^why,
the*n I'^ll te*ll h^er pla*in
Sh^e sin*gs a^s sweetl^y a*s a^
ni*ghtin^gale.
Sa^y tha*t sh^e fro*wn; I'^ll sa*y
that sh^e loo*ks a^s cle*ar
A^s mor*nin^g ro*se^s ne*wl^y
wa*sh'd w^ith de*w**

The length of a line of verse, measure by counting the stresses, is called the METRE.

When there are five stresses, the line is called a PENTAMETER.

When the lines do not rhyme, however, they are said to be BLANK.

Most of Shakespeare's plays are written in BLANK VERSE and the metre he uses is PENTAMETER.

All this sounds very technical and if Shakespeare stuck rigidly to blank verse throughout his plays he would

become rather monotonous; but he manages to avoid monotony, not only by writing some speeches and scenes in prose, but by introducing variations in the blank verse itself. This is what he does:

- Instead of introducing a pause at the end of each line (through the use of comma, full-stop or semi-colon), he runs one line into the next (called 'enjambment') and the listener is not aware of the five-stress pattern.
- He introduces pauses in the middle of a line to break up the pentameter, sometimes dividing a line between two different speakers.
- He occasionally drops the ten syllable line altogether.

In addition to Shakespeare's variations, there are the changes of pattern that can be brought about by the actor's interpretation of the lines. Only a very bad actor would deliver them in such a way that the listeners would be conscious of the pentameters.

Remember that the -ed at the end of the word was pronounced as a separate syllable. Thus *vexed* counted as two syllables, but *vex'd* as one. Shakespeare would choose between the 'd and the -ed ending according to the number of syllables he wanted in a line:

**Hugg'd and embraced by the
strumpet wind**

Would be a ten syllable line.

Speak the Speech

Some people find it very difficult to read Shakespeare aloud; others love it. There's no doubt, however, that the better the reading, the more the play will be enjoyed and understood by both readers and listeners.

Let us assume that so far you have not actually read anything by Shakespeare, but you are prepared to begin. You will be helped if you remember these points.

1. Emphasise the words you think are important.
2. Pause at the commas, semi-colons and full stops.
3. If there is no stop at the end of a line, read straight on to the next line.
4. -ed at the end of a word is pronounced as a separate syllable: advis-ed inform-ed trench-ed. If the full syllable is not to be pronounced an apostrophe is used: advis'd inform'd trench'd
5. Try to give expression to the *feelings* of the characters.
6. Wherever possible, convey these feelings by your tone of voice, your facial expression, your gestures and your movements
7. Don't rush to get through the speech – take your time!

Here are some short quotations and extracts to practise on, arranged under headings. If you can enjoy speaking these, you will enjoy longer speeches when they come.

Insults

In *A Midsummer Nights Dream*, Lysander uses Hermia's size to insult her:

Get you gone, you dwarf

Where would the pause come?
Which word would be said with the most force?
What movements could he make?
What is he feeling?

In *Romeo and Juliet*, Capulet gets angry with his daughter Juliet because she refuses to marry the man he has chosen for her:

**Hang thee, young baggage!
disobedient wretch.
I tell thee what – get thee to a
church a Thursday
Or never after look me in the
face**

Which words would be stressed?
How loudly do you think the speech ought to be said?
Would all the pauses be the same length?
What tone of voice would Capulet use?
Should he be sitting, standing, walking about, gesturing?
Ask yourself similar questions for the following quotations, then try speaking them:

- **Away, you mouldy rogue, away!**
- **I dote upon his very absence**
- **Not Hercules could have knocked his brain out, for he had none!**
- Jacques. **Let's meet as little as we can.**
Orlando. **I do desire we may be better strangers.**

Research Task: Elizabethan England

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Queen Elizabeth• Life of Women• The Plague• Exploration• Religion | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Theatre & Acting• London• Medicine• Science & invention• Leisure |
|---|--|

STEP 1:

- You must choose ONE topic from the list above

STEP 2:

