Theatre Company at IU South Bend
Ernestine M. Raclin School of the Arts
2013-14

Student Guide

King Lear by William Shakespeare

Directed by Justin Amellio and Randy Colborn
**Enjoying the Play**

**Engagement:** the ability to focus entirely on the task at hand.

**Encounter:** can only occur if one is engaged. It is often defined as a conflict. Since plays are filled with characters that talk differently than us and are engaged with situations and issues distinct from our own, and we are taking time away from our lives to focus on the imaginary ones of characters in a play, it is quite easy to see where the heart of the conflict lies if we want to encounter a work of art. That is particularly so with a work of art that is being enacted with words and actions live in a theatre.

What to wear? First, do not let your wardrobe keep you from seeing a play. What you choose to wear is not as important as the fact that you have chosen to come. Of course, bear in mind that people that choose to go to the theatre are all utterly fascinating.

What is it that makes them, and you, so utterly fascinating? It is the willingness to challenge yourself to see and hear a group of people endeavor to work as a team in the telling of a story for a couple of hours. It is also your willingness to socialize with the play and players, rather than those sitting around you in the house (the seats in the house of the auditorium or any performance space).

Remember that most of those you will be seeing on the stage are fellow students. While there is a chance they might seem more to you, that “moreness” will be in direct proportion to their abilities to be engaged in what it is they are trying to accomplish. The rehearsal and production process is all about endeavoring to foster that engagement, but there are no guarantees. The universal thing for to understand or appreciate about it is: they will all have worked very hard. Of course, the true measure of work is what is produced of that work. Yet, some of the students that you will see performing, including those running lights or doing the other important production activities might be freshman, or sophomores. They will all be in process as students.

So, engagement is a concept for both those engaged in creating the theatrical event and for you; those seeing and hearing the play. That is absolutely true.

Plays are stories which are enacted by actors for an audience. Plays, even funny ones, are about people in trouble. It is why we read and watch stories about other people; fiction, non-fiction, etc.

In seeing and hearing a play we get to see how people solve their troubles or problems. That trouble, as it is for you and your troubles or problems, is a relative term. That means that what one (or more) perceives as trouble is from their perspective. It is a problem to them even though it might not be everyone else’s problem. In a play the problems are very large to the characters engaged in trying to solve them, or run away from them, or however it is that they deal with their problems. The problems are large enough that they compromise the abilities of the characters to do much else, even if they want to or would rather be doing that something else. And if the characters in a play try to avoid or run away from the problems or troubles they will not successful. That may be the most striking difference between a play and “real” life. We are sometimes able to avoid or run away from trouble or problems in “real” life. But we are not always successful with such an approach. Plays are about those kinds of problem, or troubles, or times. Even if in hindsight they turn out to be not such significant troubles or problems.

So, for actor and the rest of the crew have two problems: to do a play about a bunch of characters in trouble with problems, and to do it in front of an audience. It is very easy for them to worry too much about you “liking” them and how they enact the story to the detriment of the story itself. The key for those working on the play is to focus or engage with the problems the characters in the play are dealing
with and allow you to see and hear them doing so. You have it a bit easier in that you have to allow
yourself to see and hear the play and consider how these characters are dealing with their troubles or
problems. But, it is only a bit easier.

You have a life going on outside the theatre. You also cannot rewind or pause the story, or turn up the
volume. You also have to be disciplined: on time to the production; go to the restroom before the curtain
(the start of the play) and/or at intermission (breaks in the production when the lights in the house (the
seats in the auditorium) come up; get back to your seat in the ten or so minutes of the intermission, etc.

A play is a live event. A live event demands your presence and engagement. What is presence? It starts
with your willingness to set aside all else for a couple of hours. Think of it as that rare opportunity when
you choose to turn off your cell phone for a bit of time. Can you do it? If you are utterly fascinating, you
can. You should try to do it in all of your classes and see what happens.

Theatre means seeing place. That comes from the Ancient Greeks. Fortunately, in your seat you are
facing the stage. You are free to choose to look around, and chat with others sitting around you, even
during the performance. Instead, you choose to give over to the fact that you are facing toward the stage
and give over your attention to what you are seeing and hearing. You do have the power and ability to do
that.

There are two key parts to this enterprise: 1) up there on-stage; and 2) you out here, the audience. When
you go to a play you are really going to three different things: a play, a specific production of that play,
and a specific performance of that production.

When people attend a live theatrical performance for the first time they often do not realize how different
such an experience is from watching a movie or television program. Because the performers and the
audience are in the same place, they are creating the event together. Different really can be better. But
sometimes it is just different. What is wrong with that?

A live presentation such as a play is riskier for the actors and more exciting for the audience. The actors
don't have the luxury of leaving mistakes on the editing room floor, and each performance that the
audience sees is unique, depending upon the audience's reaction, the interaction of the players and even
the mood of each actor for that particular performance. The role the audience plays in creating the
atmosphere for the performance cannot be overemphasized. The more the audience gives, the more the
actors can give to their roles, enhancing the audiences understanding and enjoyment of the play. Because
of this impact by the audience upon the actors, the following general guidelines are suggested:

  Expect a play to relate in some way to real-life experiences.

  Even if they are presented in unfamiliar ways there will be familiar relationships, characters, and
  situations.

  Pay attention to the interdependent relationship that develops between the audience and the
  performers on stage. They work together to create that particular performance, a performance that
  will never happen again. You are part of the creative process.

  Become involved in the production. Try to block out annoyances such as fatigue or hard seats,
  and try not to let feelings about a particular performer, or the style of the set or costumes, distract
  you. Theatre artists work hard to integrate the production so that you can appreciate all of the
  elements as a whole.
Relax. Listen and watch. Be glad that you are taking the opportunity to watch someone else trying to deal with what life throws at them. Trust that if you miss something, anything, that you will be able to discern it in later moments of the action of the play. If you keep you focus on the stage and off yourself, you will have accomplished much. You can do that for a couple of hours.

About the playwright

William Shakespeare is considered by many to be the greatest writer in the history of English literature. He just happened to be playwright and poet. For one so well known, we actually know little about Shakespeare’s life. What few details we have come from church records, land titles, and the written opinions of others.

In the book titled *Will in the World*, by Stephen Greenblatt, the author found that Shakespeare actually purchased his Coat of Arms. In Elizabethan England, a person was able to purchase a Coat of Arms “found” and approved by the government. In reality, someone created the Coat and it had little historical significance.

It is assumed that Shakespeare was born on April 23, 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon, England because he was christened on April 26, 1564. The tradition was to christen the baby three days after birth. In 1582, at the age of eighteen, Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway. Anne was approximately four years older than William. Four years later, Shakespeare left for London, where there was already an established theater community, to make his way. By 1595, Shakespeare was named as one of the senior members of the Lord Chamberlain’s Men, an acting company that performed frequently before the king. This was no small accomplishment; the prominent theater company later became, under James I, the King’s Men, making Shakespeare an official playwright to the King.

