



The Taming of the Shrew

Activity Pack

for AS and A Level English Literature

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- Image of the Globe Theatre, courtesy of C. Walter Hodges

Teacher's Introduction

Why choose *The Taming of the Shrew*?

There are many reasons for teaching this play. My top three:

1. Because the central theme of the play – the battle of the sexes – remains as relevant today in the era of identity politics and #MeToo as it was when Shakespeare wrote it.
2. Because the play is controversial and arouses strong views – some people would like it to be removed from the stage forever because they find it offensive and politically incorrect, while others argue we should read and watch it to see what the fuss is about.
3. Because the play contains ambiguity and lends itself to different readings and interpretations. Some actors who play the female protagonist Katherina see her as a victim of domestic abuse, while others suggest she is liberated by marriage to 'mad-brain' Petruchio and finds her own voice.

This pack provides a wide range of tasks which will help students to enjoy and understand the play and its contexts – before, during and after the first reading of the text. As well as key tasks there are extensions to push learners further and consolidate learning. Post-reading activities can be used as revision tools prior to mock and final exams. The pack includes 'Points to Consider' and 'Discussion Points' which are designed to help students understand aspects of the play's contexts, and to encourage debate. There are also some fun and creative tasks, e.g. quizzes, director's notes, a crossword and a word search, and essay questions are included throughout rather than in a separate section.

There is a focus throughout on the A Level English Literature assessment objectives (AOs), so that students are equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to perform effectively in examinations. AOs covered are indicated on the tasks themselves and on the Contents page. You will find indicative content and suggested responses in the Teacher's Notes. Points to Consider and Discussion Points do not have indicative content or suggested responses.

The activities in this pack will be helpful to teachers who are following these English Literature A Level specifications: Edexcel 9ETO; OCR H472; AQA A 7712; AQA B 7717. **Remember: it's important to check exam board websites for specification changes and updates. For example, *The Taming of the Shrew* is a new text for the OCR Drama and Poetry pre-1900 paper (first teaching 2025).**

The edition of the text used in the preparation of this Activity Pack is the Cambridge School Shakespeare, edited by Michael-Fynes Clinton and Perry Mills, CUP, 1998.



A web page containing all the links listed in this resource is conveniently provided on ZigZag Education's website at **[zzed.uk/12950](https://www.zzed.uk/12950)**

You may find this helpful for accessing the websites rather than typing in each URL.

Specification Information

Examination Board Requirements

Assessment Objectives

All the examination boards share the same assessment objectives:

- AO1: Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using appropriate terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression.
- AO2: Analyse the ways meanings are shaped in literary texts.
- AO3: Demonstrate an understanding of the significance and influence of context on texts and how they are received.
- AO4: Explore connections within and across literary texts.
- AO5: Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

Edexcel 9ETO

Paper 1: Drama, 2 hours 15 minutes (1 hour 15 minutes recommended for the Shakespeare text)
Section A, choice of two essay questions on the Shakespeare text, marks available = 25

The mark scheme breaks down as follows:

AO1, AO2, AO3: mark out of 21; AO5: mark out of 14

Open book examination, with play text allowed (but not the Edexcel Critical Anthology which accompany the text)

OCR H472

Paper 1: Drama and poetry pre-1900, 2 hours 30 minutes

One two-part question on the Shakespeare text

- a) Students will be offered a passage from the text. They are expected to comment on the effects (15 marks, AO2 = 75%, AO1 = 25%)
- b) An essay question in response to an opinion / a quotation about the play (15 marks)

Closed book examination

AQA English Literature A 7712

Paper 1: Love through the ages, 3 hours

Section A: one question on the Shakespeare text, worth a potential 25 marks. An extract from the text is provided. Students are expected to comment on the extract and the rest of the play in the light of the text.

AO5: /3; AO4: /3; AO3 /6; AO2 /6; AO1: /7

Closed book examination for Shakespeare question

AQA English Literature B 7717

Paper 1B: Literary genres – Aspects of comedy, 2 hours 30 minutes

Students can answer two questions on the same Shakespeare play, in Sections A and B

Section A – one question on an extract from the Shakespeare text. Students are expected to comment on Shakespeare's dramatic methods. Marks available = 25

Section B – choice of two essay questions on the Shakespeare text. Students are expected to comment on a statement/quotation about the play, explaining whether they agree with the view.

All AOs are assessed and weighted equally in Sections A and B

Closed book examination

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Assessment Objective Mapping

A Reminder of the Assessment Objectives

- AO1: Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using appropriate terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression.
- AO2: Analyse the ways meanings are shaped in literary texts.
- AO3: Demonstrate an understanding of the significance and influence of context on texts and received.
- AO4: Explore connections within and across literary texts.
- AO5: Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

Topic
Pre-reading Activities
Induction 1
Induction 2
Act 1, Scene 1
Act 1, Scene 2
Looking Back at Act 1
Act 2, Scene 1
Looking Back at Act 2
Act 3, Scene 1
Act 3, Scene 2
Looking Back at Act 3
Act 4, Scene 1
Act 4, Scene 2
Act 4, Scene 3
Act 4, Scene 4
Act 4, Scene 5
Looking Back at Act 4
Act 5, Scene 1
Act 5, Scene 2
Looking Back at Act 5
Further Research Tasks
Plot-sequencing Task
Crossword
Character Word Search
Contexts
Characterisation and Character Relationships
Themes
The Writer's Use of Language
Dramatic Methods
Shakespeare's Stagecraft
Use of Settings
Attitudes and Values
Structure and Form
Genre
Imagery
Critical Reception
Performance History

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Pre-reading Activities

Task 1 – Research Project: Literary, Social, Religious and Historical

Suggested research topics:

1. Shakespeare's life and times (to include key events in Shakespeare's life, dates of famous plays, important historical and literary events which occurred during his lifetime)
2. Shakespeare's theatre and stagecraft (to include venues, audiences, boy actors)
3. Shakespeare's comedies which feature love and marriage as important themes, e.g. *Twelfth Night*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Merchant of Venice*.
4. Other texts which feature wife-taming and shrewish wives, e.g. ballads such as 'The Wife and Curst Wife Lapped in Morel's Skin, for Her Good Behaviour' or 'The Wife of Bath's Tale' and medieval mystery plays, e.g. *Noah's Flood* (see Context page 63–64 for 'A Merry Jest...').
5. George Gascoigne's 1566 translation of the play *Supposes* (based on Italian poetry) – the source of the Bianca subplot (see Context page 69 for a plot summary of the play)
6. Folk tales or stories in which beggars are transported into luxury, e.g. where the beggar finds sleeping in an alley in *The Arabian Nights*.
7. Elizabethan sports, games and pastimes, e.g. cruel sports, hunting, falconry, games of chance
8. Elizabethan sumptuary laws – laws about clothing and fabrics that could be worn in society.
9. Classical comedy – features of Greek and Roman comedy, e.g. Aristotle, Plautus
10. Commedia dell'arte – including origins and stock characters (see Context page 70)
11. Elizabethan comedy – origins and types of comedy, dominant themes, distinctive features
12. Elizabethan marriage customs – courtship, the marriage ceremony (see the Context page published in 1549 under Edward VI), pre- and post-wedding rituals, e.g. reading of the banns
13. Elizabethan attitudes to women and the education of women, e.g. Elizabethan conduct books and wives such as Juan Vives' *The Office and Duetie of an Husband* and *A Fruitfull and Pleasant Instruction of a Christian Woman*.
14. Elizabethan Church teachings about the role and status of men and women, e.g. teachings about marriage.
15. Renaissance attitudes to scolds/shrews and punishments meted out to them, e.g. scolding was a petty offence in early modern England and scolds were caused pain and shame by ducking stool or scold's bridle.
16. Elizabethan attitudes to rank and hierarchy, e.g. The Great Chain of Being.

Task 2 – Glossary of Key Terms

Create a glossary of terms which will help you study and write about the play.

Suggested terms provided below.

- | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| • Alliteration | • Ambiguity | • Antithesis |
| • Aside | • Assonance | • Bawdy humour |
| • Climax (of the play) | • Companionate marriage | • Dark comedy |
| • Double entendre | • Dramatic irony | • Exposition |
| • Farce | • Foil | • Foreshadowing |
| • Iambic pentameter | • Imagery | • Induction |
| • Main plot | • Metaphor | • Metre |
| • Motif | • Ovidian comedy | • Prose |
| • Pun | • Resolution | • Rhyming couplet |
| • Satire | • Simile | • Slapstick |
| • Stichomythia | • Stock character | • Subplot |
| • Wordplay | | |

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Task 3 – Love and Marriage – What Do You Think?

Jot down your thoughts in response to the following statements before sharing ideas.

Children should be guided by their parents in matters concerning love and marriage. It is not acceptable for children to marry without your parents' permission or knowledge.
Love alone is not necessarily a good basis for marriage. Other factors are important when choosing a partner to marry, e.g. money, respectability, similar background and social status.
Arranged marriages are as successful as love marriages.
Couples should strive to have an equal partnership, but if one person chooses to dominate the other, that is OK.
Society functioned better in the past when men and women had traditional gender roles.
Nobody should be allowed to marry before they have known their partner for a long time.

Task 4 – What Should I Expect in a Shakespearean Comedy?

In Shakespeare's day, the genre of comedy did not necessarily equal 'side-splitting' or 'laugh out loud' funny. Instead, it meant that the play would involve some of the following features:

Key features of Elizabethan comedy:

- An exotic or fairy-tale location
- A focus on ordinary or middle-class main characters and the social groups they belong to
- Verbal humour – witty comments and descriptions, wordplay, puns, comic insults
- Physical comedy – slapstick humour, e.g. comic beatings
- Disguises, transformations and mistaken identities
- Multiple, complicated or intertwined plots
- Marriage is the goal or 'telos' of the play
- Stock characters, e.g. a clown/buffoon, a clever/wily servant, a foolish old man
- Obstacles or conflict(s) which the young lovers must overcome
- Love will triumph
- Characters – who are often self-deluded – will go on journeys of self-discovery and gain recognition of who they are and what they should want
- The play's ending will include a celebration of love, e.g. multiple marriages
- True order is restored at the end of the play with a return to the status quo – the characters to their rightful place/state
- Family tensions are resolved, and characters reconciled
- Villains have been unmasked, and their evil doing resolved
- The moral purpose of Elizabethan comedy is to deride and poke fun at things that are wrong or foolish

Tick off or make a note of these features of comedy as and when they occur in the plays you study.

Task 5 – So, What Tickles *Your* Funny Bone?

What do *you* find amusing? Think about current plays, TV programmes, films or comedies that make you smile. You might want to focus on a specific comic genre, e.g. romantic comedies, farces, sitcoms, musicals, etc. Discuss with a partner what it is that you enjoy about the items on your list. The settings? The situations people find themselves in? The physical comedy? The language?

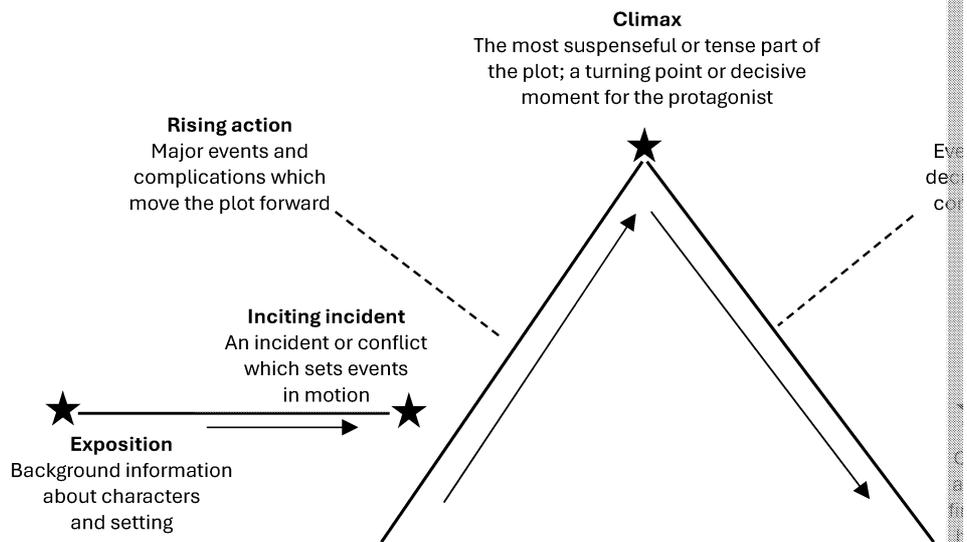
Choose one play, programme or film from your list of favourites. Using the Task 4 features of comedy, analyse whether your chosen play/film/programme makes use of any of them.

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Task 6 – Freytag’s Pyramid

Use this diagram to help you understand the structure of the play while you are studying it. Fill in events of the play on a copy of the pyramid as you study the play.



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Induction 1

All tasks are to be completed after reading the scene.

Task 1 – Summary

Small group work. Read the Lord's speeches to his huntsmen (from line 30 up to the stage direction where Sly is carried off).

Make a bullet-point list of the instructions the Lord gives his servants about how Sly should behave during the 'jest'. Aim to identify 10 details.

- What impact does the Lord want to have on Sly?
- Do you find the proposed deception of Sly amusing?

Task 2 – Close Analysis

Pair or small group work. Read the speech the Lord makes at line 101, beginning 'Barthol'mew my page...' until the stage direction 'Exit a Servingman' at line 126.

In this speech the Lord outlines how Bartholomew the page should behave to be a good wife. What does the 'ideal wife' in the Lord's speech sound like? Write a summary of what the Lord believes that a good wife will...

Task 3 – First Impressions of Christopher Sly

Pair work. Discuss these questions with a partner:

- Consider Christopher Sly's words and actions at the start of this scene. Summarise what you think of him.
- How do you think Sly is going to behave when he wakes up to find he's living in the Lord's country house?

Discussion Point

Some critics have suggested that the Hostess is the first female character to appear in the play. Is it fair to view her as a noisy, nagging woman based on how she treats Sly?

Task 4 – Themes

Pair work. Working with a partner, create a mind map of themes which are introduced in the induction, adding quotations to illustrate each theme. Analyse your chosen quotations. Suggest a title for the play.

- Appearance and reality
- Social class, power, and status
- Deception and disguise
- Hierarchy
- Sports and games
- Identity

Points to consider

Framing scenes or inductions were common in plays of the 1590s, when *The Taming of the Shrew* was written. This is the only play in which Shakespeare uses one. Often plays begin with an induction also end with a final framing scene. If Shakespeare did not use an induction to begin the play, how might he have concluded *The Taming of the Shrew* it had?



Extension Task

When you get to the end of the play, discuss what you would like to see happen next involving Sly and/or the nobleman.

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Induction 1 Quiz

1. How does Christopher Sly upset the Hostess of the Warwickshire alehouse?
 - a) He refuses to pay for the beer he's drunk.
 - b) He refuses to pay for glasses he has broken.
 - c) He refuses to leave the premises at closing time.
2. What is the Lord's motive for playing a trick on Sly?
 - a) He wants to test his servants and see if they can follow his orders.
 - b) He thinks it will be funny to see a beggar transformed into a nobleman.
 - c) He wants revenge on Sly because the beggar is lying in a drunken stupor.
3. What does the Lord tell the players about Sly when he asks them to perform?
 - a) Sly is an eccentric visitor who doesn't approve of plays or players.
 - b) Sly is a lunatic visitor who is being cared for at the Lord's home.
 - c) Sly is a visiting lord who is given to odd behaviour.
4. What instructions does the Lord send to Bartholomew the page, who is Sly's wife?
 - a) Bartholomew is told he must flirt with Sly and take him to bed.
 - b) Bartholomew is told he must feed and nurse Sly when he wakes up.
 - c) Bartholomew is told to shed tears and tell Sly he has been ill for several days.
5. What does the Lord say he intends to do during the deception of Sly?
 - a) He is going to observe events so that his servants don't lose their senses too much.
 - b) He is going to pretend to be a visitor and watch the play alongside Sly and drink with him.
 - c) He is going to absent himself so that Sly can be made to believe he is in the Lord's country house.

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Induction 2

All tasks are to be completed after reading the scene.

True or False Quiz

Which of these statements about Induction 2 is true? Justify your choices.

1. The first thing Sly wants when he wakes up is a glass of wine.
2. Sly claims he has had several jobs during his lifetime, including working and keeping a performing bear.
3. Sly is told he has slept for 10 years, waking only to say strange things to his wife.
4. When he meets his 'wife' (Bartholomew the page in disguise), Sly jumps on her and take her to bed.
5. Sly is told that the players want to perform a comedy to improve his health.

Task 1 – Imagery

Sly is bombarded with offers in Induction 2 – of food, drink, clothing, music, sports and elite pastimes. Analyse the examples below with a partner.

1. 'Wilt thou have music? Hark,
Apollo plays, / And twenty caged
nightingales do sing.' (lines 31–32)
(Apollo = Greek god of music)

2. 'Or wilt thou sleep? We
Softer and sweeter than
purpose trimmed up for
(Semiramis = legendary Assyrian queen)

3. 'Dost thou love hawking? Thou hast
hawks will soar / Above the
morning lark.' (lines 39–40)

4. 'Or wilt thou hunt? / The
welkin answer them / And
the hollow earth.' (lines 41–42)

The final offer is Sly's 'wife'. Analyse how she is described:

5. *Lord:* Thou hast a lady far more beautiful
Than any woman in this waning age.