- Collect THREE sources on your topic
- These must be varied
Eg. Visual – photograph, drawing; diary extract; official document;
historians account – description, analysis, opinion; encyclopaedia

STEP 3:

- Analyse each source
- Present the information from each source as a MIND MAP
- Focus on:
 - Facts
 - Opinions
 - Key Words
 - Key Ideas

STEP 4:

- Synthesise the information from the three sources
- Present this as a list of KEY POINTS.
- Use the following format:

TOPIC:

KEY POINTS:

-
-
-
-

Background Information on the Production

The Director – Rachel McDonald

After reading the playwright's script, the director decides on an overall vision for the production. The director meets with the creative team to achieve a unified look for the sets, costumes, lighting, sound and other elements. The director oversees the actors in rehearsal, often with the help of an assistant director and always with stage managers.

Reference, Laura Scrivano interviews Director Rachel McDonald, "Shrewish Sexual Politics" in *Currents* Vol. 25 No.1 March 2007 - about tackling Shakespeare's problem play.

As a director, what attracted you to *The Taming of the Shrew*?

It's always the multilayered levels of richness that attracts me to Shakespeare. It can be endlessly mined - so many readings are possible and so many questions are raised. *The Taming of the Shrew* is a really challenging play. It is a play with an enormous amount of chemistry. There is a really strong sense of attraction between the two main characters which leaps off the page - despite the fact that they are always fighting. It's a very difficult play from the point of view of sexual politics and for that reason it is not done that much, especially considering how entertaining it is. However, the play also has a dark heart. There is a violence to it and it's definitely anti-feminist in many ways. It's a very confronting play for a modern audience and quite often it goes in the too hard basket. I'm quite attracted by things in the too hard basket!

How will you approach the sexual politics of the play?

I really struggled with the play at first. The clue is the prologue which sets the play up as part of this huge elaborate practical joke played on this drunken guy who is found asleep and convinced that he is a lord and in charge of all these people. It's a male fantasy come true, as indeed is the rest of the play. If you can read the play in that dream/fantasy sense then you can allow yourself to go with the extremity of it. Everyone knows this play is a male fantasy about dominating a woman, dominating a wild cat, a really difficult woman. But there is a female fantasy at the heart of it too and that is the longing for a man who isn't scared of you. Kate has enormous keep off signs all over her and Petruchio just goes straight through all of them and that's got attraction for women as well as men. Kate has a huge journey because she starts the play as an absolute psycho. Quite often people talk about Kate as if she was a spirited girl and it's not actually true. She hits people, she throws things at people. She is an unhappy, out of control person who is completely a victim of her emotions. She is unable to get what she wants out of life. She is like a two-year-old in some ways. No one has shown her any limits and she is violent and at least through her marriage she achieves some sort of control over her universe. And she kind of learns a way of getting what she wants out of people.

Why do you think this play will appeal to Education audiences?

The nexus of control and romantic love is something of deep interest to teenagers. This play is honest about those male longings to control. That intersection between power and love is of enormous interest to anyone at that age and to anyone at any age really!

Is the full text of the play being performed?

I have the very difficult job of cutting a full third of the text. The coward's way out would be to cut all the hard stuff but I'm not going to do that. I think the hard stuffs the interesting stuff!

I am hoping the cuts will make the play a little bit tighter and faster. Inevitably you will lose some of the layers, particularly of the minor characters but I'm determined not to cut anything really difficult and central to the axis of the play.

How will the design complement the central themes of *The Taming of the Shrew*?

In the design we want to suggest the sense of hyper-vivid, the hyper-real which is in the play. It is that extremity and exaggeration that we find in dreams. We also want a slight whiff of the circus in the design as we want to make it clear that this is a play within a play. And that gives you permission to exaggerate. For female actors there is a lot to resist in the text and if you put it in a circus or a dream it give you more permission to go with it.

What do you hope audiences will take from the production?