By 1596, Shakespeare was successful enough as a playwright that his family was granted (purchased) a Coat of Arms, allowing Shakespeare to be called a “gentleman.” One year later, Shakespeare became a ten percent owner of the new Globe Theatre where so many of his plays would later be performed. By 1611, Shakespeare retired, returned to Stratford. He died on April 23, 1616.

**Why is Shakespeare Important? Or is he?**

“There is of course the great problem—to be able to be like Shakespeare— create all kinds of different people quite unlike oneself.”

—Iris Murdoch

Yes, he is important. We would be very different if not for him and his ideas exemplified by the characters he created particularly through what they say and do within the plays. Even if you have never read or seen a Shakespeare play or read or heard one of his poems, you have been informed by him. His work is the most quoted in all forms of media, even if you did not know that he was being quoted, and even if it was done so indirectly. He is inescapable.

Shakespeare’s plays are based upon the stories of others, including earlier plays. What makes his work distinctive or universal, at least to me, but also found by others, is that his characters seem to live and grow within the plays. For both good and bad those characters create the world they live in as they struggle against whatever problems they encounter.

Harold Bloom, an eminent Literary Critic, including Shakespeare, states that Shakespeare is the original psychologist. It is hard to argue that point when you can find extensive references to Shakespeare’s characters in the works of the founders of modern psychology such as Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and
many others. I could go on, and while it seems a bit like saying “because,” Shakespeare is important because he is important. He is so prevalent that, like him, love him, or loath him, ignoring his work is simply not an option.

**London—then & now**

London: A crammed commercial huddle that smells of the river. In 1600 the population of London was 200,000 (75,000 inside the Walls of London). It is over 8 million now and the wall is barely visible.

The Thames was everybody’s highway. You crossed normally by boat and there was commerce on the river. Chained to the banks there were sometimes criminals. The streets were narrow, made of cobble stones, slippery with the slime of garbage. Houses were crammed together and there were many alleys. Chamber pots were emptied out of windows and there was no drainage. But, the City had its natural cleansers—the kites, graceful birds that made their nests of rags and refuse.

Countering the bad, man-made odors, the smells of the countryside floated in. It was a city of loud noises—hooves and coach wheels on the stones, the shouts or tells of traders, the brawling of apprentices. Even normal conversation must have been loud since everybody was tipsy. Nobody drank water. Coffee and tea were barely on the horizon, becoming widely used in approximately 1667. Ale was the standard beverage and it was strong. Ale for breakfast was a widely used means for starting the day. The better sort drank wine, which promoted friendship and sword fights. It was not a sober city.

**About the Play:**

“No man will ever write a better tragedy than Lear.”-George Bernard Shaw

The Tragedy of King Lear was written by William Shakespeare sometime between 1603 and 1606. Why the discrepancy? Well, there are allusions in the play which seem to place it closer to 1603, but the publication of *The True Chronicle History of King Leir* (by Anonymous) was not published until 1605. But, the argument often goes further that Shakespeare’s Lear launched the impetus for Leir. Does it matter that we are unsure? The answer to that question depends upon whom you ask.

After disposing of his estate between two of his three daughters, King Lear descends into madness.

The play is based on the legend of Leir of Britain, a mythological pre-Roman Celtic king.

**CHARACTERS**

LEAR, King of Britain
GONERIL } daughters
REGAN } to Lear
CORDELIA }

EARL OF KENT
Lear's FOOL

EARL OF GLOUCESTER
EDGAR, son to Gloucester
EDMUND, bastard son to Gloucester
CURAN, gentleman of Gloucester's household
KING OF FRANCE; becomes Cordelia’s husband  
DUKE OF BURGUNDY; a possible suitor to Cordelia

DUKE OF CORNWALL, husband to Regan  
DUKE OF ALBANY, husband to Goneril  
OSWALD, steward to Goneril

OLD MAN, tenant to Gloucester  
DOCTOR

HERALD  
KNIGHTS attending on Lear, OFFICERS, CAPTAINS, GENTLEMEN, MESSENGERS, SOLDIERS, SERVANTS, ATTENDANTS

Synopsis

In Britain, King Lear, in old age, chooses to retire and divide up Britain between his three daughters. However, he declares that they must first be wed before being given the land. He asks his daughters the extent of their love for him. The two oldest, Goneril and Regan, both flatter him with praise and are rewarded generously with land and marriage to the Duke of Albany and the Duke of Cornwall, respectively. Lear's youngest and most beloved daughter, Cordelia, refuses to flatter her father, going only so far as to say that she loves him as much as a daughter should. Lear, unjustly enraged, gives her no land. The Earl of Kent tries to convince Lear to reconsider, but Lear refuses then banishes Kent for acting traitorously by supporting Cordelia. Gloucester then brings the King of France and the Duke of Burgundy in and Lear offers Cordelia to Burgundy, though without a dowry of land, contrary to a previous agreement. Burgundy declines, but the French King, impressed by Cordelia's steadfastness, takes her as Queen of France. Next, Lear passes all powers and governance of Britain down to Albany and Cornwall.

Edmund, bastard son of Gloucester, vows to himself to reclaim land his father has given to his "legitimate" son Edgar. Edmund does this by showing his father a letter he (Edmund) forged, which makes it seem that Edgar wants to take over his father's lands and revenues jointly with Edmund. Gloucester is enraged, but Edmund calms him. Later, Edmund warns Edward that he is in trouble with his father, pretending to help him.

Goneril instructs her steward, Oswald, to act coldly to King Lear and his knights, in efforts to chide him since he continues to grow more unruly. Kent arrives, disguised as a servant, and offers his services to Lear, who accepts. However, as a result of the servants' lack of respect for Lear, his own fool's derisions of him, and Goneril's ill respect toward him, Lear storms out of Goneril's home, never to look on her again. Lear goes next to Regan's house. While leaving, the fool again criticizes Lear for giving his lands to his daughters. Lear fears he (himself) is becoming insane.