Servant: And till the tears that she hath shed for thee
Like envious floods o'er run her lovely face,
She was the fairest creature in the world –
And yet she is inferior to none. (lines 58–63)

- How is she described?
- How is she contrasted with other women?
- How is she contrasted with the Lord's description?
- How is she contrasted with the Servant's description?
- How is she contrasted with the other women mentioned in the scene?



Extension Task

There are four classical allusions in the servants' descriptions of the Lord's 'wife' (Induction 1, line 43) which are offered to Sly to give him pleasure. Research the allusions.

- Adonis (the mortal lover of the goddesses Aphrodite and Persephone in Greek myth; he was the ideal of male beauty)
- Cytherea (another name for the goddess Aphrodite)
- Io (daughter of Inachus in Greek myth, and lover of Zeus)
- Daphne (female nymph in Greek myth)

You might find these websites helpful:

- zzed.uk/12950-adonis1
- zzed.uk/12950-adonis2
- zzed.uk/12950-adonis3
- zzed.uk/12950-aphrodite1
- zzed.uk/12950-iodis1
- zzed.uk/12950-iodis2
- zzed.uk/12950-daphne1
- zzed.uk/12950-daphne2

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Task 2 – Comedy in Induction 2

Shakespeare uses several comic devices to make the audience laugh in Induction 2. Add examples to the table below:

Source of humour	Example
Repetition (e.g. of questions, actions, phrasing)	
Physical comedy	
Costumes and props	
Incongruity	
Bawdy humour	
Disguises	

Choose one example from the table and write a paragraph explaining how it adds to the comedy. Share your work with a classmate.

Task 3 – Theme: Transformation

Sly moves from prose to verse and back again in Induction 2. Look at his speeches in the middle and end of this scene.

- Discuss with a partner whether the content and style of Sly's speeches suggest a transformation into a lord.
- What does Sly's 'transformation' in the Induction suggest about the events of the play, *The Taming of the Shrew*?

Discussion Point

Consider this student's comments on the Induction: 'I know it's supposed to be funny, but I found it hard to laugh. The hawks are better looked after than Christopher Sly. It's not just for laughs. Sly lusting after a young male servant is also disturbing. It was another example of the Lord using his power to exploit others.'

Task 4 – Essay Planning

Pair work. Discuss this statement about the Induction scenes: 'The Induction scenes show that the events of *The Taming of the Shrew* are framed by comedy.'

Write a five-point essay plan in response to this statement. Find textual evidence to support your points.
OR

Write the first paragraph for an essay in response to this statement.

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Scene-by-scene Activities

Act 1, Scene 1

Task 1 – The Cast List

Pair work. Examine the cast list in your play text. Note how the characters are described. Now look at this list of stock characters from Roman comedy:

- A boastful, arrogant soldier
- A clever slave/servant (who is often a trickster)
- A buffoon (a clown figure)
- A humourless old miser
- Young lovers
- A parasite/hanger-on (e.g. a flatterer who is always hungry)
- A randy old man (who lusts after younger women)
- A clever hero who exploits others' weaknesses
- A father figure (either too strict or too soft)
- An unmarried young woman (often pretty but stupid)

Using both lists, make predictions about who might play which role in *The Taming of the Shrew*. Can Shakespeare combine roles so that characters fulfil more than one function?



Extension Task 1

You could compare the cast list with a list of stock characters from Italian *commedia dell'arte*, which also has its origins in classical comedy. See Context page 70 for a list of *commedia* characters, or research them online. You might find this website helpful: zzed.uk/12950-commedia-dellarte

Points to consider

In most editions of the play, Katherina is described as 'the Shrew'. Shrews are stock characters who would have been familiar to Shakespeare's audiences in folk tales, ballads and other plays. The shrew was an unpleasant, bad-tempered woman, given to scolding, nagging and aggressive behaviour. Being a 'complaint' was a petty criminal offence in England and Wales during the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. There were several different punishments, all designed to humiliate a shrewish woman. They included the ducking stool, pillory and the scold's bridle.

How do you think Elizabethan audiences were supposed to respond to this character when they saw her on stage?

Task 2 – First Impressions of Lucentio and Tranio

Small group work. Read the opening part of the scene, up until the stage direction 'stand by' (line 47). Answer these questions:

1. What do you learn about Lucentio's family background and social class?
2. Why has Lucentio come to Padua?
3. What advice does Tranio give Lucentio?
4. Compare the speech styles of master and servant in these examples:
 - *Lucentio*: I have Pisa left / And am to Padua come as he that leaves / A ship deep / and with satiety seeks to quench his thirst. (lines 21–24)
 - *Tranio*: Let's be no stoics nor no stocks, I pray / ... No profit grows where we do not strive to get, sir, study what you most affect. (lines 39–40)

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Points to consider

Padua was famous for its university, which was a centre of Aristotelianism. Students across Europe, including England, travelled there to study philosophy. In *Ethics*, philosopher Aristotle wrote that it was only by virtuous living that one would achieve happiness.

What is ironic about Lucentio – who falls in love with Bianca at first sight and disguises himself as a tutor to get inside her father’s house – coming to Padua to study Aristotle?

Task 3 – Katherina – Is She Really a Shrew?

Small group work. Read from the stage direction ‘Enter Baptista with his two daughters, Gremio and Hortensio’ (lines 46–136).

1. Match the descriptions of Katherina below with the correct speaker:

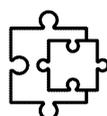
‘She’s too rough for me’	‘No mates for you / Unless you were of gentler, milder mould’	‘From all such devils, good Lord deliver us!’
‘Stark mad, or wonderful froward’	Katherina is a ‘fiend of hell’	‘Your gifts are so good here’s none will hold you out’ (hold = have, marry)

(Speakers: Gremio, Hortensio, Tranio)

2. What is Katherina accused of in this extract? Jot down a list of things Gremio says about Katherina.
3. Pair work. Analyse what Katherina says in this scene:

To Baptista	‘I pray you, sir, is it your will / To make a stale of me among your friends?’ (stale = either a prostitute or someone whose love is ridiculed)
To Hortensio	‘I’ faith, sir, you shall never need to fear. / I wish it is not half so much / Were, doubt not her care should be / To comb your noddle / And paint your face and use you like a fool.’ (lines 61–65)
About/to Bianca	‘A pretty peat! It is best put finger in the eye, and she knew it.’ (peat = pet, darling or spoiled child)
To Baptista	‘Why, and I trust I may go too, may I not? / What, shall I be like a fool? / Belike / I knew not what to take and what to leave? Ha!’ (lines 100–104)

- What characterises Katherina’s speech style?
- What advice would you give to an actor playing Katherina about how to deliver this speech? (Sarcastic? Annoyed? Upset?)
- Does Katherina deserve her terrible reputation as a shrew?



Extension Task 2

In her podcast on *The Taming of the Shrew*, critic Emma Smith has suggested three ways to interpret Katherina’s character. Katherina can be played as ‘feisty and misunderstood’, or ‘strident and antisocial’. Can you find any evidence in the text to support these views of Katherina?

You can listen to Emma Smith’s podcast here: [zzed.uk/12950-podcast](https://www.zzed.uk/12950-podcast)

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Task 4 – First Impressions – Bianca: Sweet, Put-upon Younger Sister

What do you make of Bianca? Compare what she says with what others say to and from her. You could create and fill in a table like this:

	Example(s)	
What others say about/to Bianca		
What Bianca says		

Task 5 – First Impressions – Baptista Minola: Caring Father or Deadbeat?

Find textual evidence to support these ideas:

Baptista has his daughters' best interests at heart.	Baptista is a neglectful father about his daughters.

In her podcast mentioned earlier, Emma Smith poses the question, is Baptista Minola a 'patriarchal tyrant'? Write a paragraph explaining which view of Baptista you find more convincing.

Points to consider

Gremio is described in the stage directions as a 'pantaloone' – a stock character from the commedia dell'arte. A pantaloone (*Pantalone* in Italian) is a money-loving, rich, old man with an eye for the ladies. He is often an obstacle to the happiness of young lovers.

Task 6 – Hortensio and Gremio – Comic Rivals

Hortensio and Gremio are usually played as comic figures, whose rivalry to get 'across' to Bianca seems grotesque and ridiculous.

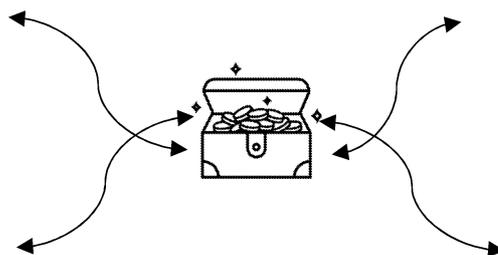
Pair work. Read their exchange about finding a husband for Katherina (from Gremio's 'devil's dam!' up to the stage direction at line 136, 'Exeunt Gremio and Hortensio').

What are the similarities and differences between the comic rivals? Discuss or make a list.

- Their attitudes to Bianca
- The way they speak about their rivalry
- The way they speak about finding a husband for Katherina
- Their attitudes to each other
- The way they speak about each other

Task 7 – Theme: Marriage and Money

- Can you find four examples in this scene which suggest money and marriage are linked together in this play? Add them to a mind map like this:



- 'Baptista Minola is a wealthy merchant, but he behaves more like a market trader who tries to bargain with Gremio and Hortensio.'

Can you find any textual evidence to support this view?

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Task 8 – Theme: Romance and Reality

- The comic rivalry of Hortensio versus Gremio is followed by the comic contrast between Lucentio's love-struck swooning and Tranio's down-to-earth approach to wooing Bianca. Write a 50-word summary of the plan Lucentio and Tranio come up with to get Bianca. 'I pray you sir, tell me, is it possible / That love should of a sudden take such hold / On my Bianca's entrance at line 211.
- Analyse how Shakespeare uses language to convey the differences between appearance and reality in the examples below. Label literary techniques with relevant terms.

Lucentio	
'As Anna to the Queen of Carthage was - / Tranio, I burn? I pine, I perish, Tranio, / If I achieve not this young modest girl.' (lines 145–147)	'Nay, then, 'tis time I pray, awake, sir. If you have any thoughts and wits to spare, let them be put to use.'
'O yes, I saw sweet beauty in her face, / Such as the daughter Agenor had, / That made great Jove to humble him to her hand / When with his knees he kissed the Cretan strand.' (lines 158–161)	'Thus it stands: / He is a shrewd / That, till thou shalt see him, / Master, your love may be deceived.' (lines 170–173)

Task 9 – Theme: Disguise and Deception

Pair or small group work. After reading from Biondello's entrance at line 212 until the end of the scene, answer the questions below. Compare the ways disguise and deception are used in Act 1, Scene 1.

- What are the purposes of disguise and deception in the Induction?
- What are the purposes of disguise and deception in Act 1, Scene 1?
- Is the deception of Sly different from the deception of Baptista?
- Why does Lucentio deceive Biondello about his motives for exchanging clothes?
- Why does Shakespeare return to Sly and Bartholomew the page disguised as Biondello at the end of Act 1, Scene 1?

Points to consider

Tranio is the name of the clever and resourceful slave in Roman dramatist Plautus's comedy *Mostellaria*. He devises cunning plans to keep his master out of trouble. From what you have seen in Act 1, Scene 1 – is Tranio cleverer and more resourceful than his master Lucentio, or are they equals?

Task 10 – Attitudes and Values: Women's Voices

Discuss these questions with a partner:

- Does Act 1, Scene 1 suggest that only silent women are socially acceptable?
- Do you think audiences would have expected all women to be silent and submissive?
- Is the talk of Katherina as 'an irksome brawling scold' (Act 1, Scene 2, line 81) a humorous effect?
- Compare what is said about Katherina and Bianca's voices in Act 1 Scene 1. What do you think it suggests about attitudes to women's speech?
 - Lucentio on Bianca*: 'In the other's [Bianca's] silence do I see / Maid's mild behaviour.'
 - Tranio on Katherina*: 'Marked you not how her sister [Katherina] / Began to scold / When she was angry / That mortal ears might hardly endure the din?' (lines 162–164)

Points to consider

Shakespeare continues the theme of appearance and reality in this scene, with Bianca and Katherina. Note the verbs to do with looking here and elsewhere in the play. Lucentio believes he can 'see' (line 70) Bianca clearly, while Tranio says (line 162) that Katherina is a shrew. Can we trust what men say about women?

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Task 11 – Who’s got the Power?

At the end of Act 1, Scene 1, discuss what each character wants, and assess whether they are likely to achieve their goals. Put the characters in order of their power, with 1 being most powerful and 7 being least powerful. Fill in a table like this:

Character	What they want
Baptista	
Katherina	
Bianca	
Hortensio	
Gremio	
Lucentio	
Tranio	

Task 12 – Critical Opinion

In *Clamorous Voices* by Carol Rutter (The Women’s Press, 1988), Fiona Shaw, who played Katherina in 1987, offers a commentary on the RSC production of *The Shrew* she was in. She says that J.C. Miller believed ‘Kate behaves like many children who are unloved. I have a slight sympathy for that. I don’t think Kate is a child. She’s a woman, and I think that to make her a child is to make her less interesting. I didn’t think she’s a particularly intelligent woman... and he thought she reacts like a child. I think she behaves badly, really younger than she is, like a ten-year old.’ Fiona Shaw goes on to say that she thought of Katherina ‘isn’t of a quiet, sullen, delinquent, but of a woman who’s raging. She’s a fright. She’s a real shrew. She does bang about. I can imagine a Kate who does; that in itself is enjoyable. My Kate was very unhappy.’ (p. 6)

Discuss these views with a partner. Write a paragraph saying whether you agree with J.C. Miller, based on what you have seen of Katherina in Act 1, Scene 1.

Task 13 – Director’s Notes

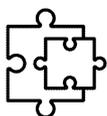
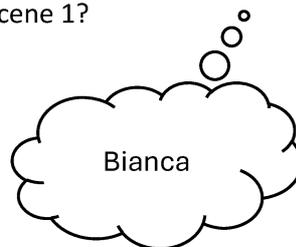
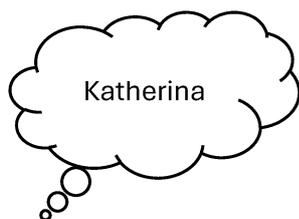
Pair or small group work.

- Write director’s notes for the actors playing Katherina and Bianca. Tell them what you think they are listening to what is said about them in Act 1, Scene 1. Think about what expressions they could use to convey how they feel. How might the sisters interact with their father? With the other male characters on stage?
- Write director’s notes for the actors playing Lucentio and Tranio. Tell them how you think they should behave as they go aside to observe Baptista’s conversation with Gremio and Hortensio about his daughter. What should actor playing Lucentio do to show he is attracted to Bianca? How should they interact?

Task 14 – What Am I Thinking?

Small group work. In groups of three, take one character each. Write thought bubbles for each character.

- How do they feel about the events of Act 1, Scene 1?
- What are they thinking?



Extension Task 3

You are Katherina. You keep a secret diary, which you write in every night in your bed. Write Katherina’s diary entry for the evening after the events of Act 1, Scene 1. Share your entry with a classmate.

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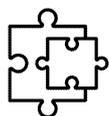


Act 1, Scene 2

Task 1 – Petruchio and Grumio Arrive in Padua

Pair or small group work. Read from the start of the scene up to the end of Hortensio's speech 'Petruchio, patience...' (line 46). Discuss these questions with a partner:

- Is Grumio a good servant?
- Is Petruchio a good master?
- What role does Hortensio play in this extract?
- How does this extract continue the theme of appearance and reality?



Extension Task 1

Discuss how the master–servant relationship between Petruchio and Grumio compares to the others you have seen; Lucentio–Tranio–Biondello; the Lord and his servants. You could jot your thoughts down in a bullet-point list or on a mind map.

Points to consider

By the sixteenth century, 'villain' (used as an insult by Petruchio to describe Grumio) had taken on its modern meaning. It is a Latinate word which meant low-born person or villager in the medieval period. Which meaning do you think applies to Grumio? How would you describe him?

Task 2 – Foreshadowing

The exchanges between Petruchio and Grumio in Act 1, Scene 2 foreshadow Petruchio's treatment of Katherina. Make predictions about what will happen when Katherina and Petruchio meet. How will he treat his bride-to-be?

Task 3 – Who is Petruchio?

Small group work. Read from line 45 to line 110 (from Hortensio's question 'And what happy gale / Blows you to Padua here from old Verona?' to Grumio's description 'You know him not, sir.')

1. Language analysis

Annotate Petruchio's speeches in this extract with different coloured highlighters to identify the technique used.

- Imagery: money, the weather, the sea and ships
Which imagery is used most frequently? What does this suggest about Petruchio?
- Classical allusions (look them up if your play text doesn't include notes)
What does Petruchio's use of classical allusions suggest about him?
- Other literary techniques: similes, rhyme, hyperbole, repetition, sound patterns
Choose two examples from this list and discuss what they suggest about Petruchio.

2. Character profile

Write a character profile for Petruchio. You might like to create a table like the one below.

Background and family	Motives
Attitude to love and money	Key

You can add to this table when you get to the end of the scene. You might also include your own, e.g. speech style, treatment of others.



Extension Task 2

Compare Petruchio as a would-be wooer with Christopher Sly and/or Lucentio.

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Task 4 – Hortensio the Would-be Wooer

Small group work. Read from Hortensio's speech 'Tarry Petruchio, I must go with the entrance of Gremio and Lucentio, disguised as Cambio, a schoolmaster (line 110)

1. Analyse the language Hortensio uses to describe Bianca and Katherina. Fill in

Bianca	
Quotation	
Analysis	

2. Does Hortensio have the same attitude to love and money as Petruchio?

Task 5 – Theme: Deceit and Deception

Small group work. Read from Hortensio's line 'Now shall my friend Petruchio do to Grumio's line 'Will he woo her? Ay, or I'll hang her.' (line 191)

- Identify the examples of deception in this extract. You can include lies, disguising the whole story. You should be able to find four examples.
- For each example, what motive does the deceiver have?