I think they will come away from it talking. That's what I want. This stuff is endlessly interesting. I hope it will be a clear, detailed, vital energetic reading of the text that will send up and open up questions. I also hope the audience come away having had a good time – there is this great sense of chemistry and play and circus to be enjoyed.

Synopsis

To familiarise yourself with the story, read through the play synopsis below. Write down your initial response to the story, which you can reflect back on, after you have seen the play.

Baptista Minola, a rich gentleman of Padua, has two daughters - Bianca and Katherine. Bianca, the younger daughter, has many suitors, including Hortensio and the elderly, wealthy Gremio. Sharp-tongued and wilful, Katherine seems to terrify men and no one wants to marry her, despite her fortune.

Baptista is determined that Bianca can not marry until Katherine is married, any prospect of which seems a long way off. Gremio and Hortensio agree to try to find a husband for Katherine.

Enter Petruchio, an old friend of Hortensio. Petruchio is in search of a wife with a large dowry. He is not put off by tales of Katherine's wilful and wayward behaviour. Young Lucentio, travelling from Pisa with his groom Tranio, has barely arrived in Padua when he sees and falls instantly in love with Bianca. Hearing that Baptista wants tutors for his daughters, Lucentio disguises himself as a tutor, 'Cambio', while Tranio pretends to be Lucentio.

Hortensio, similarly inspired, disguises himself as a music teacher, Litio. Old Gremio is delighted to have found in Cambio a schoolmaster who will woo, he thinks, Bianca on his behalf with love poems. Both are put out to discover yet another rival in the supposed Lucentio.

In exchange for twenty thousand crowns in hand and the promise of half Baptista's lands in years to come, Petruchio agrees to marry Katherine. Tranio (disguised as Lucentio) and the rich but ancient and doddery Gremio compete with their respective fortunes to win Bianca. Baptista promises his daughter to 'Lucentio' (i.e. the disguised Tranio), subject to his securing his father, Vincentio's, agreement of a vast financial settlement.

Meanwhile, the real Lucentio makes himself known to Bianca and she falls in love with him. Hortensio resigns his claim on Bianca and instead marries a wealthy widow.

To get round the awkward business of the parental settlement, Tranio finds a stranger (a Pedant from Mantua) to impersonate Lucentio's father, Vincentio. Petruchio marries Katherine and takes her off to his country house, where he proceeds to 'tame' her by depriving her of sleep and food and continually contradicting her.

Believing he has tamed the 'shrew', Petruchio takes Katherine back to her father's house. No one is ready to believe that Katherine has changed. The newly married Lucentio and Hortensio each bet a hundred crowns that Katherine is the least obedient of the new wives.

Katherine is the only one of the three wives who comes when summoned and so, to everyone's astonishment, Petruchio wins his wager and Katherine lectures Bianca, the Widow and the assembled company about the duty women owe their husbands.

Reference <http://www.rsc.org.uk/learning/91.aspx>

List of Characters

THE FATHERS

Baptista Minola - a rich citizen of Padua
Vincentio - a merchant from Pisa

THE DAUGHTERS

Katherina - the 'shrew', Baptista's elder daughter
Bianca - Baptista's younger daughter

THE SUITORS

Gremio - a rich old man of Padua
Hortensio - a gentleman of Padua
Lucentio - a gentleman from Pisa
Petruccio - a gentleman from Verona

THE SERVANTS

Tranio - servant to Lucentio
Biondello - Lucentio's boy
Grumio - servant to Petruccio
Curtis - servant at Petruccio's house

Also Tailor, Haberdasher, Merchant from Mantua, Widow

Promotion Copy

In this early comedy, but early problem play, was Shakespeare really saying that a husband should be a woman's lord, life, keeper and sovereign? As he explored disguise, domestication, social roles and marriage as an economic institution he also wrote one of his funniest plays.