At Gloucester's castle, Edmund convinces Edgar to flee, then wounds himself to make it look like Edgar attacked him. Gloucester, thankful for Edmund's support of him, vows to capture Edgar and reward Edmund. Regan and Cornwall arrive to discuss with Albany their ensuing war against Lear. Kent arrives at Gloucester's with a message from Lear and meets Oswald (whom Kent dislikes and mistrusts) with a message from Goneril. Kent attacks Oswald, but Cornwall and Regan break up the fight, after which Kent is put in the stocks for 24 hours. Edgar, still running, tells himself he must disguise himself as a beggar. King Lear arrives, finding Kent in the stocks. At first, Regan and Cornwall refuse to see Lear, further enraging him, but then they allow him to enter. Oswald and Goneril arrive, and Lear becomes further enraged. After Regan and Goneril chide Lear to the brink, he leaves Gloucester's castle, entering a storm.
The daughters and Cornwall are glad he leaves, though Gloucester is privately concerned for his health. In the storm, Kent sends a man to Dover to get Cordelia and her French forces to rescue Lear and help him fight Albany and Cornwall. Lear stands in the storm swearing at it and his daughters, but Kent convinces him to hide in a cave. Gloucester tells Edmund of the French forces and departs for Lear, but Edmund plans to betray his father and inform Cornwall of the proceedings. Kent finds Lear, nearly delirious, in the storm, and tries to take him into the cave. Just then, Edgar emerges from the cave, pretending to be a madman. Lear likes him and refuses to go into the cave. Gloucester arrives (not recognizing Edgar), and convinces them all to go to a farmhouse of his. Edmund, as promised, informs Cornwall of Gloucester's dealings with the French army. Cornwall vows to arrest Gloucester and name Edmund the new Duke of Gloucester.

At the farmhouse, Lear, growing more insane, pretends his two eldest daughters are on trial for betraying him. Edgar laments that the King's predicament makes it difficult to keep up his (Edgar's) charade, out of sympathy for the King's madness. Gloucester returns and convinces Lear, Kent, and the fool to flee because Cornwall plans to kill him. Cornwall captures Gloucester and with Regan cheering him on, plucks out Gloucester's eyeballs with his bare fingers. During the torture, Gloucester's servant rescues his master from Cornwall and they flee to Dover to meet the French. On the way there, Gloucester and the servant meet Edgar (still a madman, named Poor Tom), who leads his father (Gloucester) the rest of the way.

At Albany's palace, Goneril promises her love to Edmund, since her husband (Albany) refuses to fight the French. Albany believes that the daughters mistreated their father (Lear). A messenger brings news that Cornwall is dead, from a fatal jab he received when a servant attacked him while he was plucking out Gloucester's eyeballs. Albany, feeling sorry for Gloucester and learning of Edmund's treachery with his wife, vows revenge.

At Dover, Cordelia sends a sentry out to find her estranged father. Regan instructs Oswald (Goneril's servant) to tell Edmund that she (Regan) wants to marry him, since Cornwall is dead. Edgar pretends to let Gloucester jump off a cliff (Gloucester believes it truly happened), then Edgar pretends to be a different man and continues to help his father. Lear, fully mad now, approaches and speaks to them. Cordelia's men arrive and take Lear to her. Oswald comes across Edgar and Gloucester, threatening to kill them. Edgar, though, kills Oswald, and discovers by letter that Goneril plants to murder Albany and marry Edmund. At Cordelia's camp, King Lear awakes, more sane than before, and recognizes Cordelia.

At her camp, Goneril, while arguing with Albany, states to herself that she would rather lose the battle than let Regan marry Edmund. Edgar, disguised, brings warning of ill plots (by Goneril) to Albany. Lear and Cordelia are captured in battle by Edmund. Edmund sends them to jail and instructs a Captain to kill them. Edgar arrives and fights and wounds Edmund, who admits his treacheries to all. Goneril mortally poisons Regan, then stabs herself. Edmund reveals that he and Regan ordered the Captain to hang Cordelia and kill Lear. Lear then emerges with dead Cordelia, and tells all he killed the Captain that hung her. Edmund dies and King Lear, in grief over Cordelia, dies.

**Let there be blood!**

*King Lear* is going to be filled with violence and blood. But, everything you see on stage has been carefully planned and practiced.

Each production of *King Lear* uses GALLONS of fake stage blood. It’s expensive! One gallon of stage blood can cost about $75 dollars.
According to Aimee Cole, Costume Shop Supervisor at IU South Bend, after the blood is bought, or made, the costume designer will test it on some of the costumes the actors will wear. If the blood stains the fabrics, it can ruin a costume!

Stage blood can be used in a variety of ways. It can be applied like make-up with a sponge, contained in a blood packs (if someone is getting stabbed), or blood capsules (if someone is getting punched in mouth).

In the Alfred Hitchcock movie, Psycho, and Martin Scorsese’s Raging Bull, chocolate syrup was used instead of blood because the movie was in black and white.

**Make Your Own Stage Blood**

**Ingredients:**
- one ounce of red food coloring
- one pint of clear corn syrup
- teaspoon of yellow food coloring to adjust the color
- about one ounce of water

**Directions:**
1. Combine all ingredients in a large bowl.
2. Mix with large spoon.
3. If necessary, add one to three ounces of clear dish soap to make the blood runny.

It usually washes out of clothes and won't stain skin except the palms of your hands.

**STAGE COMBAT**

Did you know that the fighting you see on stage is very similar to what dancers do? Both dancing and stage fighting are choreographed. Every movement is planned and practiced to make sure that actors do not hurt themselves or others and to make sure the fighting still looks real. This is part of the illusion of stage combat. Actors are trained and coached, much like athletes, and they practice the fight every night before the performance.

Every time you watch a movie or TV show that has fighting, you are watching a planned fight. Watch your favorite TV shows or movies and see if you can pick out the different steps that make up a fight. Do you think choreographing a fight is difficult? Why or why not? How is it similar to dancing?

**ADAPTATION; Context**

Whether it is set in the 1950s, during the Civil War, or in outer space, the context of a play is important to everyone involved. It allows actors, directors, and designers to make specific choices about language, costumes, sets, music, and lighting. It also allows the audience to learn more about a certain period.

This production is an adaptation of the play King Lear by Shakespeare. An adaptation is essentially the same story, but the director has changed pieces to fit their artistic vision. Shakespeare’s plays have been adapted many times in books, other plays, and movies. Here are some examples (there are actually many, many more possibilities):

Starring Jessica Lang and Michelle Pfeiffer, A Thousand Acres (1997) is an adaptation of King Lear set on a Midwestern farm in the late 1970s. The movie is based on a best-selling novel by Jane Smiley and won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1991.
Starring Mekhi Phifer, Josh Hartness, and Julia Stiles, *O* (2001) is an adaptation of Othello. The characters are high school students at an almost exclusively white boarding school.

Starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Clare Danes, *Romeo + Juliet* (1996) is an adaptation of the play by the same name. The characters are wealthy teenagers who battle with guns instead of swords.

Starring Heath Ledger and Julia Stiles, *10 Things I Hate About You* (1999)… is an adaptation of the play *The Taming of the Shrew*. The majority of the characters names and locations are the same, as is the movie’s plot.

Starring Amanda Bynes and Channing Tatum, *She’s the Man* (2006) is an adaptation of Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night, or What You Will*. Set in a preppy high school, Bynes dresses as her brother in order to play soccer.

Starring Natalie Wood (who doesn’t sing her own songs), *West Side Story* (1961) is a musical adaptation of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*. In the film, the feuding families are portrayed as fighting street gangs.