Task 6 – Petruchio's Past

Pair or small group work. Read aloud Petruchio's speech that begins 'Why came I intent?' (line 192). On the first reading, put emphasis on all the nouns in the speech. On the second reading, put emphasis on all the words to do with sounds. On a third reading, put emphasis on the verbs in **bold**. (Note: some words may be in more than one category.)

Think you a little din can **daunt** mine ears?
 Have I not in my time **heard** lions roar?
 Have I not **heard** the sea, **puffed up** with winds,
Rage like an angry boar **chafed** with sweat?
 Have I not **heard** great ordnance in the field,
 And heaven's artillery **thunder** in the skies?
 Have I not in a pitched battle **heard**
 Loud 'larums, **neighing** steeds and trumpets' clang?
 And do you **tell** me of a woman's tongue,
 That gives not half so great a blow to hear
 As will a chestnut in a farmer's fire?
 Tush, tush, fear boys with bugs!

1. Decide – which are the most important words? Why?
2. Which is your favourite image in this speech? Why?
3. Make a list of Petruchio's life experiences – and their accompanying sounds – dealing with a shrewish bride.
4. What advice would you give an actor playing Petruchio about how to deliver this speech – boasting, exaggerating for comic effect?

AO2

Points to consider

Petruchio's speech about his life experiences is often a highlight of this scene when it is performed. With its rhetorical devices, it offers an actor plenty of scope to catch the audience's attention and make the audience laugh. The content and style of this speech are typical of *Il Capitano*, a stock character from commedia dell'arte. This figure had its roots in Italian comedy, the braggart soldier *Miles Gloriosus*. In Italian comedy (both classical and modern commedia dell'arte) the braggart soldier was a coward who boasted about his success with women. His claims were undermined or exploded by a close male friend in asides to the audience. Discuss these ideas in relation to Petruchio and Grumio.

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Task 7 – Theme: Male Rivalry

Small group work. Read from Gremio’s line ‘Hortensio, hark’ (line 205) until the end of the scene.

- Find textual evidence to support these ideas:
 - The male characters see wooing and wedding as a competition.
 - Petruchio, Hortensio and Gremio perceive Tranio (disguised as Lucentio) as a threat.
 - By the end of the scene Petruchio is ‘top dog’. The opportunities of the scene are his, not theirs, and his by virtue of him being a ‘winner’.
- You are Bianca. Put your love rivals in order of desirability. Do you think Baptista would agree with you? Would he see the same way?

Task 8 – All the Single Gentlemen Role Play

Small group work. How do the would-be male wooers feel about love and marriage? In groups of four, each take on the role of one of the male characters: Petruchio, Lucentio, Hortensio, Gremio. Tell the rest of the group:

- What love means to you
- Why you want to get married
- How you feel about the woman you hope to marry

Task 9 – How Men Define Women

Pair work. Throughout Act 1, Scene 2, men have the power to define Katherina and Bianca. This includes one man – Petruchio – who has neither seen nor met them. Work with a partner to identify the speaker and the subject in these examples.

	Quotation	Speaker
1	‘young, and beauteous / Brought up as best becomes a gentlewoman.’ (lines 82–83)	
2	‘intolerable curst, / And shrewd and froward so beyond all measure / That, were my state far worsor than it is, / I would not wed her for a mine of gold!’ (lines 85–88)	
3	‘in Baptista’s keep my treasure is... the jewel of my life’ (lines 112–113)	
4	‘“... the curst!” / A title for a maid of all titles the worst.’ (lines 123–124)	
5	‘an irksome brawling scold’ (line 181)	
6	‘But will you woo this wildcat?’ (line 190)	
7	‘she’s the choice love of Signor...’ (line 229)	
8	‘famous for a scolding tongue’ (line 247)	
9	‘famous for... beauteous modesty’ (line 248)	

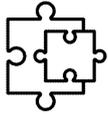
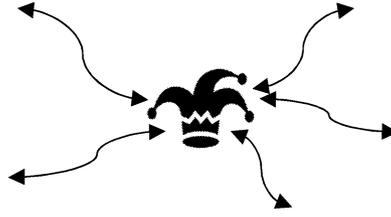
- Write a paragraph summing up how women are defined in Act 1, Scene 2.
- Which of these descriptions is the odd one out? Why?
- Which of these descriptions is most offensive today? Why?

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Task 10 – Grumio’s Role in Act 1, Scene 2

Pair or small group work. Find five examples which illustrate Grumio’s role as comic commentator. Discuss what would be lost if the director cut Grumio’s role.



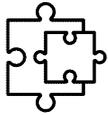
Extension Task 3

Write a paragraph summing up Grumio’s importance in Act 1, Scene 2. Share your work with a classmate.

Task 11 – Director’s Notes – Tranio

Pair work. Discuss with a partner how you would cast the role of Tranio.

- Should he be older or younger than Lucentio?
- What social class should he be?
- Should he have a different accent from Lucentio?
- Should he be comfortable or awkward when he puts on his disguise?
- Should he be convincing in the role of love rival for Bianca, or should he (initially) be a bit of a joke?
- What impact would you like your Tranio to have on the audience?



Extension Task 4

Pair work. Compare Tranio disguised as Lucentio with Christopher Sly disguised as a nobleman. What are the key differences? You might like to create a Venn diagram of your ideas.

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Looking Back at Act 1

Task 1 – Debate: ‘Petruccio is a fortune-hunting rascal.’

Debate whether there is evidence in Act 1 to suggest that Petruccio is a fortune-hunter motivated solely by money.

Task 2 – Money makes the world go round

Who is paying? Make a bullet-point list of who is funding what by the end of Act 1. Write a paragraph summing up how money is portrayed in the first act of the play.

Task 3 – Who is deceiving who?

Draw a ‘Deception in Act 1’ mind map which shows who is lying to or deceiving who. Is there anyone who is telling the truth and not trying to deceive anybody?

Act 1 Quiz

- Where is Lucentio from?
 - Pisa
 - Venice
 - Verona
- Where is Petruccio from?
 - Mantua
 - Verona
 - Florence
- What is Petruccio’s father’s name?
 - Vincentio
 - Baptista
 - Antonio
- Where does the play take place?
 - Florence
 - Mantua
 - Padua
- Which character is called a ‘pantaloon’ in the stage directions?
 - Gremio
 - Hortensio
 - Grumio
- What advice does Tranio give Lucentio about studying?
 - It will be best to focus on philosophy.
 - It will be best to focus on poetry and literature.
 - He should balance studying with pleasure.
- Baptista sets conditions for his would-be suitors. What are they?
 - Suitors must win a contest as provide her dowry.
 - Suitors will only marry after a husband dies.
 - Suitors will not marry until she has finished her education.
- What is Petruccio’s reason for visiting Padua?
 - To see his good friend.
 - To get over the death of his father.
 - To make a financial statement.
- What does Gremio tell Lucentio (via Cambio) to teach Bianca?
 - Books of love
 - Books of poetry
 - Music
- How many characters are mentioned as intending to adopt a child at the end of Act 1 (excluding the suitors)?
 - Three
 - Four
 - Five

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Act 2, Scene 1

Task 1 – The Dysfunctional Minola Family

Small group work. Read up to Baptista's speech which begins 'Was ever gentleman comes here?' (line 38)

Rewrite this extract in modern English. Don't worry about writing in verse – just the meaning of Shakespeare's dialogue. Then answer these questions:

1. Why does Katherina treat Bianca so roughly?
2. Is Bianca a blameless victim or does she provoke Katherina?
3. How does Baptista treat his daughters?
4. What does Katherina complain to her father about?
5. Are you sympathetic towards any of the Minola family?

Critical opinion

Fiona Shaw, who played Katherina in 1987, has said that 'Kate talks a lot about marriage and seems to want to get married... you've got to believe that she's not mad. She would marry someone who was marriageable.' (*Clamorous Voices*, Carol R. O'Connell, Women's Press, 1988, p. 10) Is there any evidence in this extract from Act 2, Scene 1 to support Shaw's opinion?

Task 2 – Setting up the Wooing Scene

Small group work. Read from the entrance of *Gremio*, *Lucentio (disguised as Cambio)* (*disguised as Litio*), *Tranio (disguised as Lucentio)* and *Biondello* (line 38) until Petruchio's entrance (line 58).

The purpose of this extract is to make us eager to see Katherina and Petruchio together. How does the extract create anticipation? Find three examples which make you excited to see Katherina and Petruchio together. Analyse the dramatic impact of your examples.

Task 3 – Director's Notes

Pair or small group work. How should the actors playing Baptista and Petruchio perform the exchange below?

Look at the exchange below. Discuss how the lines should be delivered, any facial expressions that might be appropriate, and how the characters should react to each other's words.

Baptista: Good morrow, neighbour Gremio. God save you, gentleman.

Petruchio: And you, good sir. Pray have you not a daughter
Called Katherina, fair and virtuous?

Baptista: I have a daughter, sir, called Katherina.

Gremio: You are too blunt; go to it orderly.

Petruchio: You wrong me, Signor Gremio. Give me leave.

[*To Baptista*] I am a gentleman of Verona, sir,
That hearing of her beauty and her wit,
Her affability and bashful modesty,
Her wondrous qualities and mild behaviour,
Am bold to show myself a forward guest
Within your house, to make mine eye the witness
Of that report which I so oft have heard.
And for an entrance to my entertainment,
I do present you with a man of mine,

[*Presents Hortensio.*]
Cunning in music and the mathematics,
To instruct her fully in those sciences,
Whereof I know she is not ignorant.
Accept of him, or else you do me wrong.
His name is Litio, born in Mantua.

Baptista: Y'are welcome, sir, and he for your good sake,
But for my daughter Katherine, this I know:
She is not for your turn, the more my grief.

Critical opinion

Some critics think that Petruchio's description of Katherina is ideal. Elizabethan women were expected to be obedient, which Petruchio suggests she is. Would you want to share any of these qualities? How does Petruchio describe her?

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Points to consider

Note the way Shakespeare has structured Act 1, Scene 2 so that Petruchio’s description of Katherina as an ideal gentlewoman occurs immediately after he has seen her strike and tie up her sister, argue with her father and leave the stage vowing revenge. How should the audience react when they hear Petruchio’s

Task 4 – Theme: Male Rivalry

Small group work. The male rivalry from Act 1, Scene 2 continues as Petruchio, Gremio (disguised as Lucentio) jostle to be accepted as suitors. Read lines 38–137.

Make notes on the three men in response to these questions:

- How do they make themselves seem like desirable sons-in-law?
- What do they say about themselves?
- What offers do they make?
- Are there any key similarities/differences in the suitors’ approaches?

Points to consider

Baptista’s dowry for Katherina of 20,000 crowns is a huge sum, the equivalent of £4 million today (enough to buy almost 3,000 horses when the play was written). Why do you think Shakespeare makes Katherina’s dowry so large?

Task 5 – Make Them Laugh

Pair or small group work. The prelude to the wooing scene can be very funny on account of these comic devices, from the entrance of Gremio, Lucentio, etc. at line 38 up to Petruchio alone to wait for Katherina. Analyse their significance and impact:

Incongruity	Comic exaggeration
Irony	Physical comedy
Comic warnings	Comic timing

Discussion Point

Some critics suggest this extract (lines 38–164) proves Petruchio is genuinely excited about meeting Katherina, that he is offering her a huge sum of money. Can you find textual evidence to support or contradict this?

Task 6 – Petruchio’s Soliloquy

Read the soliloquy Petruchio delivers alone on stage which begins ‘I pray you do. I will not say you are fair, for that you are not, though I will say you are a wrench, for that you are. (line 165) In this soliloquy Petruchio creates another version of Katherina and decides what to do with her. Create and fill in a table like the one below.

If Katherina...	I will...
complains	
frowns	
refuses to speak	
tells me to go away	
refuses to marry me	

- How would you describe Petruchio’s approach to wooing Katherina?
- What impact is he hoping to have on Katherina?
- How does this version of Katherina compare with Petruchio’s previous description of her?

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Task 7 – The Wooing

Discuss these questions with a partner before you read the wooing extract from *A*

1. Imagine what Baptista says to Katherina when he sends her to Petruchio.
2. Why does Katherina obey her father?
3. How should Katherina enter the stage?

Now read from Katherina's entrance at line 165 up to the end of Petruchio's speech (have Katherina to my wife.)

(You will find a glossary and link to a 'translation' of the wooing scene in the Teach Meanings. Watch the scene shortly after reading it. You can find YouTube examples here:

1. The Taming of the Shrew (2012), Shakespeare's Globe
[zzed.uk/12950-youtube1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=12950-youtube1)
(Not the whole wooing scene but gives a flavour of an interpretation of the wooing scene – feisty and give as good as they get verbally.)
2. Meryl Streep, Raul Julia (Shakespeare in the Park, televised 1981)
[zzed.uk/12950-youtube2](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=12950-youtube2)
(This extract of the wooing scene is worth watching because of the physical interaction between the actors – would such a staging of the play be acceptable today? Do the actions speak louder than words?)
3. The Taming of the Shrew (2019), Royal Shakespeare Company
[zzed.uk/12950-youtube3](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=12950-youtube3)
(The gender roles were swapped in this production – a female Petruchio wooed Katherina. This extract is useful for discussing how gender roles are constructed in *The Taming of the Shrew*.)

Points to consider

In a Marxist reading of the play, Natasha Korda comments on the meaning of 'cate', which Petruchio uses in the wooing scene. She says: 'The Oxford English Dictionary defines cates as "provisions or victuals bought (as distinguished from those usually more delicate and dainty than, those of home production)." The word comes from the Old French 'achat' meaning 'purchase'. What is ironic about Petruchio's use of this word in this scene?

(See Natasha Korda, 'Household Kates: Domesticating Commodities in *The Taming of the Shrew*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (Summer, 1996), pp. 109–131)

Task 8 – Form: Stichomythia

In the wooing scene, Katherina and Petruchio speak in stichomythia – dialogue in which characters speak alternate lines, or half lines, of verse. On the page it looks as if the characters are speaking other's lines. In Greek drama stichomythia was used when two characters were in conflict.

The Merriam Webster dictionary says:

'In stichomythia terse, contentious, and often biting lines are bandied back and forth. In stichomythia may alternately voice antithetical positions, or they may play on one another's words, twisting or punning on words just spoken to make a new point.'

[zzed.uk/12950-stichomythia](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=12950-stichomythia)

This is the pattern that is repeated in the stichomythia:

- Katherina insults Petruchio.
- Petruchio responds by contradicting Katherina, twisting her words, punning on her words.

Arguably, Katherina only insults Petruchio because he begins their first encounter by insulting her. He calls her Kate – the familiar, diminutive form of her name. She responds in a series of puns.

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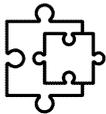


Think about how you would feel if someone you had only just met chose to address you by a shortened version of your name, without asking permission.

How does Katherina insult Petruchio? Work with a partner to add meanings/explanations to the table. Then add comments on how Petruchio responds to each insult – does he ignore it? Use puns? Make a bawdy joke?

	Insult	Meaning	
1	A movable		
2	A joint stool		
3	ass		
4	jade		
5	swain		
6	buzzard		
7	fool		
8	coxcomb		
9	craven		
10	crab		
11	withered		
12	witless		

Which of these insults is your favourite? Why?



Extension Task 1

Write a paragraph comparing Katherina's violence towards Petruchio with her violence elsewhere in this scene and in Act 1. Does Katherina's violence make her seem more powerful or more repulsive? Share your work with a partner.

Critical opinion – Katherina's Violence

It is important to understand why Katherina strikes Petruchio. She hits him because he has just made a joke about oral sex. (See lines 210–214.)

Fiona Shaw, who played Katherina in 1987, comments, 'She doesn't mind all that he's up for that, but nobody speaks to her obscenely. She walks down, he looks at her, she slaps him. I think she is really appalled. That slap is the first clue that Kate's behaviour is not just a performance of dignity.' (*Clamorous Voices*, Carol Rutter, The Women's Press, 1988, p. 11)

In her article, 'Cruel Comedy? The Taming of the Shrew' (*emagazine* 68, April 1998), Fiona Shaw comments on the wooing scene and Katherina's violence:

'The climax of the rhetoric for Katherina is her triumphant proclamation that she is a woman of a certain telling detail in a culture which prized female silence. Petruccio produces an effect by provoking her to violence.'

Do you agree that Katherina is provoked into violence when Petruchio makes her a joke? Is her striking of Petruchio an act of a powerful or powerless woman? Do you think Petruchio would respond to Katherina's striking of Petruchio in the same way as the Earl of Gloucester responds to the Duke of Burgundy's striking of him?