It polarises audiences and artists - but either way it is a text that leaps off the page into a dream world where two fantasies are explored: the strong woman's desire for a man who doesn't fear her; and the male dream of dominating a wild cat. From *Kiss Me Kate* to *10 Things I Hate About You*, from *The Tamer Tamed* to Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor exemplifying the battle of the sexes in their film version, and their lives, this is a play that has seeped deep into popular culture.

Petruccio: Come, come, you wasp, I'faith you are too angry.

Katherina: If I be waspish, best beware my sting.

Petruccio: My remedy is then to pluck it out.

Katherina: Ay, if the fool could find where it lies.

Petruccio: Who knows what where a wasp does wear his sting? In his tail.

Katherina: In his tongue.

Petruccio: Whose tongue? (II, I 207-212)

Task: Letter Writing

- Write a letter from KATE to BIANCA – a personal letter!
- In this letter Kate explains to Bianca WHY she has CHANGED.
- Include some or all of the following details
 - Kate's first impression of Petruchio
 - Her first reaction to being married
 - Her experiences at Petruchio's country house
 - Her feelings when treated so badly by Petruchio (and his servants)
 - What she came to realise about herself – her past behaviour and attitudes
 - Why she now loves (and obeys) Petruchio

Plan For Letter

KEY POINTS	DETAILS / FACTS

Before seeing the production, explore these questions:

Questions for students who haven't read the play

1. Look over some of the Elizabethan language and their meanings before you see *The Taming of the Shrew*.
2. Compare the attitudes toward women in the Elizabethan age – 400 years ago – and the way they are represented today.
3. What would you include in the program for a play whose values are considered quite sexist today? Why do you think the director of this production has given the play a Mexican flavour?
4. A cross-section of Kate's body with one of Petruchio's hands covering her eyes features in the publicity campaign for the play. What can you tell about the play from this STC poster image of the play?
5. Boy actors played female roles in Shakespeare's time. What do you think of the director of this production's decision to have Bianca, Kate's beautiful younger sister played by a male actor?

Questions for students who have read the play

shrew – a brawling, troublesome woman

What does the title tell you about the play?

1. Re-read Act I in your group. Find
 - a. a quote that shows Petruchio's reason for seeking a wife.
 - b. a quote that shows the reason Petruchio isn't worried about Kate's shrewish reputation.
 - c. 3 words that describe Kate in an unattractive way.

Write a journal entry in which you reflect on your first impression of Petruchio and the attitudes to women you are seeing in the text. (250 words)

2. Read Act 2 in your group. Then
 - a. describe in your own words Petruchio's plan.
 - b. Find an example of Kate's temper. Describe the situation briefly in your own words.
 - c. What is the criterion which Baptista decides to use to choose Bianca's husband?

Write a journal entry in which you reflect on your impressions of Kate and the attitudes to women and marriage you saw in the text. (250 words)

3. What expectations do you have for Shakespeare's problem play/comedy in production now you have read scenes from the play?

4. With a partner, write a BRIEF summary of the plot (story line). You may use bullet points for this if you wish. Do not use more than 1 page for this.

Discuss the following questions about Katharine and write your answers in point form:

- a. How would you describe her character at the beginning of the play?
- b. How would you describe her character at the end of the play?
- c. What methods does Petruchio use to bring about a change in Katharine?

For each question find a quotation to support your point.

- d. What is your opinion of Katharine?
- e. What do you think was Shakespeare's attitude to women, according to his characterisation of Katharine?

5. How do you predict some of the following stage properties will be employed in this production?

Props List

Induction

Five leashes, ropes around shoulder?
Single feather
Empty bottle

I.i

Pencil case and bag for Lucentio
Bunch of feathers for Bianca
Glasses for Tranio
3 legged stool

I.ii

Petruchio bag, suitcase
Pocketknife
Hortensio shopping bags
Doorkey
Shopping includes leafy vegies
French sticks
Kiwi fruit
Doormat---benvenuto?
Lucentio textbooks including Ovid's
Ars Amores
Tranio 2 bottles wine

II.i

Hoop and stick for Kate
Pack of cards
Old fashioned revolver.
Extra glasses for schoolteachers
Instrument for Hortensio...probably
guitar
Music stand attached?
Need 2, one made into a hat for later.
Packet of cards
Magnetic fishing set
3 cup and ball trick
Remote for power point presentation
Other equipment for it (???)
Notes to Bianca from Hortensio and
Lucentio

III.ii

Bridal veil
Bouquet...feathers?
Holy water dispenser, someone
holding up a shell? A tin can?