**King Lear on Film**

*King Lear* (1971): Peter Brook’s version, shot bleakly in black and white, captures on film the performance of Paul Scofield, considered one of the best Lear in history.


*Korol Lir* (1969): This Russian film by Grigori Kozintsev, with music by Dmitri Shostakovich, is considered one of the best adaptations of the King Lear story.

*King Lear* (1987): Jean-Luc Godard made Lear a gangster named Don Learo and cast Molly Ringwald as Cordelia.

*King Lear* (1984): Sir Lawrence Olivier was in his 80s when he did this BBC-TV production of the play. John Hurt portrays the Fool and Diana Rigg is Regan.


**EXPLORING THE TEXT**

“England has two books, one which she has made and one which has made her: Shakespeare and the Bible.”

-Victor Hugo

"Shakespear[sic] is a drunken savage with some imagination whose plays please only in London and Canada."

-Voltaire

**KING LEAR, the basics**

Tragedy=Goat Song?
Tragedy: The derivation of the word 'tragedy' is uncertain. The word may come from the two Greek words tragos (goat) and oide (song). It has been said that before it is slaughtered, a goat will tell the story of its life by singing or crying. The cries sound like a human voice.

What makes a tragedy so tragic?

TRAGIC HERO
All tragedies have a “tragic hero”, or main character who is put into a situation of conflict which he must resolve. A combination of bad luck and misjudgment lead to the hero's death. In classical Greek works, the tragic hero is always male.

A WARNING
All tragic heroes are warned in one way or another. Often times, there is foreshadowing of this event by fortunetellers or blind characters who are considered wise.

TRAGIC FLAW
All tragic heroes have a flawed nature or blind spot that leads to their downfall. For most, it is pride, or hubris.

HIGH STATUS
The tragic hero is always of high social status, whether he is a king, a prince, or an army general.

The images in Shakespeare’s language are expressions of the character’s state of mind at that moment. Thousands of books have been written about this subject. Shakespeare’s characters speak what they are thinking, and they communicate much of the time through imagery. The imagery is often a very strong clue to who the character is. Shakespeare’s characters use imagery far more than do the characters in modern plays. They need to express themselves through images.

Vocabulary

“Don't use words too big for the subject. Don't say "infinitely" when you mean "very"; otherwise you'll have no word left when you want to talk about something really infinite.” -C.S. Lewis

Here is some vocabulary from King Lear:

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VERSE & PROSE

Shakespeare’s plays were written in a combination of Verse and Prose.

Verse

Blank Verse refers to unrhymed iambic pentameter. Blank verse resembles prose in that the final words of the lines do not rhyme. Unlike prose, there is a recognizable meter: most lines are in iambic pentameter. (See Below)

Rhymed verse in Shakespeare’s plays is usually in rhymed couplets, two successive lines of verse of which the final words rhyme with one another.

Prose

Prose refers to ordinary speech with no regular pattern of rhythm or rhyme. If you are unsure if a passage is in prose or in blank verse, look for the following visual clue: a long passage in prose is typically printed in your text like an ordinary paragraph.

Standard rules of capitalization are followed:
only proper nouns (names and place names), the pronoun "I" and the first letter of a new sentence are capitalized.

Iambic Pentameter

What exactly do these words mean?

Iamb: A poetic unit with one unstressed syllable followed by one stressed syllable, as in the word “a/fraid.” It sounds sort of like a heartbeat: daDUM.

Pentameter: Ten syllables or beats in each line. This means iambic rhythm is repeated five times, or has five feet per line: daDUM daDUM daDUM daDUM daDUM.

Confused?

• A typical line of verse has 5 units of meter, or feet.
• Each foot contains two syllables.
• When the first syllable is stressed and the second syllable is unstressed, it is called iambic pentameter. When read correctly, the rhythm of iambic pentameter is similar to the human heartbeat. It also follows a natural speech pattern.
We often speak in 10 syllable phrases. So, making characters speak in it more often accomplishes what sets a play apart from real life: we often do it, so why not make characters in plays do it with far more regularity?

In looking at the text of King Lear you will find examples of verse and prose. And you will also find characters shifting between the two. Some characters speak more in one than the other. Which characters say which lines? And when? Why do they speak the way they do when they do it?

**Showing Status**
The upper class usually speaks in verse while commoners speak in prose. Why do you think that is? What does it mean when/if they switch?

**RHYMED VERSE** is often used for ritualistic or choral effects or in highly lyrical passages that give advice or a moral. Rhyme is used for songs, in Prologues, Epilogues and Choruses, and in plays within plays, to distinguishes the imaginary performances from the "real world" of the play. It is also used for the supernatural, but not for ghosts.

**BLANK VERSE** is used mainly for passionate, lofty or momentous occasions and for introspection. Many of Shakespeare's famous speeches are written in blank verse.

**PROSE** is used whenever verse would seem strange: in serious letters, in proclamations, and in the speeches of characters actually or pretending to be mad -verse is apparently too regular and orderly for expressing madness!
Prose is used for cynical commentary and for exposition. It is used for scenes of everyday life and for relaxed conversation.

**SHAKESPEARE IN YOUR OWN WORDS**

Sometimes, it can be scary to read Shakespeare because of the amount of unfamiliar words. However, if you take your time, you’ll see that Shakespeare isn’t THAT difficult.

Let it be so. Thy truth, then, be thy dower, For by the sacred radiance of the sun, The mysteries of Hecate and the night, By all the operations of the orbs From whom we do exist and cease to be, Here I disclaim all my paternal care, Propinquity, and property of blood, And as a stranger to my heart and me Hold thee from this forever. The barbarous Scythian, Or he that makes his generation messes To gorge his appetite, shall to my bosom Be as well neighbored, pitied, and relieved As thou my sometimes daughter.

Paraphrase(King Lear speaking to Cordelia):
That’s decides it. What you said/did will determine your marriage bargain. By the holy and unwavering brightness of the light of day, and the unholy beings and shadows of night, and all that gives us life and death, I cease all fatherly responsibility, feelings, obligations, and end our relationship and all that comes with it, forever. The worst of all other beings shall be greeted and treated by me the same as you, former daughter.

-(King Lear I.I)
Characters relating

“Family love is messy, clinging, and of an annoying and repetitive pattern, like bad wallpaper.”

- Friedrich Nietzsche

The story of King Lear is about two families:

**Family 1; King Lear**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daughter</th>
<th>Marital Partner</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goneril, married to</td>
<td>Regan, married to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duke of Albany</td>
<td>Duke of Cornwall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cordelia, married to</td>
<td>King of France</td>
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**Family 2; Duke of Gloucester**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Son</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edgar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edmund</td>
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King Lear is a story about two families and the power each person has over the others. Lear has three daughters, while Gloucester has two sons. Each of the children have different characteristics which set them apart from each other.