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Task 9 – Petruchio’s Power Moves

Pair work. Petruchio uses a range of techniques to assert dominance over Katherine. Work with a partner to find textual evidence to illustrate these ideas. Discuss the

	Petruchio’s power move	Textual evidence	Line
1	Sexual innuendo		
2	Physical threat		
3	Using imagery of food to describe her		
4	Using imagery of animals to describe her		
5	Refusing to let her leave / end the conversation		
6	Telling her what her reputation is		
7	Making her walk for him		
8	Telling her what he and her father have decided for her		
9	Referring to her looks		
10	Telling her how he will treat her after marriage		

Discussion Point

Petruchio and Toxic Male Behaviour

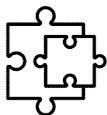
In his article, ‘The Gaslighting of Katherine – The Taming of the Shrew’ (emagazine 88, April 2020), Simon Bubb suggests that Petruchio gaslights Katherine during the wooing scene. He says Petruchio gaslights Katherine

‘In his first words to her he trivialises her by using the diminutive form of her name (‘that’s your name I hear’, 2.1.182). Then upon being corrected (‘They call me Kate’, 2.1.183) he contradicts her... ‘You lie, in faith, for you are call’d plain [simply] Kate’ (2.1.184). Petruchio gaslights her... by telling her what others supposedly call her behind her back (‘Kate the shrew’, 2.1.185) and by referring to himself as ‘the doctor’ (‘I’ll be the doctor’, 2.1.186). Is this an example of what some controversial modern pick-up artists

Definition of negging:

‘An act of emotional manipulation whereby a person makes a deliberate backhanded or otherwise flirtatious remark to another person to undermine their confidence and to gain the manipulator’s approval.’ *Wikipedia*

- Do you agree with Bubb’s assessment?
- Is Petruchio a toxic male, or is he a good partner for a feisty woman like Katherine?



Extension Task 2

Pair work. Create a flow chart or write a paragraph summing up your thoughts on the wooing scene. These questions might help you formulate your ideas.

- Are Petruchio and Katherine well matched?
- Are they attracted to each other?
- Who won the battle of wits? How?
- Did Petruchio deserve to be struck by Katherine?

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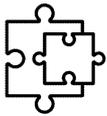


Task 10 – Petruchio Brazens It Out

Small group work. Read from the stage directions ‘Enter Baptista, Gremio and Tranio’ to ‘Exeunt Petruchio and Katherina separately’ (lines 268–313).

Answer these questions on this extract:

1. What is Katherina’s attitude to Petruchio and her father in her speech which begins ‘I am ashamed that you should call me Katherina’ (line 274)
2. What does Petruchio mean when he tells Baptista that Katherina is ‘curst... for ’twixt us twain... That she shall still be curst in company’? (lines 281, 293)
3. Compare Petruchio’s description of his courtship of Katherina with what really happened in the real scene. Make two bullet-point lists:
 - a) Petruchio’s version
 - b) The reality
4. Why does Petruchio say he’s going to Venice?
5. What is the significance of the stage direction ‘Exeunt Petruchio and Katherina’?

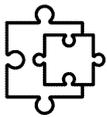


Extension Task 3

Pair or small group work. Respond to this question: ‘Discuss how Shakespeare presents gender and power in this extract.’ (lines 268–313) Make a bullet-point plan or write an introduction to the essay.

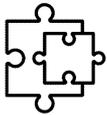
Task 11 – Director’s Notes

Pair work. Write director’s notes for the actor playing Katherina. How should she perform about her during this extract? What facial expressions, gestures and actions could she use in her performance? How should she react when Petruchio says, ‘And kiss me, Kate. We will have some sport with this’?



Extension Task 4

Pair work. Write a speech for Katherina to deliver as she exits the stage in Act 2, Scene 1. Don’t worry about trying to use Shakespearean language – just go for it. Share your work with the class.



Extension Task 5

Petruchio compares Katherina to two famous women of myth and legend – Cleopatra and Lucrece – to Baptista, praising his wife-to-be’s excellent qualities. Find out more about Cleopatra (Grissel – line 284) and Lucretia (Lucrece – line 285). You might find www.bbc.com/culture/2014/02/140213_shakespeare_taming_of_the_shrew useful for this research. Discuss the significance of Shakespeare’s use of these classical references in showing off his classical education, playing the scene for laughs, mocking Katherina as a bride-to-be how he wants her to behave?

Task 12 – Elizabethan Courting Rituals

In the Elizabethan period it was typical for a couple to court for at least six months before marriage. The man would visit his bride-to-be and bring her gifts and love tokens such as rings and flowers. Both bride and groom were expected to agree to the marriage contract, even if they were not happy with their parents. During the Elizabethan period romance was not a prerequisite for marriage, but a good basis for a lifelong partnership. By the sixteenth century many thinkers believed that marriage (a loving union involving some equality between spouses) was preferable to arranged marriage until they were in their twenties, even though the legal age of marriage was 12 for girls and 14 for boys.

Discuss these questions:

- Which Elizabethan courting customs has Petruchio subverted in Act 2, Scene 1?
- Why has Baptista allowed him to subvert these customs?
- Do you believe that Petruchio and Katherina will have a companionate marriage?

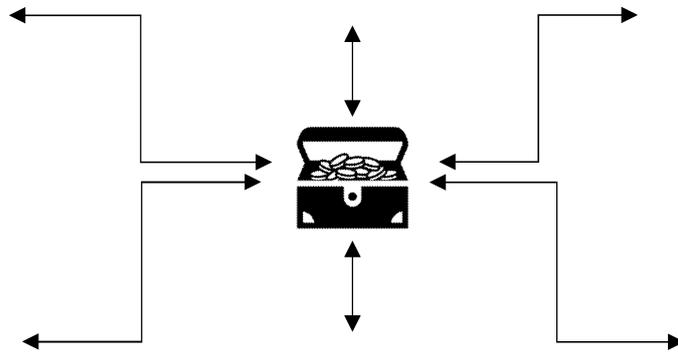
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Task 13 – Theme: Money

Pair or small group work. Read the final part of Act 2, Scene 1, from line 313 until line 387. Complete these tasks.

1. Create a mind map of references to money and merchandise in this extract (from line 313 to line 387). (The extract begins with 'gentlemen, now I play a merchant's part...' up to Baptista's exit at line 387).

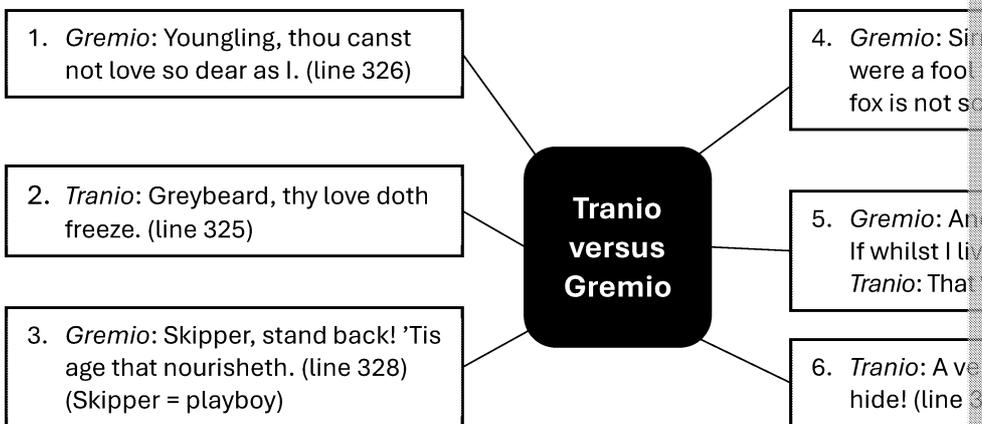


What do these references to money and merchandise show you about attitudes towards money in the play?

2. Compare the deal Baptista makes with Tranio and Gremio regarding Bianca with the deal Petruchio makes with Katherina for Petruchio's hand in marriage. What are the similarities and differences between the marriage deals? You could create a Venn diagram to compare the deals.

Task 14 – Form and Style: Mirroring

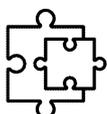
At the end of Act 2, Scene 1, the focus is on Tranio, who has a war of words with Gremio. This exchange mirrors the battle of wits between Katherina and Petruchio earlier in the play. Analyse the insults Gremio and Tranio hurl at each other. Discuss how this exchange mirrors Petruchio's wooing of Katherina.



Task 15 – Theme: Games and Gambling

By the end of Act 2, Scene 1, Petruchio and Tranio (disguised as Lucentio) can both be seen as gamblers, hoping to make their dreams come true. Tranio is working on behalf of Lucentio, while Petruchio is working for himself. Tranio uses a gaming metaphor, commenting how he has 'bluffed' his way through (line 394). This is a reference to bluffing while playing cards.

Write a paragraph comparing how Petruchio and Tranio have bluffed their way to success. Share your work with a partner.



Extension Task 6

Pair or small group work. Create a mind map of quotations and examples from the play that would help you write an essay about how Shakespeare presents games and gambling in *The Taming of the Shrew*.

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Looking Back at Act 2

Task 1 – Attitudes and Values: Gender and Power

Pair work. Make a list of five quotations from Act 2 which show how men rule the world. Analyse the language and meanings of the quotations you choose.

Task 2 – Petruchio’s Most Outrageous Moments

What are the five most outrageous things that Petruchio says or does in Act 2? Analyse the language. Which is the most outrageous item on your list? Does Petruchio’s outrageous behaviour have any justification?

Task 3 – Theme: Appearance and Reality

‘In Act 2, Petruchio is a winner because he refuses to accept reality. Instead, he creates a new reality for himself. Because he is an alpha male, he can make others accept the new reality.’
Discuss these comments with a partner. To what extent do you agree with them?

Task 4 – Attitudes and Values: Female Virtues

Pair or small group work. Make a list or mind map of comments the male characters make about Bianca’s desirable qualities in Act 2. Analyse the language used in these quotations. What examples suggest about Elizabethan attitudes to women? Are things different today?

Task 5 – Creative Writing Task

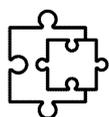
Individual or pair work. Choose one of these writing tasks. Share your work with a partner.

1. You are Katherina. You keep a journal. Write an entry for the day you met Petruchio about your sister, your father and your bridegroom.
2. You are Baptista. You visit the grave of your dead wife. Imagine what you would say to her about you’ve achieved today – getting husbands for both your daughters.
3. You are Petruchio. On your journey to Venice, tell your servant Grumio how you’re feeling about marriage and your bride-to-be.
4. You are Bianca. What would you say to your father when he tells you of his plan to marry you off to Petruchio?

Task 6 – (Silent) Debate

Make notes on the following statements. Be prepared to discuss your ideas with a partner. Add your comments to statement sheets in a silent debate, following your teacher’s instructions.

1. ‘Petruchio would not be a winner without the collusion of the other male characters. It is they who help him to emerge as “top dog” at the end of Act 2.’
2. ‘Petruchio and Katherina are genuinely attracted to each other and fall in love.’
3. ‘Petruchio and Katherina deserve each other. They are both violent bullies.’
4. ‘The male suitors in this play are abhorrent. They are all self-serving, egotistical and terrible husbands.’
5. ‘Money is more important than love. In fact, the only real love we see is love for money.’
6. ‘Baptista is the real winner in Act 2. He marries both his daughters off to suitors who are well provided for financially.’
7. ‘The message of Act 2 is that “might is right”. If you have enough strength, you can get what you want. That’s the way of the world.’
8. ‘Petruchio’s outrageous behaviour makes him funny and charismatic. He has the ability to charm.’
9. ‘The characters behave as if Katherina is a villain in Act 2, but really she’s a victim.’
10. ‘*The Taming of the Shrew* may be a comedy, but the wooing scene is not funny.’



Extension Task 1

Small group work. Students could make up more statements to add to the (silent) debate.

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Act 2 Quiz

1. What does Bianca say about her suitors when Katherina interrogates her at the start of Act 2, Scene 1?
 - a) She would like to marry a young man
 - b) She hasn't yet seen anyone she would like to marry
 - c) She finds Gremio old and repulsive
2. How many people does Katherina strike in Act 2, Scene 1?
 - a) One
 - b) Two
 - c) Three
3. What does Katherina say she wants to be revenged on Bianca for?
 - a) Her rudeness
 - b) Her silence
 - c) Her taunting of Katherina
 - d) Because Bianca is Baptista's favourite
4. Which of these is NOT a quality Petruchio praises Katherina for when he first meets Baptista?
 - a) Wondrous qualities
 - b) Bashful modesty
 - c) Beauteous face
 - d) Mild behaviour
5. What does Petruchio tell Baptista that Hortensio is a good teacher of?
 - a) Mathematics and music
 - b) Music and literature
 - c) Literature and classics
 - d) Latin and mathematics
6. What does Tranio (disguised as Lucentio) bring as a gift to Baptista's house?
 - a) A lute and books
 - b) Books and money
 - c) Cambio (Lucentio disguised as a tutor)
7. What does Petruchio tell Baptista about wooing Katherina?
 - a) He will come every day until he has won Katherina's love, and he will bring her gifts
 - b) He can't come every day to woo Katherina but believes he can easily win her love
 - c) He is confident he can win her love because he is rich and handsome
8. What does Katherina assault Hortensio with?
 - a) A Latin book
 - b) The lute
 - c) Her fists
8. What does Katherina assault Hortensio with?
 - a) A Latin book
 - b) The lute
 - c) Her fists
9. Which of these birds does Petruchio use to describe Petruchio's wooing of Katherina?
 - a) Nightingale
 - b) Buzzard
 - c) Turtle dove
 - d) Hawk
10. Which goddess does Petruchio compare Katherina to?
 - a) Diana, goddess of the moon
 - b) Minerva, goddess of wisdom
 - c) Venus, goddess of love
 - d) Juno, Queen of the Gods
11. When he comes to see Katherina gone, Baptista asks Petruchio 'What are your dumps'? What does Petruchio reply?
 - a) She is angry
 - b) She is vengeful
 - c) She is worried
 - d) She is unhappy
12. Which of these is NOT a word Petruchio uses to describe Petruchio to Baptista about his wife?
 - a) 'mad-cap ruffian'
 - b) 'half lunatic'
 - c) 'brazen lout'
 - d) 'swearing Jack'
13. What of these does Petruchio tell Katherina did when Petruchio wooed her?
 - a) Kissed him
 - b) Slapped him
 - c) Swore at him
 - d) Gave him a love letter
14. What does Petruchio tell Baptista he will do in Venice for?
 - a) To draw up the nuptial contract
 - b) To organise food for the wedding feast
 - c) To have the marriage licence
 - d) To buy clothing for Katherina
15. What condition does Petruchio set for Katherina (disguised as Lucentio) to marry Bianca?
 - a) His father must give her away
 - b) He must win Bianca's love
 - c) Gremio must agree to the match
 - d) He must buy Bianca a house in Padua to live in

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Act 3, Scene 1

Tasks to be completed by pairs / small groups after reading the scene.

Task 1 – Bianca the Puppet Master

- Analyse the language Bianca uses in her first speech in this scene. Pay particular attention to how she uses:
 - Pronouns (I, me, myself, we, you)
 - Commands
 - Figurative language (metaphor, imagery)
- Find three other examples from this scene which show that Bianca has power. Write a table like this one, or to a flow chart, and analyse them.

	Example	Comments
1		
2		
3		

- What have you learned about Bianca from this scene? Write a paragraph summarising your findings. Use evidence from Act 3, Scene 1.

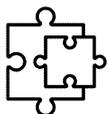
Task 2 – Theme: Male Rivalry

- Compare the methods Lucentio and Hortensio use to woo Bianca. Make notes on:
 - How they speak to and about each other
 - How they speak to Bianca
 - How they reveal who they are and how they feel
- Write director's notes for the actors on how to perform this scene. You want to emphasise male rivalry. How could Hortensio and Lucentio convey their rivalry physically on stage in relation to each other? What should they be doing during their lessons to increase suspicion in each other? What could the actor playing Bianca do to increase suspicion?

Task 3 – Irony

Discuss these examples of irony from Act 3, Scene 1.

- Lucentio chooses to use Ovid's *Heroides* for his Latin lesson. The *Heroides* is a collection of poems, presented as if they have been written by heroines of mythology to their mistreated, neglected or deserted lovers. The lines Lucentio uses to reveal his lesson are from a letter in which Penelope, Queen of Ithaca, writes to her husband Ulysses, while she waits for him to return and marry her. Ulysses has been away for 20 years during the Trojan Wars. During this time, Penelope remains faithful to Ulysses, despite being urged to remarry. She comes up with various excuses to keep 100+ unwelcome suitors at bay.
- Bianca, who has been praised for her maidenly modesty, silence and submission, is introduced with these words: 'I am not so nice / To change true rules for odd inventions / Or to follow fantastical new ideas)
- Shakespeare makes Hortensio tutor Bianca in lute playing. Lutes were notorious for being difficult to play.
- Hortensio says he will reject Bianca if she proves to be of easy virtue ('if thy tongue / To cast thy wand'ring eyes on every stale...' (lines 86–89). He uses a hawking metaphor to describe her and she is the bird he commands.



Extension Task 1

Follow up your discussion of irony by writing a paragraph about how Shakespeare uses irony in Act 3, Scene 1.

Task 4 – Comparison of the Wooing Scenes

Compare this wooing scene with the wooing of Katherina. Identify five key differences.

Task 5 – Theme: Gender and Power

Debate this statement: 'Bianca seems to have the most power in this scene, but Hortensio shows that men are still in charge.' To what extent do you agree with this opinion?

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Act 3, Scene 2

Task 1 – Pre-reading Small Group / Class Discussion

- Describe a dream wedding.
- Describe a nightmare wedding.
- Make a list of all the things that could go wrong on a wedding day.

Task 2 – Pre-wedding Nerves?

Small group work. Read up to the entrance of Biondello at line 30.

A.

Make a list of:

1. Baptista's concerns
2. Katherina's worries

B.

Analyse Katherina's and Tranio's descriptions of the missing bridegroom. Summarise each. Which version of Petruchio is the true one? Or would you describe him in other words?