Chief's headdress
Coaster
Confetti

IV.i

Old radio
Old tiny radiator
Doylies
Servo flowers
Tablecloth
2 X Pizza in box, gets thrown
OR...maybe tinned food, corn, beef
jerky...
jug of water
kid's toy dustpan and brush
blanket (round Kate)

IV.ii

Pull-on light cord

IV.iii

Big hard-back cookery book in Italian
Swivelling bar stool?
Hot chips in paper (get eaten)
If not allowed, corn chips but not as
good.
Tailor and Milliner equipment
Suitbag?
Toolbelts?
Measures?
Pile of hats?

IV.v

Tumbleweed
Old map
Reins
Hobby horses?
Fake beard for Andrew

IV.v

All wearing head-gear
Whisky
Tequila
Lemon
Salt
Odd glasses
Corn chips?

After seeing the production, explore these questions:

Questions for students who hadn't read the play

1. Represent what you consider to be the main theme of the play in any form you wish.
 - Is it Petruchio who needs “taming”?
 - Is it believable that Kate's character changes so quickly and so dramatically?
 - How is Kate like a coin?
 - How is Petruchio like a magician?
 2. What expectations did you have before seeing this production? What changed for you after seeing it?
 3. Find print advertisements for the current anti-domestic violence campaign – or record the television community announcement. Do you think Petruchio would be reported to the police or other authorities for his behaviour today?
 4. *Direction* – What do you think was the vision of the director and his interpretation of the play. (The role of the director of a theatrical production not only includes finding the best actors for the play, creating truthful and believable performances, and building an effective ensemble, but also defining a particular vision for the text.)
 5. *Design* - What mood does the set evoke from the out-set of the play? How does this alter at different times in the production? Sketch Genevieve Dugard's set.
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Questions for students who had read the play

1. Select a monologue to be memorised and performed for the class. Read through it very carefully. Seek clarification on any parts of the speech you do not understand.

Rewrite your monologue in modern language.

Create a mindmap about your character. Show what you know about your character's personality, background, beliefs and attitudes, appearance etc.

Design a costume for your character. Label your diagram clearly and provide explanations for your choices. Provide a swatch of fabric for your costume and attach it to your design.

Rehearse your monologue. Decide how you are going to move, use the space, incorporate body language, voice, props etc.

Perform the monologue for the class.

2. Discuss the impact the actor doublings/triplings had on the audience's experience of the play.

3. How did the actors use the space to convey the shifts in character and narrative and time?

Act III Scene ii

Look at Petruchio's speech, lines 215-232.

Individually write in the stage directions (non-existent in Shakespeare's day) for Kate's actions.

As a group, decide whose stage directions work best and prepare a presentation for the class.

You can be either Petruchio OR Kate OR the director if your 'reading' is chosen.

4. How does lighting contribute to the mood of the scenes? What effect do these lighting states achieve? List some that were used.

5. How does music and other sound design elements contribute to the production?

Bibliography

Text

The original text used was the Arden edition of *The Taming of the Shrew*, which was then edited by the director, Rachel McDonald.

Filmography

10 Things I Hate About You – a modern appropriation of *The Taming of the Shrew*

Web Sites

www.sydneytheatre.com.au - Sydney Theatre Company

You can also send us your feedback on the productions you have seen, e-mail our archivist for specific information you may be searching for or check the date and time of a performance.

www.rsc.org.uk – Royal Shakespeare Company

Contains extensive information and recourses on all of Shakespeare's plays

<http://www.shakespeares-globe.org/> - Shakespeare's Globe