In the early 20th century, a psychologist named Alfred Adler did a study of birth order characteristics. Using his findings, Adler tried to predict the characteristics of a child by its position in the family. For example, if the child is the oldest, it might have a lot of responsibility, but be bossy. Here is a list of birth positions and the characteristics and family situations of each:

**Only Child:**

Since parents have no prior experience with kids, an only child will have ALL the attention. He or she may become spoiled or can be over-protected. He or she likes being the center of attention and has difficulty sharing.

**Oldest Child:**

Parents have high expectations for the oldest child. The oldest has to learn to share, is expected to set an example for the other children, and is given responsibility. The oldest may become authoritarian or strict. He or she feels power is his or her right to have. They can be helpful if encouraged.

**Middle Child:**

This child may feel squeezed out of a position of significance or privilege. They could be even tempered or may have trouble finding their place. They could become a fighter of injustice.

**Youngest Child:**

This child never loses the spotlight. Many of his or her siblings act as teachers. This child wants to be bigger than the others and is frequently spoiled. This child will ALWAYS be the baby and may make plans that never work out.

**Family power**
What is a family? There are many different definitions of FAMILY. Just ask any of your friends. Every one of them will probably have a different answer. Traditionally, a family is thought to be made of a father, mother, and children. Aunts and uncles, cousins, and grandparents are considered extended family.

Although this may not describe your family that does not mean your family isn’t normal. Every family is unique. Some families only have a mom OR a dad. Others have two moms or two dads. Some are run by grandparents or god parents, while others are foster families.

Sometimes, a brother or sister is the head of the family.

Take a look at the families in King Lear. Even in Shakespeare’s time, these families were non-traditional. Otherwise, Shakespeare would not have written about them or chosen them to tell this story. What do you think? In Lear’s family, the daughters have no mother. The same is true in Gloucester’s family. There are no mothers in the play. Sometimes what is not in a play is as important as what is in a play.

Kent acts as a god parent to Cordelia. Are these families normal? Is there such a thing as a “normal family?”

Who is More Important—a Duke or an Earl?
A Duke. Besides kings and princes are five levels of nobility in Great Britain. A Duke is a nobleman of the highest hereditary rank. Below the title of Duke are Marquess, Earl, Viscount, and Baron.

Legitimate Edgar vs. Illegitimate Edmund
Edmund is the illegitimate, or bastard, son of the Earl of Gloucester. This means that Gloucester was not married to Edmund’s mother when he was born — quite a scandal, especially in Shakespeare’s time. Because of this technicality of his birth he has no status within his family or society, and lives only by the charity of his titled father. His older brother Edgar is the legitimate son of Gloucester, meaning that Edgar was born within the bonds of marriage. Being the legitimate son, Edgar will inherit his father’s title. Edmund can never inherit — unless Edgar either dies or is disinherited by his father.

What’s a Fool?
A Fool or jester is a type of clown mostly associated with the royal courts of the Middle Ages. Fools wore brightly colored clothing in a motley pattern — a patchwork of red, blue and green diamonds. Their hats, called the “cap’ n ’bells” or “coxcomb”, were especially distinctive; made of cloth, they were floppy with three points. At the end of each point hung a jingle bell. The three points of the hat represent the asses’ ears and tail worn by jesters in earlier times. Fools also carried a mock scepter, known as a bauble or marotte.

The earliest written description of a Fool was of a dancing dwarf brought to the Egyptian Pharaoh’s court circa 2100 B.C. Dwarves and hunchbacks became very popular as jesters. A Fool could get away with saying just about whatever was on his mind. As Jester Shi, who served the Duke of Xian in seventh-century B.C. China, once said, “I am a jester, my words cannot give offense.” Fools tended to reveal things as they really are, and this is what set them apart from other court entertainers. Very often a Fool had talent for music or poetry, and made his point through ditties and comic verse. He was also responsible for curing a king’s foul mood so that some other member of the court would not lose their head. It was thought that a Fool’s pranks and witty banter brought luck to his noble patron. A good Fool was well treated, respected, and even beloved by his monarch.
The Baron of Muncaster’s jester, Tom Fool, was the inspiration for the Fool in Shakespeare’s *King Lear*, giving the word ‘tomfoolery’ to the English language.

**Mental illness**

In the story of *King Lear*, Lear develops a mental illness and, by the end of the play, has gone completely mad. Here are a few different types of mental illness and ways that doctors attempt to treat people with them.

**Clinical Depression**

A serious condition which affects 9.9 million American adults. Twice as many women suffer from it than men. All ethnic and racial groups are affected.

**Symptoms:**
- Sadness for a long period of time
- Major changes in sleep, appetite, and energy
- Feelings of guilt or emptiness
- Thoughts of death or suicide
- Difficulty thinking or concentrating
- Lack of interest in activities that were once enjoyed

**Causes:** No single cause for depression; it is a biological brain disorder caused by a chemical imbalance.

**Treatment:** Depression is easily treatable with medication (Prozac, Zoloft, Lexapro). Different styles of therapy (family, group, behavioral) are also effective, especially when used with medication.

**Bipolar Disorder**

A serious brain disorder that causes extreme shifts in mood and energy. Affects 2.3 million adults in the US and can run in families. It is a life-long condition which often begins in early adulthood.

**Symptoms:**
- Decreased sleep
- Increase activity or energy
- Either very happy or very angry
- Faster thinking than normal
- Poor judgment
- Depression

**Causes:** A chemical imbalance in the brain. Some people have a genetic pre-disposition to the disorder.

**Treatment:** There is no cure for bipolar disorder, but it is treatable and manageable. Medication, such as lithium, is used. Therapy (interpersonal, family) can be used. If the person also suffers from depression, which can be part of bipolar disorder, anti-depressants can be used to treat a depressive episode.

**Attention-Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**

A condition characterized by inattention and hyperactivity, commonly found in young people, but can also be found in adults. One person in every classroom in America has ADHD.

**Symptoms:**
- Failure to pay close attention to details
- Easily distracted
• Forgetful in daily activities
• Fidgets with hands or feet
• Talks excessively
• Interrupts others
• Does not listen when spoken to directly

**Causes:** ADHD is not caused by bad parenting or lack of intelligence. It is a biological disorder with lower activity in areas of the brain that control attention, social judgment, and movement.

**Treatment:** ADHA can be treated with medication (Ritalin, Adderall) and with special therapy.

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**Schizophrenia**

A devastating brain disorder that affects 2.2 million American adults. Schizophrenia interferes with the ability to think clearly, distinguish fantasy from reality, manage emotions, and make decisions. Symptoms emerge in the teenage years. People with this disorder are NOT dangerous or violent towards others when they receive treatment.