Katherina on Petruchio	Tranio on Petruchio
A 'mad-brain rudesby' (line 10) (rudesby = lout/ ruffian)	'Means but well' (line 22)
'Full of spleen' (line 10) (has a changeable temper)	'Blunt' (line 23) (blunt = tactless, rude)
'A frantic fool' (line 12) (frantic = mad, delirious)	'Passing wise' (line 24)
'Hiding his bitter jests in blunt behaviour' (line 13)	'Merry' (line 25) (merry = cheerful)
'Never means to wed where he hath wooed' (line 17)	'honest' (line 25)

Points to consider

It seems odd that it is Tranio, disguised as Lucentio, who speaks as if he knows Petruchio well. Why do you think Shakespeare gives Tranio these lines, when it would make more sense coming from Petruchio's friend Hortensio?

Task 3 – Imagine...

Pair or small group work. What happens offstage after Katherina leaves the stage with Bianca and others' at line 26? Write a short scene with dialogue and stage directions and the other characters. Share your scene with your classmates.

Task 4 – Textual Analysis

Pair or small group work. Use the first 30 lines of the scene for a textual analysis task. You could respond to this prompt:

'Katherina is a victim of the patriarchy on her wedding day and throughout *The Taming of the Shrew*. To what extent do you agree? Discuss how Shakespeare presents Katherina as a victim and elsewhere in the play.'

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Task 5 – Here Comes the Bridegroom

Small group work. Read from Biondello’s entrance at line 30 up to Petruchio’s entrance at line 39.

Biondello’s description of the bizarre trio creates anticipation. We will be eager to see Petruchio and Grumio. Pick out the details that you find most amusing or outrageous.

Petruchio	The horse



What would be the modern equivalent of a bridegroom wedding like this? Describe a twenty-first-century Petruchio wedding entourage.

Task 6 – Petruchio’s Arrival in His ‘Mad Attire’

Small group work. Read from the stage direction ‘Enter Petruchio and Grumio’ at line 113 to the exit with Baptista, Gremio, Biondello, etc. at line 117.

The emphasis is still on Petruchio’s appearance. How do Baptista and Tranio try to change his clothes, and how does Petruchio resist them?

- Baptista says...*
- Tranio says...*
- Petruchio says...*

Task 7 – The ‘Mad Marriage’: Storyboard the Wedding of Katherine

Small group work. Read from line 118, where Tranio says to Lucentio, ‘But, sir, to do this add...’ up to ‘Enter Petruchio, Katherine...’ at line 174.

Using Gremio’s descriptions, create a storyboard for the marriage ceremony. Add what the characters are saying and doing. (See below for a storyboard template.)

When you have completed the storyboard, decide which of the things that Petruchio does during the ceremony is the most outrageous. Why does he behave this way? Identify three

Shot ...	Action
	Dialogue



Shakespeare chooses not to stage the wedding of Petruchio and Katherine. Instead, while it takes place offstage, Lucentio and Tranio enable Lucentio to marry Bianca. During this discussion, Lucentio and Tranio like to elope with Bianca and marry in secret. So the wedding either. Why doesn’t Shakespeare stage the wedding?

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Extension Task 1 – Watch the Wedding Scene

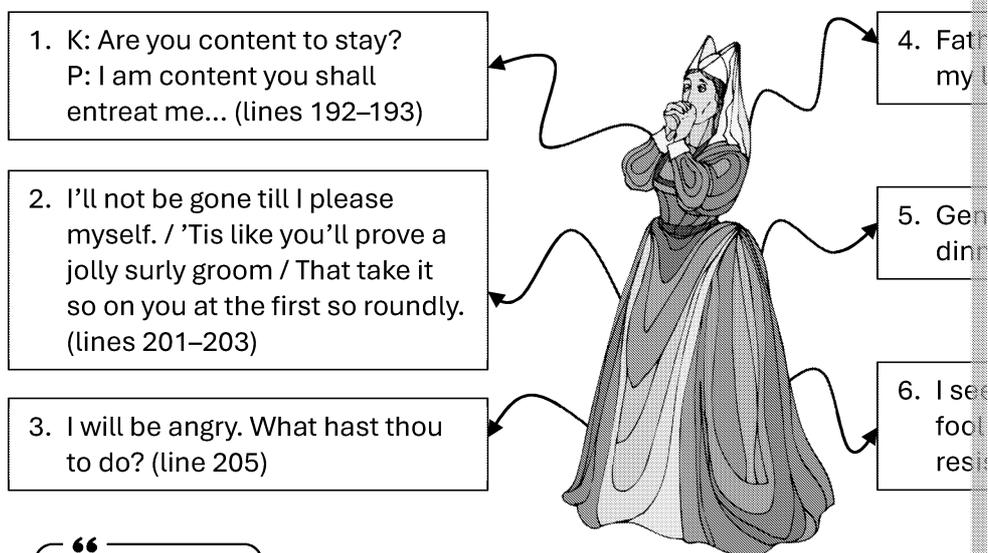
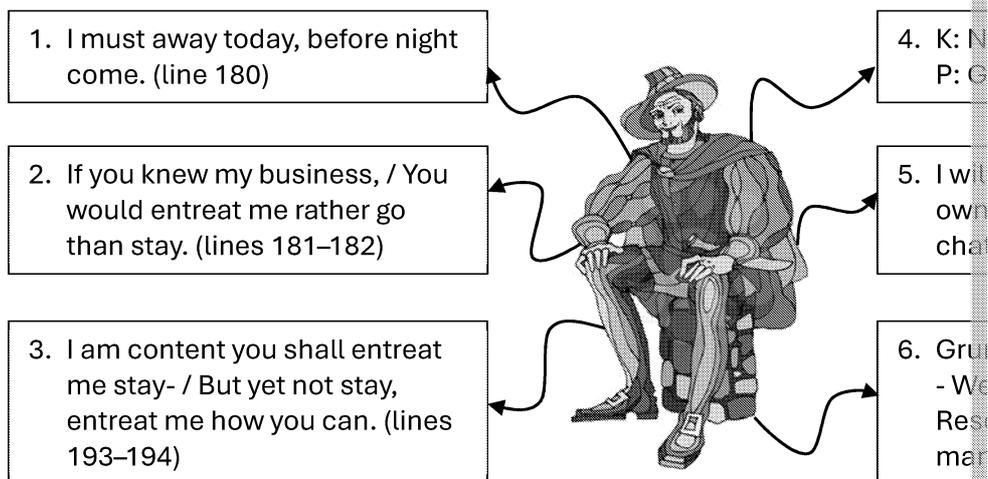
If your school or college has an ERA account, you can watch the 1966 French production of *The Taming of the Shrew*. It is in the BBC Shakespeare archive. Zeffirelli. Here is a link: zzed.uk/12950-tamingoftheshrew (The film is also available on DVD.)



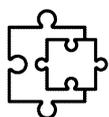
Task 9 – Katherina versus Petruchio

Small group work. Read from line 174, when Petruchio and Katherina return from the ceremony, up to the end of the scene.

Analyse the examples on these mind maps. Compare the tactics and linguistic techniques used to try to get their own way.



Discussion Point Why does Katherina lose this battle? **AO2**



Extension Task 2

Compare the battle of wills on the wedding day with the verbal battle between Petruchio and Katherina in Act 2, Scene 1. How are Petruchio's Act 3 tactics similar to his tactics in the wooing scene? Work with a partner to create a flow chart to keep track of your ideas.

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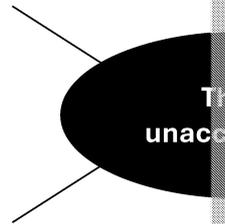


Discussion Point

‘The sexism of Petruchio’s speech about owning Katherina is not acceptable today. It should not be played for laughs.’ What do you think?

Task 10 – Social Norms and Values

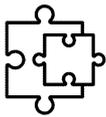
Pair or small group work. Add examples of socially unacceptable things that Petruchio and Katherina say and do on their wedding day to a mind map like this:



Would any of these words or actions be socially acceptable at a wedding today?

Task 11 – Critical Opinion

Read these comments and write a paragraph in response. ‘Petruchio subverts social norms on his wedding day to teach Katherina a lesson about her behavior. He does not want a shrewish wife who shames him, as she has shamed her father. Share your paragraph with a classmate.



Extension Task 3– Petruchio the Bully?

Pair work. Use the final part of Act 3, Scene 2 for a textual analysis task. Focus on line 174 when Petruchio says ‘Gentlemen and friends, I thank you for your presence in the scene. Respond to this essay question:

‘Explore the presentation of Petruchio in this extract and elsewhere in the play.’

Critical opinion

Carol Rutter comments on the way this scene was played in the 1987 RSC production of *The Taming of the Shrew*. ‘Brian Cox made the scene ludicrous but dangerous. He directed most of the famous “goods and chattels” speech not to Kate but to the crowd, with the intention of seizing his property... Kate got the message. “They shall not touch my goods and chattels” was both a threat and a promise.’ What do you think of this interpretation of the scene? (Clamorous Voices, Carol Rutter, The Women’s Press, 1988, p. 13)

Task 12 – Comedy in Act 3

Pair or small group work. Today, audiences might not find it funny when Katherina is taken away against her will. However, the final exchange at the end of Act 3, Scene 2 suggests that the men are amused by what they have just witnessed. Look for sources of comedy in Act 3, Scene 2.

Visual comedy	Wordplay/puns	
Physical comedy / slapstick	Comic exaggeration	

- Which is your favourite comic moment? Why?
- Are there any moments which are supposed to be funny but you find it hard to laugh at?

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Looking Back at Act 3

Task 1

Individual or pair work. Plan or write a short essay explaining how Shakespeare uses devices in Act 3. Support your ideas with textual evidence.

Task 2 – Theme: Social Status

Pair or small group work.

- A. Collect references to clothing from Act 3 and make a mind map. What do they tell you about the theme of social status?
- B. Collect five examples and/or quotations from Act 3 where characters are worried about or fear public humiliation. What do these examples show about sixteenth-century attitudes to public humiliation?

Act 3 Quiz: True or False?

Pair work. Justify why you think these statements are true or false:

1. Bianca admits to Lucentio (disguised as Cambio) that she loves him when he visits her in Act 3, Scene 1.
2. Hortensio's desire for Bianca wanes when he sees her treating Lucentio (disguised as Cambio) favourably.
3. Petruchio is late to his wedding because he fell off his horse and had to be taken to the hospital.
4. Baptista refuses to allow Petruchio to marry Katherina unless he dresses in a more respectable manner.
5. Katherina refuses to marry Petruchio because he has humiliated her publicly.
6. Petruchio blasphemes in church during the wedding ceremony.
7. Petruchio tells Baptista he can't stay for the wedding feast because he has to return to his home in Verona.
8. Petruchio threatens to take legal action against anyone who tries to stop him from taking away from Padua.
9. Bianca says she feels sorry for Katherina because she's married to a mad man.
10. Baptista tells Bianca he will go ahead with the wedding feast because he thinks her prospective son-in-law Tranio (disguised as Lucentio) is better than Petruchio.



Extension Task 1

Individual or pair work. Write an article for a Paduan newspaper, magazine or website which covers local news. You have been asked to report on the wedding of Petruchio and Katherina which has scandalised Padua. You can include quotes from guests who were at the wedding. Make sure you give your article an exciting headline which grabs the reader's attention. e.g. 'The Weirdest Wedding Ever!'



Extension Task 2

Small group work. Write and record a podcast about the key events of Act 3. Use a question-and-answer format. The presenter asks their guests about what happened before, during and after Petruchio's wedding. If you like, your guests can be characters from the play (i.e. the podcast is a role play). If you prefer, your guests can be literary critics. Remember to write an introduction and a conclusion for the podcast, with the presenter signing off, to help orientate the listeners.

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Act 4, Scene 1

Task 1 – Grumio Arrives at Petruchio’s House

Small group work. Read from the start of the scene up to the entrance of Petruchio. Answer these questions:

1. What does Grumio complain about in his opening speech?
2. What is Petruchio’s house like?
3. How would you describe the relationship between Grumio and the other servants?
4. What preparations have been made to welcome the bride and groom?
5. What happened on the journey home?
6. Why is Grumio so concerned about the appearance and manners of the servants?



Extension Task – Act It Out

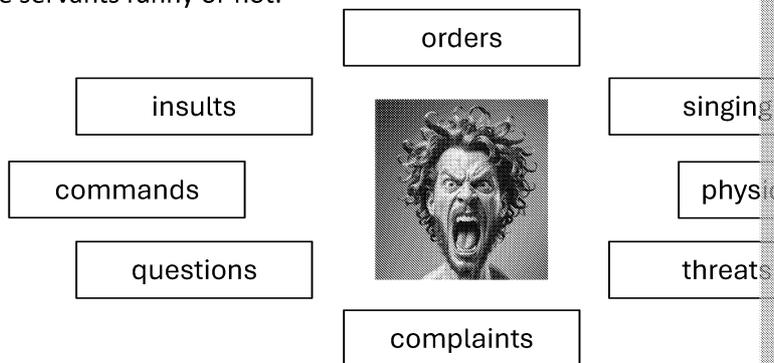
Pair or small group work. Write a script with dialogue and stage directions for Petruchio’s journey home and then read/act it out.

Points to consider

After hearing Grumio’s description of the journey home, Curtis comments, ‘I am reckoning he is more shrew than she.’ (line 63) Do you think this is true? Has Petruchio shown shrewish tendencies all the way through the play?

Task 3 – Petruchio at Home

Pair or small group work. Read from Petruchio’s entrance with Katherina at line 91 to line 159. Add examples of Petruchio’s behaviour to a mind map. Discuss whether Petruchio and the servants funny or not.



Points to consider

Is Curtis correct when he says, ‘He kills her in her own humour’ (line 151)? Is Petruchio putting on an act to tame Katherina, or are we seeing the ‘real’ Petruchio in this scene? Has Katherina ever behaved like Petruchio does in this scene?

Task 4 – Director’s Notes – What About Katherina?

Pair or small group work. What advice would the director give the actor playing Katherina performing this scene?

- How should she deliver the few lines she has to speak?
- What should she try to convey with her body language?
- What sort of costume should she wear, and what state should it be in?
- How should she move?
- What should her facial expressions show?
- What should Katherina be thinking during this scene?

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Critical opinion

Critic Carol Rutter says, 'Petruccio at home looks mindlessly violent.' (*Clamor*, The Women's Press, 1988, p. 15) Rutter asked the actor Fiona Shaw, who played Katherina, 'Is Petruccio really violent, or is it only a ploy?' Shaw replied, 'Petruccio's violence may be real to Kate, so that we can see what she's dealing with... it's this man who is now taking her to bed. I don't want to be earnest about it, but this is the reality that she thinks she's in. And that's marriage.' (*Clamorous Voices*, p. 15) Discuss these views.

Task 5 – Petruccio's Soliloquy

Pair or small group work. Answer the following questions:

- Read from line 159 to the end of the scene. Try reading Petruccio's soliloquy in a weary, triumphant, cruel, thoughtful.
 - Which style works best?
 - Does Petruccio's tone change?
 - How should Petruccio speak the last two lines, which are addressed to himself?
- Summarise Petruccio's plan to tame Katherina.
- Why does Shakespeare use images of falconry in Petruccio's soliloquy?
- Brian Morris, editor of the 1981 Arden edition of the text, says that Petruccio's soliloquy is 'a misogynistic rant that has no place on stage in the twenty-first century.' Do you agree? Discuss what you think Morris means.
- 'A misogynistic rant that has no place on stage in the twenty-first century.' Do you agree? Discuss what you think Morris means.
- Some critics suggest that Petruccio will suffer as much as Katherina during the sleep- and food-deprived too. Do you agree?

Points to consider

Petruccio's reference to killing his wife with kindness (line 179) was a phrase used in the sixteenth century. It means to harm someone by overindulging them. Do you think this is what Petruccio has been doing in Act 4, Scene 1, or do you think he's been doing something else?

Act 4, Scene 2

Task 1 – Love and Marriage in the Subplot

Small group work. Read from the start of the scene up to Biondello's entrance at line 10. Answer these questions:

- Why does Hortensio decide to give up pursuing Bianca?
- What are Hortensio's new marriage plans?
- Where does Tranio say Hortensio has gone, and why?
- What has happened in the relationship between Bianca and Lucentio (disguised as Biondello) in Act 3, Scene 1?



Extension Task 1

Lucentio tells Bianca he is reading Ovid's *The Art of Love* (*Ars Amatoria*), a Latin poetry teaching readers about the art of seduction, published around 2 AD. Do you think Lucentio needs to find out more. Ovid was Shakespeare's favourite poet. Is it ironic that Lucentio is reading Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* to help him seduce Bianca? Does he need lessons in the art of seduction?

Here are some helpful links for researching Ovid:

zzed.uk/12950-ars-armatoria

zzed.uk/12950-ovid1

zzed.uk/12950-ovid2

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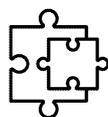


Task 2 – Attitudes towards Women

How do Tranio and Hortensio speak about women in this extract? Analyse the quotations. Identify who/what is being spoken about in each example.

	Speaker	Quotation
1	Tranio	'She bears me fair in hand' (she's deceiving me / stringing me along) (line 3)
2	Tranio	'O... unconstant womankind!' (line 14)
3	Tranio	'mine eyes are witness of her lightness' (lightness = fickle behaviour)
4	Hortensio	'one unworthy all the former favours / That I have fondly flattered' (line 30)
5	Tranio	'Fie on her! See how beastly she doth court him.' (beastly = unbecomingly) (line 34)
6	Hortensio	'I will be married to a wealthy widow / Ere three days pass, who has loved me.' (lines 37–38)
7	Hortensio	'this proud disdainful haggard' (haggard = wild hawk) (line 39)
8	Hortensio	'Kindness in women, not their beauteous looks, / Shall win the day' (lines 41–42)
9	Tranio	'he'll have a lusty widow now / That shall be wooed and wedded' (lines 50–51)
10	Tranio	'Ay, and he'll tame her... Petruchio is the master, / That teaches the shrew / To tame a shrew and charm her chattering tongue.' (lines 56–58)

Sum up the perfect woman, according to Hortensio and Tranio.