**Symptoms:**
• Delusions and hallucinations
• Confused thinking and speech
• Lack of interest
• Repeated rhythmic gestures or slow movement

**Causes:** Unknown, but may be genetic.

**Treatment:** Hospitalization is common along with medications such as Thorazine, Prolinx, Geodon, and Risperdal. These are antipsychotics.

**Medications:**

Prozac, Zoloft, Lexapro—used to treat symptoms of depression, bipolar disorder, panic disorder, and obsessive-compulsive disorder. They act on neurotransmitters (parts of the brain), allowing electrical messages to be processed more smoothly and efficiently. They are taken once a day, either in the morning or evening.

**Side Effects:** Nausea, diarrhea, drowsiness, and dry mouth.

**Prolinx**—helps treat disordered thoughts and other emotional, nervous, and mental problems. Take tablets by mouth with a drink of water. Take with food or milk if it upsets your stomach.

**Side Effects:** Constipation, difficulty sleeping, drowsiness, dry mouth, headache, sexual difficulties, skin rash, and weight gain.

**Adderall**—increase attention and decrease restlessness in patients who are overactive, unable to concentrate for very long or are easily distracted, and have unstable emotions.

**Side Effects:** Anxiety, dry mouth, irregular heartbeat, nervousness, changing moods, shaking, trouble sleeping.

**Lithium**—first approved in the United States in 1970 to treat bipolar disorder. Lithium is used to even out the highs (mania) and lows (depression) in mood associated with bipolar disorder. Lithium has also
been used to treat people with schizophrenia. Lithium should be taken every day in regularly spaced doses.

**Side Effects:** Nausea, loss of appetite, mild diarrhea, weight gain, acne, and skin rashes.

**Therapy**

- **Self-Help Groups** — groups of people suffering from the same illness get together to discuss issues and problems with one another. Great for families as well.

- **Psychotherapy** — meetings with a trained doctor to discuss and counsel a patient and help them adapt to a more normal life.

- **Family Therapy** — meetings with the patient, the family, and a doctor to discuss the progress of both the family and the patient.

- **Rehabilitation** — can help prepare a person to re-enter society in a functional capacity. These programs may include job training, money-management, social skills, basic living skills, supported housing, and even instruction on how to use public transportation.

Mental illness is a disease that you cannot catch from others. It is not a punishment or a weakness and is not related to lifestyles. If you feel that either yourself, a friend, or a family member is suffering from a mental illness find out where you can seek help.

**POWER AND TERRITORY**

In the play *King Lear*, Lear divides his land among his three daughters. Each daughter is to be given a portion of equal size and value. However, as the play continues, Goneril and Regan begin to turn against each other. Why do you think this happens? Is it because of Lear’s actions? Are they jealous of each other’s land, or are they jealous of something completely different?

**The Themes of the Play**

**Divine Justice:** “As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods; they kill us for their sport”

The characters in *King Lear* live in a cruel and seemingly unjust world. Lear and Gloucester’s errors in judgment begin a series of events that make it appear that the greedy and untrustworthy (Goneril, Regan, Cornwall, and Edmund) will be rewarded, while the good (Edgar and Cordelia) will be punished.

The consequences of their mistakes are excessive — Gloucester loses his eyes, and Lear loses his family, his kingdom, and his mind. Justice does triumph, but not without a great cost. The betrayers turn on one another and in the end the wicked characters die. But so do good characters — Gloucester, Cordelia, and Lear himself. Although order is restored, there is no rejoicing at the end of this play.

**Parent-child relationships:** “The younger rises when the old doth fall”

At the center of *King Lear* is the relationship between the two fathers and their children. Both Lear and Gloucester make hasty decisions that lead to the complete breakdown of their families. Each has children that are eager to cast aside the old so that they, the young, can take over. Lear’s favorite is his youngest daughter, Cordelia. It is to her that he plans to give the largest and most choice third of his kingdom.
When Cordelia enrages Lear with her honest and reasonable answer — that she loves her father only according to her bond and that she must split her love between her father and her husband — he feels betrayed and disinherits her. This opens the door for Goneril and Regan to take advantage their elderly father. They would otherwise have had to wait for him to die in order to obtain his kingdom, and according to tradition, only one of them could inherit. Lear’s actions cause his daughters to replace familial love with greed. Thus begins a competition between the sisters that take them all to their graves. They are not satisfied merely retaining their halves of the kingdom, they must also make sure that their father is stripped of all his authority and left with absolutely nothing. They do not seek their father’s love — they seek his position. Once they have his power, they grow impatient with their father, and have no desire to be responsible for his care. They call him “old” at every opportunity. Ultimately, they leave him to wander the heath in the middle of a violent storm, homeless and insane.

Similarly, Gloucester is easily led by Edmund into thinking that his beloved Edgar is plotting his death. Gloucester’s advanced age is the argument given. “I have heard him oft maintain,” the lying Edmund says of his brother, “that sons at perfect age, and fathers declining, the father should be as ward to the son.” The too-trusting Edgar is as gullible as his father when he is convinced to flee his father’s wrath until Edmund has smoothed things over. With Edgar out of the way, the traditional order of the family, with Edgar as heir to Gloucester, is upset. Edmund becomes the preferred son. He, like Goneril and Regan, is not really interested in gaining his father’s love — he seeks the power and title he would normally be denied, and he is willing to do so at the expense of his father’s well-being. Edmund denounces his father as a traitor for helping the former king, and Gloucester’s eyes are plucked out. He is then cast out to wander sightlessly upon the same moors as Lear.

Both men are accountable for the disastrous situations created by their bad choices. Yet it is the betrayed children — Edgar and Cordelia — who bring about the restoration of order. Despite their treatment at the hands of their fathers, they maintain the deep bonds of familial love. Cordelia raises an army in order to reclaim her father’s throne. Edgar, disguised as Poor Tom, guides his father to Dover and prevents him from coming to any more harm. Before they die, Lear and Gloucester are reunited with the children they so rashly cast aside, and receive their forgiveness.

Nature: “These late eclipses in the sun and moon portend no good to us”

Nature and natural phenomena are mentioned throughout King Lear. Since Edmund has no rights under man’s law because he is illegitimate, he calls on Nature to be his law. He uses this speech to begin the series of deceptions that cause the unraveling of his family and hasten the destruction of Lear’s family and kingdom. Early in the play Gloucester talks about the eclipses that have recently occurred as a sign that all is not well in the world: “love cools, friendship falls off, brothers divide: and the bond cracked ‘twixt son and father.” When Lear and Gloucester reject Cordelia and Edgar, the natural order of their family is upset. In Lear’s case, he has put his entire kingdom in danger. Goneril, Regan, and Edmund upset the natural order of their world by betraying their fathers so completely. Their actions toward their fathers, as well as the deadly competition between Goneril and Regan for Edmund, also throw the kingdom into chaos. Nature itself responds with the eclipses and the storm. It is not until Gloucester has lost his eyes and Lear has lost his mind (which represent Gloucester’s blindness and Lear’s lack of wisdom) and they are thrown back into nature to wander about the moors do they begin to truly understand the enormity of their mistakes. “I have no way, and therefore want no eyes,” says Gloucester. “I stumbled when I saw.” Lear cries, “I have taken too little care of this!” A healing begins that reunites them with their wronged children and starts setting the natural order back into place. It is after these reconciliations that things completely fall apart for Goneril, Regan, and Edmund, who pay for the unnatural betrayal of their fathers with their deaths.
IMAGERY

Blindness
Both Gloucester and Lear suffer from an inability to see the truth of their situations. It is not until Gloucester actually loses his eyes and Lear loses his mind that they begin to truly “see”. The words “eye”, “sight”, and “see” are used repeatedly through the play. It is only fitting that they meet near Dover toward the end of the play and commiserate about how their blindness has cost them dearly. “If thou would weep my fortunes, take my eyes,” says Lear.

Storm
The storm works as a symbol on several levels. It is a physical expression of the state of Lear’s world — the country is in complete political disarray and society is out of order — and occurs at the precise moment Lear loses all of his authority. It foreshadows his madness and is a reflection of Lear’s internal confusion. Finally, the violent storm demonstrates the awesome power of nature, which seems to cry out against the events of the play. Its turbulence forces the powerless king to recognize his own mortality and human frailty and to at last develop a sense of humility.

Madness
Madness in the play is associated with both disorder and hidden wisdom. The Fool’s mad babble and nonsense rhymes attempt to drive home the idea that Lear has made a terrible mistake when he split up his kingdom and disinherited Cordelia. Later, when Lear himself goes mad, the turmoil in his mind mirrors the chaos that has descended upon his kingdom. At the same time, his madness leads to wisdom and strips him to his bare humanity. During Lear’s encounter with the blind Gloucester Edgar notes the king’s “reason in madness.” Edgar uses a feigned insanity so that he will not be recognized by Lear, Kent, the Fool and especially, his father. His madness, however, contains bits of insight for Lear, and the king dubs him his “philosopher”. Edgar’s time as a madman cures him of his innocence. It hardens him and prepares him to defeat Edmund at the close of the play.

Animal Imagery
Lear is referred to by the Fool as an ass, a snail, and a hedge sparrow whose head is bit off by its young. These words set him up as the victim he will become. The words used for Goneril and Regan (“detested kite”, “gilded serpent”, “tigers, not daughters”) describe them as predatory animals that, in their unnaturalness, have lost their humanity.

Edgar, as the mad Poor Tom, describes himself to Lear as having been “hog in sloth, fox in stealth, wolf in greediness, dog in madness, lion in prey.” The underhanded Oswald is called a dog, a cur, and a rat.

Questions for Discussion
1. Would you have told King Lear exactly what he wanted to hear at the beginning of the play, or, like Cordelia, would you say what you really thought?

2. One of the themes of the play is Justice. Do you think that everyone in the play got what they deserved? If not, do you think some of the justice in the play is unfair? If so, why do you think it is unfair?

3. Do you think you would have ended the play the same way as Shakespeare, or would you have changed it, like Nahum Tate? What would your ending be?

4. What does the violent storm symbolize? Does it represent in some way what is happening to Lear
and other characters?

5. What was the role of the Fool in the play? How effective do you think he was? Why do monarchs keep a fool in their courts?

6. Is Lear a sympathetic character? Is Gloucester? How do our impressions about them change during the course of the play?

7. What does blindness symbolize in the play? Who in the play is blind?

8. How do the actions of the play effect order in Britain? Is only Lear to blame for this? If not, who else?

9. How does the relationship between Cordelia and Lear compare to the relationship between Gloucester and Edgar?

10. How does nature play a major role in this play?

RESPONDING TO KING LEAR; More in-depth considerations

SCENE 1

1. What is the relationship between Kent and Gloucester?
2. How many sons does the Earl of Gloucester have?
3. What is King Lear’s “darker purpose?” What does he hope to do after his plan is enacted?
4. Who is Lear’s eldest daughter? Who is the middle daughter? The youngest?
5. What are the daughters asked to prove to King Lear?
6. What is Cordelia’s response to Lear’s questioning? How does he respond to her?
7. Why will Cordelia never marry like her sisters? What does she hope will happen?
8. What is Lear’s response to Cordelia’s answer? What does he take away from her?
9. Who tries to defend Cordelia to Lear? What happens to him?
10. Who has been competing to marry Cordelia? What does Lear say she has been “new adopted” to?
11. What does the King of France tell Lear is strange?
12. What does Cordelia want the King of France to know about her? What does she explain to him about her new situation?
13. What does the King of France do? What does Cordelia become?
14. What does Cordelia tell her sisters to do as she’s leaving? What is their response?
15. What is the arrangement that Goneril and Regan discuss at the end of the scene? How do their attitudes about their father change once they’re alone?
16. What do Goneril and Regan decide? When must they take action?

SCENE 2

1. To whom is Edmund speaking at the beginning of the scene?
2. With whom is he angry? Why? What’s the difference between himself and that person?
3. What does Edmund want?
4. What does Edmund do (according to Gloucester’s response) when his father enters?
5. What does Edgar supposedly write in a letter to Edmund?
6. What does Gloucester cite as bad omens? What do those things do?
7. Does Edmund blame the stars under which he was born for the way he is? Why or why not?
8. Of what does Edmund convince Edgar? What must Edgar do?

**SCENE 3**
1. Why is Goneril upset? What has her father been doing? Who else has been part of the problem?
2. What does Goneril tell Oswald to say so that she won’t have to speak to her father? What are her instructions to her servants?

**SCENE 4**
1. What has Kent done? Why does Lear not recognize him?
2. What does Kent want to do? What qualifications does he say he has?
3. Lear is looking for which two people?
4. What does Kent do to Oswald? What is Lear’s response?
5. What things does the Fool say he is whipped for and by whom?
6. Of what does Goneril accuse Lear’s men? Is this the first time she’s brought this to Lear’s attention? What specifically have the knights been doing?
7. How does Lear respond? Where does he plan to go?
8. What does Lear mean by “this gate that let they folly in/And they dear judgment out;” what is he referring to?
9. What is the curse that Lear places on Goneril?
10. What does Lear say is “sharper than a serpent’s tooth?” What does he mean by that?
11. What is Goneril’s plan? To whom does she write? About what?

**SCENE 5**
1. What does the Fool predict Lear will find at Regan’s house? How does he compare what Regan’s reception will be to the one he received from Goneril?
2. What does the Fool say Lear should have been before he was old?
3. What does Lear not want to be? What does he pray for Heaven to do?