Extension Task 2

Pair or small group work. Compare what men say about female behaviour in this scene and Petruchio's soliloquy in the previous scene. Note similarities and differences, including the imagery used. You could record your findings on a mind map.

Task 3 – Bianca – Potential Shrew?

Find and discuss three pieces of textual evidence from this scene which suggest Lucentio being the dominant partner in his marriage to Bianca.

Task 4 – The Fake Vincentio

Pair work. Read from Biondello's entrance at line 59 until the end of the scene. Note what Tranio tells to get the Pedant to play along with him and pretend to be Vincentio. List at least five lies.

Task 5 – Tranio's Role

Pair or small group work. What roles and functions does Tranio play in this scene?

Task 6 – Theme: Appearance and Reality

Pair or small group work. Who is in disguise – literally or metaphorically – at this point? Make a mind map which includes the characters in disguise, noting who is pretending and who is hiding their true self. What are the motives and purposes of each disguise? Record your ideas on a poster or a flip chart.

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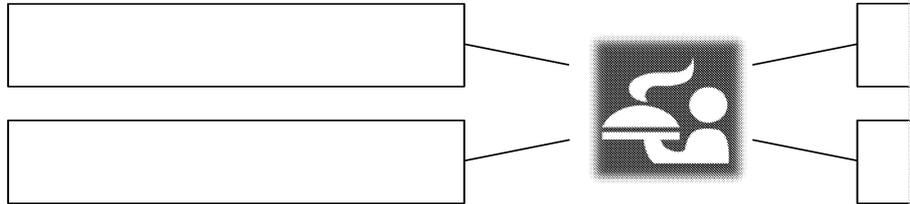
Act 4, Scene 3

Task 1 – The Taming Part 2

Small group work. Read up to the exit of the Tailor at line 162.

1. **Grumio’s Role**

Find four pieces of textual evidence which show how Grumio’s behaviour might



Is Grumio enjoying his role? Use the textual evidence you have found to write about the role Grumio plays in this scene.

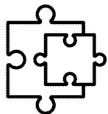
2. **Hortensio’s Role (AO2, AO5)**

Discuss these ideas: ‘Hortensio is a willing stooge of Petruchio at his taming of Katherina. Does he have any respect for him in Act 4, Scene 3. He colludes in cruelty and humiliation.’ Use textual evidence to support your ideas.

Task 2 – Petruchio’s Power

Individual or pair work. Copy and complete this table:

	Petruchio’s tactics	Example
1	Telling Katherina how to think and behave	
2	Testing Katherina	
3	Punishing behaviour he doesn’t like	
4	Controlling Katherina’s movements	
5	Controlling Katherina’s wardrobe	
6	Ignoring and twisting what Katherina says	
7	Pretending what he’s doing is for Katherina’s benefit	
8	Using verbal violence to demonstrate his power	



Extension Task 1

Individual or pair work. Write an essay plan or an essay in response to this question: ‘Act 4, Scene 3 shows that Petruchio is an alpha male who is in full control of Katherina. To what extent do you agree?’

Use textual evidence from your Petruchio’s Power table to support your answer.

Task 3 – Katherina: Has her Spirit Been Broken?

Individual or pair work. Add textual evidence and comments to a table like this:

	Katherina is still a strong and feisty woman	Katherina’s spirit is broken
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

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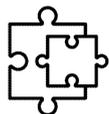
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Critical opinion

Michael Fynes-Clinton and Perry Mills, editors of the 1992 Cambridge School edition of the play, comment on Katherina's speech at line 74: 'Katherina starts to be angry, and to express anger in words. It is an inspired speech. She speaks for herself, but for all women in every century, in a passionate plea for the female voice. But will men listen?' (p. 132)

Do you agree this speech is inspiring, or is it pointless because the men on stage don't listen to what Katherina says?



Extension Task 2

Pair work. Write a short speech to deliver to your class. Discuss how Katherina is presented in this scene. Add comments on how she is treated and how she is treated. Share your speech with your classmates.

Task 4 – Petruchio Has the Last Word

Small group work. Read from the exit of the Tailor at line 163 to the end of the scene.

1. What is the moral lesson of Petruchio's long speech?
2. Why does Petruchio insist it is seven o'clock?
3. What tone of voice should Petruchio use to deliver his final speech in this scene?
4. What tone of voice should Hortensio use to deliver the last line of the scene?

Task 5 – Group Discussion

1. Has Petruchio gained or lost power during his time at home with Katherina?
2. How do you feel about Petruchio using (and abusing) other men to help him tame Katherina?
3. What is the difference between Petruchio and Katherina expressing anger in this scene?
4. Why has Petruchio chosen this moment to return to Padua?
5. Is there a danger that Petruchio's taming won't work – that he will be humiliated back to Padua?



Extension Task 3– Agony Aunt

Pair work. What advice would you give Katherina at the end of this scene? Should she continue to assert her own will and speak her mind? Should she submit to Petruchio? Remember – divorce is not an option.

Write a letter from Katherina to the agony aunt which begins, 'Dear Agony Aunt, I need your advice about...' Then write a reply from the agony aunt to Katherina which begins, 'Dear Katherina, my advice to you is...' If you like, one person can be Katherina, and the other can be the agony aunt.

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Act 4, Scene 4

Tasks to be completed in pairs / small groups after reading the scene.

Task 1 – Tranio in Control

Make notes on how Tranio:

1. Directs and uses others
2. Plans ahead
3. Plays his part convincingly
4. Stage-manages events

Now compare Tranio's control of events in Act 4, Scene 4, with Petruchio's control. Is either man at risk? What happens if Tranio's plans go wrong? What happens if

Task 2 – Bianca's Marriage is Arranged

Compare what the Pedant (disguised as Vincentio) and Baptista say about love, money and marriage in this scene. Make notes in a table or as a flow chart.

	love	money
Pedant		
Baptista		

Answer these questions:

1. Is Baptista concerned most with love or money as he arranges Bianca's marriage?
2. Why doesn't Baptista want to draw up the legal agreements in his own home?
3. How are the arrangements for Bianca's marriage similar to and different from Katherina's marriage with Petruchio?
4. How will Bianca find out that she's going to have an arranged marriage?

Task 3 – Biondello's Role

What role does Biondello play in this scene? Jot down three ways in which he is used.

Task 4 – Irony

Find three examples of irony in this scene and write a paragraph discussing their significance.



What does the success of the disguises in the subplot mean for the main plot in Act 5?

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Act 4, Scene 5

Task 1 – Different Readings

Pair or small group work. Read the scene twice using different tones of voice. For example, you could try reading it as a sulky or scared Katherina and a domineering Petruchio; or as a defiant Katherina and a playful Petruchio.

- Which tones of voice suit the text best?
- Choose lines from the text which you could use to support your chosen reading.

Task 2 – Petruchio Tests Katherina Again, and Again

Summarise the two tests that Petruchio sets for Katherina in this scene.

1. Is it day or night?	2. Vincentio –

Discuss these questions:

1. Why does Petruchio add a second test – Katherina ‘gave in’ during the debate?
2. What do you think of these tests? Choose three words to describe them.
3. Why does Katherina play along with Petruchio in this scene?
4. Hortensio uses a war metaphor at line 23 – ‘the field is won’ – to show that Petruchio will win. Is he correct?
5. Has Katherina been silenced, brainwashed, learned to play Petruchio’s game, or become a dummy? Or is something else happening in this scene?

Points to consider

Many feminist critics find Act 4, Scene 5 chilling because Petruchio has the power to dictate the terms of reality to his wife. They see him as a domestic tyrant who insists night is day and vice versa. What do you think?

Task 3 – Good Wives?

Analyse the language Petruchio uses to describe the Minola sisters in this scene.

Katherina	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Thus the bowl should run / And not unluckily against the bias.’ (lines 24–25) (a metaphor from the game of bowls; against the bias = against nature; the implication is that Katherina is behaving as a bowling ball should – rolling the right way and not against the ‘bias’) • He calls her ‘sweet Kate’ twice • ‘our merriment hath made thee jealous’ (line 76) (Petruchio describes the humorous way he and Katherina have spoken to Vincentio; jealous = suspicious) • He describes Kate as ‘my wife, this gentlewoman’ (line 62) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • •

1. What is significant about these descriptions?
2. Is Petruchio’s description of Bianca accurate?
3. Has Petruchio’s attitude to Katherina changed?

Task 4 – Hortensio’s Role

Why is he in this scene? Make a list of three things that Hortensio contributes.

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Task 5 – Critical Opinion

Fiona Shaw, who played Katherina in 1987, reads this scene positively. She does not think Katherina has been tamed, silenced or humiliated. She says, 'It's a wonderful and awful moment because the responsibility of that whole group of people is in her hands. One word from her and they go forward. Her dilemma is that she can control the situation, but she has no control over her own sense of reality: she must call the sun the moon. But then what if she says that instead of always saying "no", she can try "yes" – she may as well, she's got no choice. She can't call the sun the moon, because it doesn't matter.' "Yes" matters, names don't.' She says, 'It's her power. And it's a wicked, terrible play because she's got to render herself up before the world. In her life she wins it. What a dilemma. What a gamble.' Shaw adds that she does not think Katherina has 'dominance and a broken spirit.' (Carol Rutter, *Clamorous Voices*, *The Women's Press*)

Discuss these questions about Shaw's reading of this scene:

1. Does Katherina really have responsibility for the whole group in her hands in this scene?
2. Do you agree that Katherina gains control of the situation by giving up her own sense of reality?
3. Do you agree that Katherina hasn't got anything to lose?
4. Does it matter if Katherina does what Petruchio asks and calls the sun the moon?
5. Do you agree that Katherina gains something by rendering herself up to Petruchio?



Extension Task

Individual or pair work. Write a letter to Fiona Shaw, saying whether you agree with her reading of this scene, and why.

Looking Back at Act 4

Act 4 Quiz

1. How does Grumio abuse Curtis when he arrives at Petruchio's house?
2. What happened to Katherina and Petruchio on the journey home?
3. What is Petruchio's pet dog's breed and name?
4. What does Petruchio lecture Katherina about in bed on their first night?
5. What book is Lucentio reading in Act 4, Scene 2?
6. What does Hortensio say is more important than looks in a wife?
7. Where does the pedant who plays the fake Vincentio come from?
8. How does Grumio taunt Katherina at the start of Act 4, Scene 3?
9. Name two things Katherina complains about at the start of Act 4, Scene 3.
10. Give one reason why Petruchio rejects the hat made for Katherina.
11. What does Petruchio dislike about the dress made for Katherina?
12. What does Katherina accuse Petruchio of when she says, 'you mean to taint my blood' (Act 4, Scene 3, line 104)?
13. What time is it when Petruchio and Katherina set out to Baptista's house?
14. Give one reason why Baptista does not want to draw up Bianca's marriage contract at her own home.
15. Who is sent to tell Bianca she is to be married to Tranio (disguised as Lucentio)?
16. Where do Bianca and Lucentio plan to marry in secret?
17. Why is the real Vincentio travelling to Padua?
18. What do Katherina and Petruchio argue about on the journey to Padua?
19. How does Katherina greet Vincentio on the road?
20. What does Hortensio say he has learned from Petruchio at the end of Act 4?

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Task 1 – Act 4 Summary

Pair or small group work. A lot happens in Act 4. Write a bullet-point summary of plot and subplot. Make sure you get the events in the correct order. Now cut up the cards, and get another pair/group of students to put them in the correct order.

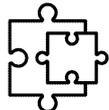
Task 2 – Food in Act 4

Pair or small group work. Make a mind map for food imagery in Act 4. Analyse the significance of your examples.



Extension Task 1

Add more images to the mind map, using examples from other acts.



Extension Task 2

Research Elizabethan attitudes to food, and make notes. Here are some

- zzed.uk/12950-food1
- zzed.uk/12950-food2
- zzed.uk/12950-food3
- zzed.uk/12950-food4
- zzed.uk/12950-food5 (useful website for a range of topics, including

Task 3 – The Journey Structure

Pair or small group work. Analyse the structure of Act 4 – it begins and ends with the literal and metaphorical journeys that occur in Act 4 show. What do these journeys show? You could create a flow chart to help you keep track of your ideas.

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Act 5, Scene 1

Task 1 – Happy Marriages?

Pair work. Before you read Act 5, consider the three couples who will enjoy a celebratory end of the play:

- Katherina and Petruchio
- Bianca and Lucentio
- Hortensio and the Widow

1. Will any of these couples have a happy marriage?
2. If you had to be part of one of these couples, who would you be, and why?

Task 2 – Vincentio versus ‘Vincentio’

Pair or small group work. Read up to line 85, where Biondello, Tranio and the Pedant run off as fast as they can.

1. Storyboard this extract to help you keep track of what happens. Add key moments to your storyboard. (See page 32 for a storyboard template.)
2. How would you stage this extract? Use images of an Elizabethan theatre and you decide:
 - Where characters make their entrances and exits, e.g. Lucentio and Bianca, Katherina, etc. at line 7; Biondello at line 32; Pedant with servants and Biondello at line 71; Biondello, Lucentio and Bianca at line 84; Biondello, Tranio and the Officer at line 85.
 - Where Gremio stands at the start of the scene.
 - Where Lucentio’s house and front door are.
 - Where the Pedant disguised as Vincentio looks out of his window.
 - Where the real Vincentio confronts and beats Biondello.
 - Where Petruchio and Katherina stand to watch the action.
 - Where the Pedant, Baptista and Tranio confront the real Vincentio.
 - Where the Officer stands in relation to the others during the discussion and Biondello is taken to prison.
3. Like Katherina in Acts 3 and 4, Vincentio finds his version of reality being challenged. Identify the techniques and/or arguments used by the Pedant, Biondello and Tranio to try to convince you that their lies are truths and that the real Vincentio is a fake.

Character	Examples	
Pedant		
Biondello		
Tranio		

- Which of these characters is the most effective liar?
 - Why do they run away when they do?
4. Make a list of three things that the real Vincentio is angry and fearful about.

Points to consider

There is a favourite Shakespearean joke at line 28 when the Pedant says, ‘Ay, my mother says, if I may believe her’. This jest about female chastity and whether a man can ever be confident he is really the father of his own children appears several times in Shakespeare’s plays. Discuss what this joke reveals about Elizabethan attitudes towards marriage and family.

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Task 3 – Gremio’s Role

What does Gremio contribute to this extract? Identify three reasons he needs to

Points to consider

Some people argue that this extract is cruel rather than funny. This scene could be so there is a genuine threat to Vincentio and subversion of the social order. What do you think? Is Vincentio in real danger, or does Shakespeare provide us with clues that he will be well and the upstart servants will be put back in their rightful places?

Task 4 – The Masks Come Off

Small group work. Read from line 85 to the end of the scene. Answer these questions.

1. What are Baptista and Vincentio angry about? Make a list for each father.
2. How does Lucentio excuse his deception of Baptista?
3. Is Petruchio testing Katherina at the end of the scene?
4. Why is Katherina reluctant to kiss Petruchio?
5. What does Petruchio’s last line mean, ‘Better once than never, for never too late’?

Critical opinion

Brian Morris, editor of the 1981 Arden edition of the play, says the exchange between Petruchio and Katherina at the end of Act 5, Scene 1 is ‘extremely important to interpret the tone of Katherina’s speech of submission in V, ii. Here for the first time there seems to be affection between the two, and the kiss seems a genuine expression of love. It is possible to play the lines as yet another example of Petruchio imposing his will on his wife, but to do so is to fly in the face of Shakespeare’s obvious intention.’
(*The Taming of the Shrew*, Arden edition, Routledge, 1988, Footnotes, p. 286)

Do you agree with Morris’s interpretation of this exchange between Petruchio and Katherina? Explain your thoughts.

Act 5, Scene 2

Task 1 – Critical Opinion

Lisa Hopkins notes that ‘single or multiple marriages are almost invariably the obvious end of Shakespeare’s comedies. Despite this, Hopkins says that Shakespeare presents marriage as a comic closure. For example, he ‘habitually disrupts’ the dramatic tradition that marriage provides a comic closure. The ‘expected telos is only very rarely attained within the confines of the play itself and the audience is forced to question both the meaning of the events he or she has witnessed and the underlying his or her response to the events’. (‘Marriage as Comic Closure’, 1998, *Shakespeare and Comedy*, p. 7) (telos = Greek term from Aristotle meaning ultimate purpose)

When you get to the end of the play, discuss whether you think *The Taming of the Shrew* provides comic closure.

1. Provides comic closure
2. Succeeds as a romantic comedy
3. Presents a problematic view of marriage
4. Leaves the audience with as many questions as answers

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Task 2 – Harmony Is Restored, or Is It?

Small group work. Read up to Katherina’s entrance just after line 100.

1. Analyse Lucentio’s opening speech. How does Shakespeare use language to show that harmony has been restored? Pay particular attention to the underlined images and phrases.

At last, though long, our jarring notes agree,
 And time it is when raging war is done
 To smile at scapes and perils overblown.
 My fair Bianca, bid my father welcome,
 While I with selfsame kindness welcome thine.
 Brother Petruchio, sister Katherina,
 And thou Hortensio, with thy loving widow,
 Feast with the best, and welcome to my house.
 My banquet is to close our stomachs up
 After our great good cheer. Pray you, sit down,
 For now we sit to chat as well as eat.
 (Act 5, Scene 2, lines 1–11)

2. Analyse the battle of wits that occurs in lines 15–48. Copy and complete this table.

Character	Who do they provoke, insult, or poke fun at?	What is the provocative insult or joke?
Petruchio		
Hortensio		
Widow		
Katherina		
Bianca		

Who do you think wins this battle of wits? Or are all the characters equal?



Extension Task 1 – Sexual Banter

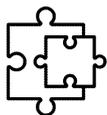
There are examples of bawdy humour and double entendre in this battle of wits. Identify these words and phrases:

1. Conceive (means to become pregnant or to understand)
2. Tale (a pun on ‘tail’, which means sex organ / a woman’s genitals)
3. Put (her) down (means to disparage someone or to have sex with someone)
4. Head and horn (horn is a symbol of cuckoldry)
5. Bush (means both the kind of bush that birds hide in and a woman’s genitalia)

Identify who makes each bawdy remark. Discuss whether this kind of sexual banter is appropriate in mixed company (i.e. people of different ages and sexes) at a wedding.

Points to consider

What is ironic about the men betting on their wives’ ability to put each other down?



Extension Task 2

Pair or small group work. Write a modern version of this battle of wits, where the men bet on their wives’ ability to put each other down. Read your script twice. On the second reading so that you have three women betting on their husbands’ ability to put each other down. What gender make in a scene like this?

Task 3 – Sporting Imagery

Pair or small group work. Analyse the men’s exchange that occurs when the women bet on their husbands’ ability to put each other down (lines 49–73). Make a mind map of the sporting imagery used, noting who uses each image and what each image means.

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Task 4 – Another Battle of the Sexes

Small group work. Read and analyse this extract from lines 74–100. Male commands and female responses are in **bold**.

- What is the difference in the way Lucentio, Hortensio and Petruchio summon Biondello?
- How do their wives respond?
- What does this exchange suggest about gender, language and power?

HORTENSIO Who shall begin?

LUCENTIO That will I.

Go, Biondello, bid your mistress come to me.

BIONDELLO I go. *Biondello exits*

BAPTISTA Son, I'll be your half Bianca comes.

LUCENTIO I'll have no halves. I'll bear it all myself.

Enter Biondello.

How now, what news?

BIONDELLO Sir, **my mistress sends you word
That she is busy, and she cannot come.**

PETRUCHIO How? "She's busy, and she cannot come"?
Is that an answer?

GREMIO Ay, and a kind one, too.

Pray God, sir, your wife send you not a worse.

PETRUCHIO I hope better.

HORTENSIO Sirrah Biondello, go and entreat my wife
To come to me forthwith. *Biondello exits*

PETRUCHIO O ho, entreat her!

Nay, then, she must needs come.

HORTENSIO I am afraid, sir,
Do what you can, yours will not be entreated.

Enter Biondello.

Now, where's my wife?

BIONDELLO **She says you have some goodly jest in hand.
She will not come. She bids you come to her.**

PETRUCHIO Worse and worse. She will not come!

O vile, intolerable, not to be endured!—

Sirrah Grumio, go to your mistress,

Say I command her come to me. *Grumio exits*

HORTENSIO I know her answer.

PETRUCHIO What?

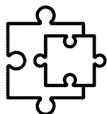
HORTENSIO She will not.

PETRUCHIO The fouler fortune mine, and there an end.

Enter Katherina

BAPTISTA Now, by my holidame, here comes Katherina!

KATHERINA **What is your will, sir, that you send for me?**



Extension Task 3

Individual or pair work.

Use the first 100 lines of Act 5, Scene 2 for a textual analysis task.

'Explore how Shakespeare presents masculine power in this extract and
Remember to include in your answer relevant comment on Shakespeare's

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Task 5 – Is Katherina Tamed?

Pair or small group work. Katherina's long speech at line 136, which begins 'Fie, fie, threatening unkind brow...' is often referred to as the 'submission speech'. Try read tones of voice to see if you believe this speech shows Katherina has been tamed. Underline or make a note of any words, phrases or lines which suggest submission. Which phrases suggest Katherina is still independent-minded and assertive?

Task 6 – Textual Analysis

Pair or small group work. Analyse Katherina's speech more closely.

Annotate it, highlighting the following features:

- Topics
- Imagery
- Motifs
- Metaphors
- Similes
- Symbolism
- Alliteration
- Rhetorical devices, e.g. questions, commands, anaphora, listing (e.g. rule of three), exaggeration, juxtaposition

Discuss what is ironic about a submissive wife speaking at this length, with such skill.



Extension Task 4

Write a paragraph explaining how Katherina uses language in her final speech. Share your paragraph with a classmate.

Task 7 – Comprehension Questions

Small group work. Read from Katherina's entrance at line 98 to the end of the scene. Answer the following questions.

1. Analyse Petruchio's instructions to his wife. See Petruchio's speeches at line 100, 'Katherine, I charge thee...'; at line 130, 'Katherine, I charge thee...'; at line 180, 'Why, there's a wench...'; and at line 188, 'To bed.' Discuss the meaning and significance of each of these instructions. Do any of these instructions contain a test for Katherina?
2. What does this extract reveal about Petruchio's vision of marriage? Pay particular attention to line 108, 'Marry, peace it bodes...'
3. What does this extract suggest the minor characters want and expect from marriage? Consider Lucentio, the Widow, Bianca.
4. How are Bianca and the Widow portrayed in this extract?
5. What is Baptista's role in this extract?
6. Petruchio says that he is a 'winner' at the end of the play (see line 188). What does he mean, literally and metaphorically? Do you agree Petruchio is a 'winner'?
7. How should the actors playing Hortensio and Lucentio deliver the last lines of the play?
8. Why does Shakespeare conclude the play with a line from Lucentio?

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Task 8 – Male and Female Roles and Duties

Pair or small group work. What does Katherina's speech suggest about the roles of men and women in an Elizabethan marriage? Create a poster to put up in your classroom. Add ideas to a table like this before you design your poster:

Men's roles, status, duties	Women's roles, status, duties

- How do you respond to these ideas?
- Are they still relevant today?

Points to consider

Who is Katherina speaking to? Is she addressing the whole company, or are parts of her speech directed at different audiences, e.g. her husband, Bianca and the Widow?

Critical opinion

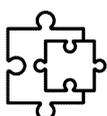
In 1897 playwright George Bernard Shaw wrote to *The Pall Mall Gazette* in the *Guardian*, urging people to boycott a production of the play. Shaw felt that the last scene of the play is 'altogether disgusting to modern sensibility.' He found two aspects of the scene problematic – the concept of male domination implicit in the wager, and Katherina's submission speech. He found this speech offensive and commented that no man 'with any sense of honour would watch the scene 'in the company of a woman without feeling extremely ashamed'.

Task 9 – Interpreting Katherina in Act 5, Scene 2 – Statements Game

Pair work. Discuss these statements about Katherina. Choose up to three you agree with and one that you disagree with. Then share your ideas with your classmates.

Katherina has been transformed by Petruchio. She has realised the benefits of marriage and is pleased to have a new role and place in society.
Katherina has not been transformed. She is as assertive and independently minded as she was at the beginning. She has simply chosen to publicly defer to Petruchio.
The submission speech is a sexist rant which sounds very unconvincing in the mouth of a woman like Katherina. She sounds like a ventriloquist's dummy.
Katherina's submission speech is sinister and chilling. It shows she has been corrupted by Petruchio.
Katherina's final speech is an act of revenge on Bianca and the Widow, who she humiliates in public. It might also be an act of revenge on her neglectful father.
Katherina colludes with Petruchio – she delivers her final submission speech to please him. The couple are working together as equals in the final scene.
Katherina's final speech undermines patriarchy. It reveals how ridiculous men are, especially when Katherina offers to put her hand under Petruchio's foot.
The shrewish behaviour of Bianca and the Widow shows Katherina's submission is necessary and serious. Shakespeare is showing the battle of the sexes will never be over.
Katherina's willing submission in Act 5, Scene 2 legitimatises Petruchio's sexist behaviour.
Katherina's final speech is a subversive power move. The so-called shrew delivers a powerful message to an attentive audience, using rhetorical techniques associated with powerful women.

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Extension Task 5

Can you think of any more statements to add to this list?

Task 10 – Actors, Directors and the Final Scene

Work with a partner. Read through these comments about performing the final scene. Discuss which production you would most like to have seen, and why.

1. Gregory Doran directed the play at the RSC in 2003. He comments on the final scene:
‘As for Bianca, she is surely not satisfied with the airheaded Lucentio. We have to be careful for Bianca himself, while wooing her for his master, and possibly she for her own sake, across the class divide (apart from anything else) is doomed... Kate has a lot to offer her love and respect for her husband, while her sister and the widow have no respect for their husbands, which can only end in bitterness... Kate recognises the therapy she has undergone. She had been agitated, or troubled as a person... They have to be careful of other spirits who have been compromised by society and forced to play roles. They have discovered genuine trust and respect for each other. They won't play by society's rules. They love and respect each other, so much so that Kate is prepared to subjugate herself to him if he should so choose, which of course he does not. We did, however, have to be careful when, as she offers to present her hand under her husband's foot, Jasper said, "Come on...", as if expecting her to fulfil her offer. Only when she moved to complete the line, "... and kiss me Kate"... We guessed they would have a lot to offer their friends' arid partnerships.' (*The Taming of the Shrew*, edited by Jonathan Bate, The RSC Shakespeare, Macmillan, 2010, pp. 156–157)
2. Michelle Gomez played Katherina in 2008. Of the final scene she says:
‘In our production she had no energy left to relate to anyone. She is a ball of nerves. She can't do anything for fear of reprisal.’ Gomez goes on to describe how she delivered the final scene:
‘Like her life depended on it. One false move in front of the court and she would have a horrific beating later at home. Although I felt there was a subtle defiance, I felt that what kind of victory is this for Petruchio? She is showing the world that the world that Petruchio and the other men in the first place have disappeared. He can only cope with her. What sort of misogynist bully does that make him?’ (*The Taming of the Shrew*, edited by Eric Rasmussen, The RSC Shakespeare, Macmillan, 2010, p. 161)
3. Paola Dionisotti played Katherina in a modern dress production at the RSC in 2008. Of the final scene and Katherina's submission speech:
‘I used to find it very moving – that speech is so full of affection for women. However desperate her situation, her articulacy never really fails. It's wrong that her voice should be strangled – as mine often was. She's talking about the women she's saying, “This is what our role is, girls – really explore it; it's like a game. Investigate the realities: thy husband is thy lord. Your life is in his hands.” It's not women that's the reality. To Petruchio she's saying, “Is this what you want me to do? Give us your foot... The man I was having gags with in the street, do you want to do this?” ... My Kate was kneeling and I reached over to kiss his foot and he said, “No, back, because somehow he's completely blown it. He's as trapped now as I am at the beginning. Somewhere he's an okay guy, but it's too late. The last image is of him. The lights went down as we left – I followed him, the others hardly noticing. He went to some hard gambling.’ (*Clamorous Voices*, Carol Rutter, The Women's Project, 2008, p. 10)

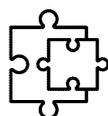
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4. Phyllida Lloyd directed an all-female production of the play at the Globe Theatre. Write a paragraph describing the final scene:

‘By having women playing men we could satirize the men’s need for supreme speech completely straight. You could feel the tension in the audience – has not lost her fighting spirit? What is happening?’ etc. But the egos of the men, being bolstered by her obedience, Petruchio was like a big mafia son who both wept sentimental tears that their little lady had finally been brought to her senses, understood and went wild with delight and recognition. Then suddenly Kate was revealed. You realized she had been “performing” and now she did so more and more in her underwear, etc. As Petruchio tried to stop her, the more wild she became. She had been made a laughing stock, began to get up and leave the table, and it ended in an explosive fight – the kind one imagined they were going to continue to have after marriage.’ (*The Taming of the Shrew*, edited by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen, London: Shakespeare, Macmillan, 2010, pp. 157–158)



Extension Task 6

Write a paragraph saying whose interpretation of the final scene you like best.

Task 11 – Engaging with Critical Opinion

Read through critic Ann Thompson’s comments on the play and its ending:

‘The apparently unrelieved ethic of male supremacy has proved unpalatable, and producers and directors have altered and adapted the text in more or less flagrant ways. Of course, responses to the play are bound to be affected by the status of women in the world by the way that status is perceived by both men and women. Reading through the play, acting as a kind of litmus paper, picking up worried and embarrassed reactions from men as committed to male supremacy as they take the play’s hero to be but whose misdeeds women were less obvious and more socially acceptable. Productions of the play in the twenty-first century, whatever thoughts were in the air on the perennially topical subjects of violence and gender, a tendency can hardly fail to increase in our own time. The play may indeed become more popular than it has been in previous centuries as it becomes, rightly, more and more difficult to perform. It is not simply rollicking good fun.’ (*The Taming of the Shrew*, introduction by Ann Thompson, London: Duckworth Press, 1984, pp. 23–24, also found in the Edexcel Critical Anthology: Comedy, pp. 10–11)

Discuss Thompson’s ideas with a partner. You may find these questions useful:

1. Do you agree that the play is about male supremacy?
2. If you were putting on the play, would you soften the ending?
3. Do you think male audience members should be worried and embarrassed by the play?
4. Do you think the play should be performed less often, or even removed from the repertoire of the twenty-first century?
5. Could you put on a production that emphasises what ‘rollicking good fun’ the play is? How would you do this?

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Looking Back at Act 5

Act 5 Quiz

1. What does Vincentio think Tranio (in disguise) has done to his son Lucentio in Act 5, Scene 1?
 - a) Murdered him
 - b) Stolen his clothes
 - c) Stolen his money
 - d) Cheated him of his inheritance
2. What do we learn about Tranio from Vincentio?
 - a) Tranio is an orphan who grew up in poverty
 - b) Vincentio brought Tranio up with Lucentio as if he were his own son
 - c) His father is a sail maker in Bergamo
 - d) His mother works as Vincentio's housekeeper
3. Why is Katherina reluctant to kiss Petruchio in Act 5, Scene 1?
 - a) She is ashamed of Petruchio's clothing
 - b) She is annoyed because Petruchio demands a kiss
 - c) She doesn't want her father and sister to see her kissing Petruchio
 - d) She doesn't want to be seen kissing in the street
4. Who hosts the banquet in the final scene?
 - a) Vincentio
 - b) Petruchio
 - c) Lucentio
 - d) Baptista
5. What does Petruchio say he has taught Katherina?
 - a) To be a conscientious housewife
 - b) To be a cheerful companion
 - c) To be quiet and uncomplaining
 - d) To be an obedient wife
6. How much is the w... on their wives' obe...
 - a) 20 crowns
 - b) 40 crowns
 - c) 80 crowns
 - d) 100 crowns
7. Bianca calls Lucen...
 - a) Laid a bet on f...
 - b) Laid a bet with... has lost
 - c) Laid a bet on f...
 - d) Laid a bet on f...
8. What does the Wid... sends for her?
 - a) She refuses to... he's playing a...
 - b) She refuses to...
 - c) She refuses to... believe men h...
 - d) She says she... women aroun... talking to Bian...
9. How does Katherin... in her final speech?
 - a) A man is 'thy...
 - b) A man is 'thy...
 - c) A man is 'thy h...
 - d) A man is 'thy u...
10. Lucentio describes... as a...
 - a) 'Miracle'
 - b) 'Marvel'
 - c) 'Wonder'
 - d) 'Surprise'

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Task 1 – A Conventional Comic Ending?

Successful Elizabethan comedies often end with:

- A celebration of love, e.g. multiple marriages
- Characters coming (back) to their senses and realising what they should really do
- Reunions between characters
- A resolution to villainy, and villains removed or defeated
- The removal of disguises
- A clarification of misconceptions
- The triumph of love
- Characters return to their rightful place(s) in the social order
- Audiences should feel they have been entertained, amused and instructed

To what extent does the ending of *The Taming of the Shrew* conform to these expectations? Discuss your ideas with a partner / as a whole class.

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Task 2 – Comparing *A Shrew* and *The Shrew*

Work in pairs or small groups. Compare Katherina’s speech in Act 5, Scene 2 with made by Kate at the end of the play *The Taming of A Shrew* (1594).

Ferando. Now, lovely Kate, before their husbands here,
I prithe thee tell unto these headstrong women
What duty wives do owe unto their husbands.

Kate. Then you that live thus by your pampered wills,
Now list to me and mark what I shall say:
Th’ eternal power that with his only breath,
Shall cause this end and this beginning frame,
Not in time, nor before time, but with time, confused; —
For all the course of years, of ages, months,
Of seasons temperate, of days and hours,
Are tuned and stopped by measure of his hand; —
The first world was a form without a form,
A heap confused, a mixture all deformed,
A gulf of gulfs, a body bodiless,
Where all the elements were orderless,
Before the great Commander of the world,
The King of kings, the glorious God of heaven,
Who in six days did frame His heavenly work
And made all things to stand in perfect course:
Then to His image did He make a man,
Old Adam, and from his side asleep
A rib was taken, of which the Lord did make
The woe of man, so termed by Adam then
Woman, for that by her came sin to us;
And for her sin was Adam doomed to die.
As Sarah to her husband, so should we
Obey them, love them, keep, and nourish them,
If they by any means do want our helps;
Laying our hands under their feet to tread,
If that by that we might procure their ease;
And for a precedent I’ll first begin
And lay my hand under my husband’s feet.