**SCENE 6**
1. What “news abroad” has Edmund not heard?
2. What does Edmund do in cunning? After Edgar leaves, what does he do to gain sympathy once his father enters?
3. What agreement does Cornwall and Edmund reach? What will Edmund do? Why does Cornwall enter into this agreement?
4. Why have Cornwall and Regan come to Gloucester’s estate?

**SCENE 7**
1. How does Kent greet Oswald? Why does he greet him this way? Name at least three of the insults Kent uses.
2. What is Oswald’s theory to Cornwall explaining Kent’s behavior?
3. What is Kent’s punishment? How long must he be punished? Who extends the punishment?
4. Who tries to help Kent face a reduced punishment? Who does that person think is to blame?

**SCENE 8**
1. What is going on for Edgar? Why is he being hunted? By whom?
2. What does he decide to do? What are the steps he’ll take?
3. What has changed by the end of the scene?

**SCENE 9**
1. What shame is Kent making, as Lear says? Where is he?
2. What do Kent and Lear argue over at the beginning of the scene?
3. Where are Regan and Cornwall? What excuse do they give for not seeing Lear?
4. What does Lear say he’d do if Regan were not glad to see him? What does he mean by it?
5. Who does Regan defend? What does Regan want Lear to do?
6. What does Lear say that Regan understands better than her sister Goneril? What does he think she will not do?
7. Who arrives? Does she think she’s done anything wrong?
8. How many men does Regan suggest Lear dismiss? Do the daughters stop there? What’s the final number they suggest Lear needs to keep?
9. What does Lear tell Goneril she is rather than his daughter or his flesh and blood?
10. Lear says he’ll stay with Regan; how does Regan respond to this idea?
11. What is Regan’s argument for Lear keeping fewer men than he wants to?
12. What does Lear ask the gods to keep him from doing? What would he do instead?
13. How do Goneril, Regan, and Cornwall refer to Lear after he leaves? What do they call him instead of “king” or “father?”
14. What do they tell Gloucester to do?

SCENE 10
1. What is Lear doing, according to the knight?
2. Where does Kent ask the knight to go?
3. What does he give the knight to take with him? Who should the knight give it to?

SCENE 11
1. Where is Lear? What is going on around him?
2. What does the fool advise him to do?
3. Where is Kent going to take them? Why?

SCENE 12
1. What has Gloucester received? Where has he hidden it?
2. Where is Gloucester going? Why?
3. What is Edmund planning to do?

SCENE 13
1. Why will Lear not enter the hovel right away?
2. What is Edgar doing when the others discover him? Who does he say follows him? Who does he mean?
3. By what name is Edgar calling himself?
4. What does Lear assume happened to Edgar?
5. What does Lear want all the other men to do (and begin to do himself) to be like “Poor Tom?”
6. What does Gloucester offer to do? Why does Lear refuse?
7. How do they convince Lear to come back to the house?

SCENE 14
1. What has Edmund brought to Cornwall? Who has he betrayed?
2. What does Cornwall say this action has made Edmund? What will he find in Cornwall’s affection?

SCENE 15
1. What delusion do Edgar and Lear share in this scene? Who else joins in?
2. On what line or lines does Edgar show us he’s only pretending to be mad?
3. What has Gloucester overheard? Where does he want Kent to take Lear?

SCENE 16
1. Where does this scene take place? In whose house?
2. What punishment do Regan and Goneril suggest for Gloucester?
3. Who does Cornwall say shouldn’t witness “the revenges” on Gloucester?
4. What do Regan and Cornwall want to know from Gloucester?
5. What does Cornwall do to Gloucester? Who encourages him to continue? Who tries to stop him? How?
6. How does Regan respond when Gloucester asks for Edmund?

**SCENE 17**
1. Who tries to help Gloucester find his way? Who do they encounter?
2. Who does Gloucester ask to lead him? Where does he wish to go?
3. What does Gloucester say he plans to do once they get there?

**SCENE 18**
1. Where is Goneril? What has changed about her husband? What has Oswald told him?
2. How does Goneril explain the change? What does she say she must do?
3. Where does she send Edmund? What does she say he’ll hear from her soon? What does she mean?
4. What does she do to Edmund before he leaves?
5. Albany says Goneril and Regan are what rather than daughters? How does she respond?
6. What does Albany say he’d do to Goneril if he could? What does he say she is in woman’s shape?
7. Who does the messenger tell them is dead?
8. Who will Albany revenge?

**SCENE 19**
1. Who is Cordelia looking for?
2. What other news does she receive?

**SCENE 20**
1. What has Oswald been instructed to do? By whom?
2. Why does Regan want Oswald to stay with her? What does she suspect about her sister?
3. With who has Regan “talked?” What have they decided?

**SCENE 21a**
1. Where does Edgar tell Gloucester they are walking? Is that where they really are?
2. What does Gloucester try to do?
3. How does Edgar convince him to change his plan?

**SCENE 21b**
1. What is Lear’s state of mind? Does it change at all during the scene? If so, when?
2. How does Gloucester recognize Lear? Does Lear recognize Gloucester at first?
3. What is the main subject of Lear’s speech?
4. Who comes to take Lear away? How does Lear respond? What does he do?

**SCENE 21c**
1. Who dies in this scene? Who kills him?
2. What does Edgar find?
3. What are Goneril’s plans? What does she wish she could call Edmund?
4. What does Edgar call Gloucester in this scene? Does Gloucester understand Edgar’s identity?

**SCENE 22**
1. What does Cordelia feel her life will be too short to do?
2. How does Cordelia wake Lear?
3. How does Lear’s mental state compare with the last time we saw him?
4. What does Lear say Cordelia has some cause to do?
5. What does the medic tell Cordelia is cured in Lear?
6. What reason does Lear give Cordelia to forget and forgive?

SCENE 23
1. What does Regan think/fear Edmund has done? What is his response?
2. What news does Albany bring with him? What does he say they must decide?
3. Was Edmund telling Regan the truth? What has he done? What does he plan to do about the women? What does he plan to do about Lear and Cordelia?
4. What does Edgar bring to Albany? What should Albany do which will cause Edgar to appear again?

SCENE 24
1. What news does Edgar give Gloucester about Lear and Cordelia?
2. What does Edgar tell Gloucester men must endure? What “is all?” What does he mean?

SCENE 25
1. Who does Cordelia ask to see? Does Lear want to see them? What does he suggest?
2. What does Lear say he’ll ask of Cordelia?
3. What does Edmund give to the captain? Where does he tell him to go? What does the note ask the captain to do?
4. What does Albany ask from Edmund?
5. How does Albany feel about Edmund? How do Regan and Goneril feel about him?
6. What does Albany do to Edmund? With what is Edmund charged?
7. Who appears to fight Edmund? What does he call Edmund?
8. List all the characters that die in this scene and explain how they die.
9. List the characters that reconcile with each other in this scene.
10. What does Albany give up to Lear?
11. What does Edgar say they must speak in these times?