[She lays her hand under her husband’s feet.]

You can find the whole text here:

[zzed.uk/12950-wholetext](https://www.zzed.uk/12950-wholetext)

What are the similarities and differences in:

- Language?
- Style?
- Tone?
- Content?

Pair or small group work to complete Tasks 3 and 4.

Task 3 – The Missing Epilogue

Pair or small group work. If Shakespeare wrote a final framing scene involving characters gone missing. Write a short final framing scene, no longer than 20 lines long. You can set it either at the Lord’s country house, or at the Warwickshire alehouse where Sly was

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Task 4 – Here’s an Epilogue

In *A Shrew* (1594) there is an interlude involving Sly before the final scene of the play. The servants are told to put Sly back in his own clothes while he is asleep. The servants are told to take him to a alehouse and leave him outside on the ground, being careful not to wake him.

Work with a partner or in a small group. Read aloud the final framing scene from the play. What do you think this epilogue would work if you added it to the end of Shakespeare’s play? What would you change? Compare this epilogue with the final framing scene you wrote for Task 3.

EPILOGUE

Then enter two bearing of Sly in his own apparel again, and leave him where he was. Then enter the Tapster.

Tapster. Now that the darksome night is overpassed,
And dawning day appears in crystal sky,
Now must I haste abroad. But soft, who’s this?
What, Sly? oh wondrous, hath he lain here all night?
I’ll wake him; I think he’s starved by this,
But that his belly was so stuffed with ale.
What, how, Sly, awake for shame!

Sly. Gi’s some more wine! What’s all the players gone? Am I not I a lord?

Tapster. A lord, with a murrain! Come, art thou drunken still?

Sly. Who’s this? Tapster? Oh, lord, sirrah, I have had
The bravest dream to-night, that ever thou
Heardest in all thy life!

Tapster. Ay, marry, but you had best get you home,
For your wife will course you for dreaming here to-night.

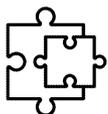
Sly. Will she? I know now how to tame a shrew!
I dreamt upon it all this night till now,
And thou hast waked me out of the best dream
That ever I had in my life. But I’ll to my
Wife presently and tame her too
And if she anger me.

Tapster. Nay, tarry, Sly, for I’ll go home with thee,
And hear the rest that thou hast dreamt to-night.

Exeunt Omnes

FINIS.

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Extension Task 1

Small group work. Write and record a podcast titled ‘*The Taming of the Shrew*’. Your podcast should be a discussion. Include your thoughts and opinion on the play and its ending. Make sure you discuss key characters, events and themes. You should aim to host the podcast and introduce contributions made by other group members.



Extension Task 2

Pair or small group work. Create a revision quiz. Each pair or group should write a quiz on the act of the play, including the Induction. Write a Kahoot (or similar website) on your knowledge of your act. You should aim to write a minimum of 10 questions. You should also write answers, too!



Post-reading Activities

Further Research Tasks

Below is a list of topics which students could research to further increase their understanding of the play and its contexts.

1. Shakespeare's plays which feature love and marriage as catalysts for tragedy – *Antony and Cleopatra*. Students could look at the differences between how love is treated in tragedy and comedy. It is also worth asking the question, could you argue that *The Shrew* are a tragedy for Katherina?
2. *The Taming of a Shrew* (aka the *Ur-Shrew*) – anonymous author, published 1590s. Examine this play, which is now thought to have been written soon after *The Taming of the Shrew*, and examine the similarities and differences between the two plays. In particular, how the play's framework concludes in *A Shrew*. (See Context page 68 for epilogue.)
3. John Fletcher's *The Woman's Prize, or The Tamer Tamed* (a sequel/response to *The Taming of the Shrew*). Students could look at how Fletcher develops the characters and themes of *The Taming of the Shrew*. They could produce a plot summary of Maria's taming of Petruchio in *The Tamer Tamed* and compare it to Petruchio's taming of Katherina in *The Shrew*. (See Context page 68 for *The Tamer Tamed*.)
4. Biblical teachings about women, e.g. St Paul's directives in the New Testament.
5. Performance history of the play – from 1590s to twenty-first century.
6. Recent productions of the play – students could collect theatre reviews and audience feedback from different times and audiences.
7. Stage and film adaptations of the play, e.g. *Sauny the Scott* – John Lacey (first staged 30 years previously), *Catharine and Petruchio* – David Garrick (1754), *The Taming of the Shrew* (1948), *Ten Things I Hate about You* (1999), *Deliver Us from Eva* (2003). Students could look at which elements of Shakespeare's play are changed/kept in these adaptations.
8. Critical approaches, e.g. feminist, Marxist, psychoanalytic, New Historicist, reader-response criticism. Students could seek out definitions of these approaches and discuss how they apply to the play in the light of their understanding.
9. Elizabethan beliefs about the four humours – blood, phlegm, choler, melancholy. How were people governed by these humours, which affected their temperament? How does this knowledge inform their understanding of the characters in the play?

Plot-sequencing Task

Pair or small group work. Put this plot summary in the correct order.

Event
a. Disguised as tutors, 'Cambio' (Lucentio) and 'Lutio' (Hortensio) woo Bianca with her. Bianca is in command of herself and her suitors during the process and hints to 'Cambio' that she is attracted to him.
b. A wealthy Paduan merchant, Baptista Minola, tells Hortensio and Gremio that they can only be allowed to woo or wed his younger daughter Bianca until a husband is found for his older daughter Katherina, who has a reputation as a bad-tempered shrew. He is looking for tutors for his daughters.
c. Vincentio is alarmed when he finds an imposter in his house in Padua. There is a period of confusion until Lucentio, Tranio and the merchant are unmasked. Lucentio accuses Baptista for his deceit and for eloping with Bianca. Tranio and Biondello assume the imposter's identities as servants. Order is restored.
Continued overleaf

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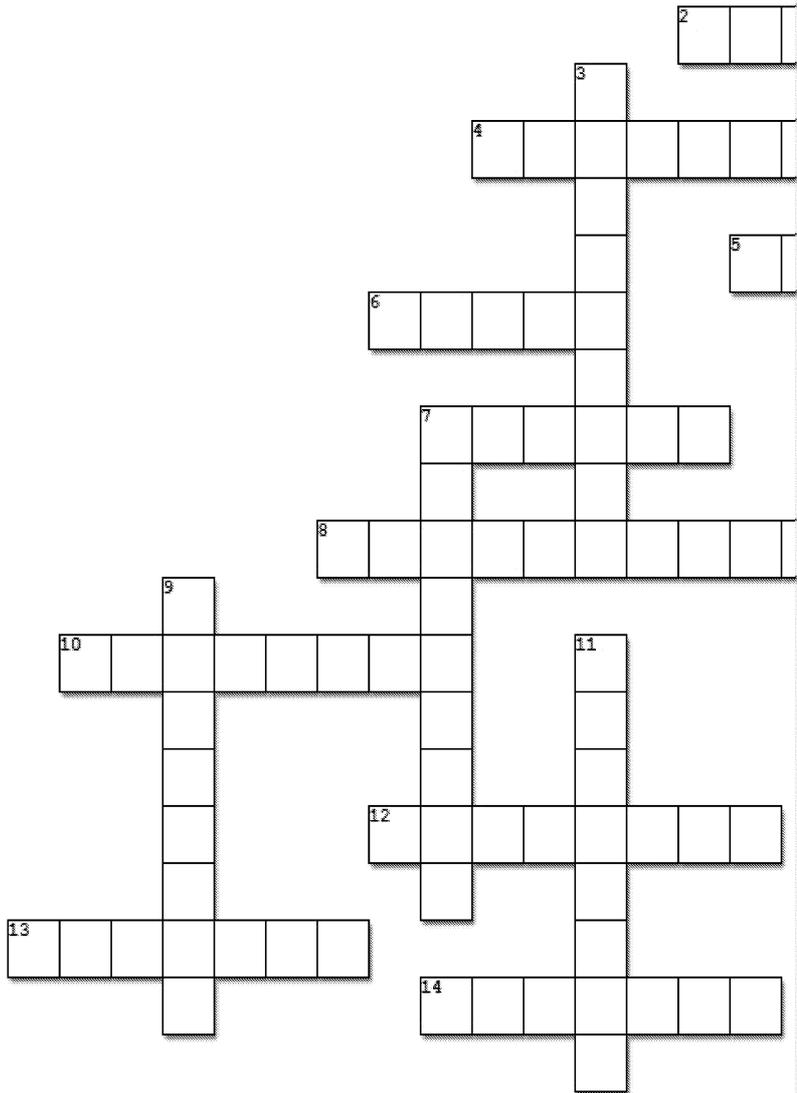
Event	
d.	A nobleman and his hunting party find a drunkard, Christopher Sly, sleeping in a forest in Warwickshire. They play a trick on him. Sly is taken to the nobleman's house and his servants pretend Sly is a lord. They tell him he has been ill and given to fits of madness. They also introduce him to his 'wife' – a pageboy called Bartholomew dressed as a woman.
e.	The Widow and Bianca refuse to come when they are called for by their suitors. Katherina obeys Petruchio's command, astonishing all the men at the feast. Petruchio wins the wager.
f.	Katherina interrogates Bianca about which of her suitors she prefers. Katherina beats Bianca roughly. Baptista breaks up their quarrel and complains about how difficult he has to have such a difficult daughter.
g.	A young well-bred man called Lucentio arrives in Padua with his servant Tranio to follow a course of study at the university.
h.	Petruchio arrives late to his wedding, by which point Katherina is upset and angry. Petruchio's eccentric dress and behaviour shock the Paduans. After the ceremony Petruchio whisks Katherina off to his home in Verona, not allowing her to attend her own bridal feast.
i.	Baptista has promised Tranio (who he believes to be Lucentio) that he can marry Bianca because he is the richest suitor. With the help of Biondello, Tranio persuades Lucentio to visit Padua to play the part of Vincentio (Lucentio's father) to vouch for him.
j.	Petruchio, a friend of Hortensio from Verona, arrives in Padua looking for a wife. When he hears that Baptista is offering a large dowry he agrees to woo Bianca.
k.	Petruchio asks Katherina to deliver a speech to the Widow and Bianca about her husband. She does. Petruchio then asks Katherina to kiss him, and she does. The feast to go to bed.
l.	Lucentio and Bianca elope in secret while Baptista is busy with the marriage. Lucentio pretends to be Vincentio.
m.	Petruchio gains Baptista's agreement that he can meet and court Katherina. Lucentio (disguised as Vincentio) presents himself to Baptista as a suitor for Bianca.
n.	On the journey back to Padua, Petruchio tests Katherina's obedience. He asks her to do the old man they meet on the road as a beautiful young girl. Katherina obeys. Lucentio, the real Vincentio, on his way to see his son Lucentio.
o.	Some strolling players arrive at the nobleman's house. They are asked to entertain Sly and his 'wife'. Sly is keen to take his 'wife' to bed but agrees to watch a comedy about an Italian merchant and his two daughters.
p.	Lucentio falls in love with Bianca the moment he sets eyes on her. He abandons his course of studying. He and Tranio swap clothes so that Lucentio can disguise himself. Tranio is for Tranio (pretending to be Lucentio) to present 'Cambio' (Lucentio disguised as Vincentio) to Baptista.
q.	Petruchio and Katherina arrive at Petruchio's house. Petruchio beats his servants and spoils the food they have prepared so that his wife goes hungry, and then keeps preaching to her about abstinence.
r.	Hortensio has married a wealthy widow. He and his bride join the other suitors at a banquet at Baptista's house, where the men lay wagers on their wives' obedience.
s.	Hortensio decides to disguise himself as a tutor ('Lutio') so that he can get close to Bianca. He asks Petruchio to present him to Baptista in this role.
t.	Petruchio and Katherina meet for the first time and there is a battle of wits. When Lucentio comes in to see how things are going, Petruchio says Katherina loves him and that the marriage will take place on Sunday.
u.	Petruchio continues to 'tame' Katherina. He denies her food and new clothes. She recognises his authority over her. In the end Katherina submits and tells Petruchio whatever time of day he says it is, and the couple go back to Padua to visit Lucentio.

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Crossword

Complete the crossword below:



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Across

- 2. What bird does Petruchio compare Katherina to?
- 4. Petruchio says he will be happy in marriage if he can 'wive it -----'
- 5. What does Petruchio tell Katherina to do to the Widow and Bianca in Act 5?
- 6. Where is the play set?
- 7. Where does Petruchio come from?
- 8. Petruchio preaches a sermon on ----- to Katherina in bed.
- 10. Where is Christopher Sly found?
- 12. Petruchio says he will kill his wife with -----
- 13. Katherina calls Petruchio a mad-brain -----
- 14. What is Petruchio's dog called?

Down

- 1. Katherina is famous for -----
- 3. Lucentio compares ----- to an arte character?
- 7. Who is Lucentio's father?
- 9. Which god is Petruchio's father? He agrees to woo and wed -----
- 11. In her final speech, Katherina compares ----- woman to a '----- tree'

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Character Word Search

1. Complete the word search.
2. Make sure you know who each of the characters is and what their key moments are.



BAPTISTA BIANCA BIONDELLO CAMBIO CHRISTOPHER
GREMIO GRUMIO HABERDASHER HORTENSIO JOSUKA
LITIO LUCENTIO PEDANT PETRUCHIO TAILOR TRUCCO

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Context: Gender

Task 1 – Elizabethan Attitudes

Individual or pair work. Read through these seventeenth-century comments, take a programme of the 1987 RSC production of *The Taming of the Shrew*. Write a 50-word summary of what these comments suggest about gender and power in seventeenth-century domestic life.

1. **Robert Sanderson (theologian, 1587–1663)**

‘In a family the master or *paterfamilias*, who is a kind of petty monarch there, rules over his children and servants. What power the master hath over his servants for all doubt the same at least, if not much more, hath the supreme magistrate over the ordering of the commonwealth; the magistrate being *pater patriae* as the master is the *paterfamilias*.’
Sermons XXXV

pater patriae = father of the country

paterfamilias = male head of the family

petty = minor

2. **Nicholas Byfield (Puritan preacher, 1579–1622)**

‘A wife never carries herself with better grace, reputation and honour than when she is in subjection to her husband. It is a wicked and senseless pride in women to think that they are more honourable and dishonour to be at their husband’s appointment and to be made to do what they will, utterly deceived... As man by obedience is God’s image, so is the woman by obedience to her husband. Lists = desires, wants

3. **Sir Justinian Isham (English scholar and royalist politician, 1610–1675)**

‘A virtuous woman is a good portion... which shall be given as a gift to such a man who can see the best way to get a good husband, unto whom being virtuous you will give more his crown and glory. And now as there are many graces and virtues which women are endued with, so you ought to have regard unto those which the sacred scriptures require proper for your sex. As these more especially:

holiness	sobriety
chastity	silence
obedience	discretion
charity	frugality
meekness	affability
modesty	

(taken from an address to his daughters on the death of their mother)
portion = dowry or woman’s fortune

Task 2

Pair or small group work. Using Isham’s list of female virtues, discuss the behavior of Bianca and the Widow. Are they portrayed as good Christian women?



Extension Task

During Shakespeare’s lifetime there was an ongoing debate about the role of women. Emma Smith argues that we should be sceptical about seventeenth-century conduct literature, including sermons, lectures and pamphlets, which tell women how to behave. She says that the popularity of conduct literature suggests that there must have been a widespread belief that women were not convinced that they wanted to behave as men instructed them to. She says that when you see a sign that they don’t... prescriptive writing is usually a description of how people did behave.’

(Emma Smith, ‘Shakespeare and Historical Context’, *The Literature Reader*, Bloomsbury Academic Media Centre, 2019)

Discuss the play in the light of Smith’s comments. Do you think *The Taming of the Shrew* subverts conduct literature?

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Task 3 – Contemporary Opinions

Individual or pair work. Read these comments by two contemporary critics and complete the activities:

1. Dorothea Kehler

'The explicit and implicit subjects of this play – arranged marriages, the authoritarian obedience expected from daughters and wives, the economic helplessness of women, the experiences that touched the lives of everyone in Shakespeare's audience. With *Shrew* as a high-spirited comedy about role-playing of game-playing, they supported not only on stage, but off, wrote the play and assigned the roles, chose the game and the rules. (Dorothea Kehler, 'Echoes of the Induction in *The Taming of the Shrew*', *Renaissance Drama*, 1995, p. 100)

Activity A

Create a mind map 'Men Rule'. Find textual evidence to support Kehler's view that men rule, assign roles, choose the game and make the rules. Add your examples. Also find textual evidence to challenge the idea that men rule?

2. Stevie Davies

'The play voices the age's suspicion that all women are a law unto themselves. Those who comply and those who chafe against constraints, "It is better to dwell in the lap of a brawling woman in a wide house," remarks the Book of Proverbs feel the same. *Shrew* offers one brawling woman and an alternative, apparently demure, obedient, married, Bianca becomes proverbial. She answers back, won't come at her husband's good as she gets. The play suggests that a man has two alternatives: a shrew or a woman. (Stevie Davies, *The Taming of the Shrew*, Penguin Critical Studies, 1995, p. 100)

Activity B

Write a paragraph supporting or challenging Davies' views. Find a quotation from the play to support your view.

Context: Social Class

In Elizabethan England the social hierarchy was well-defined, with a rigid class structure. The upper classes were powerful and influential. Commoners had less power. However, there was a shift in the economic growth that occurred in the second half of Elizabeth I's reign. A new class of goods and services was established, personified by the Tailor and Haberdasher in *The Taming of the Shrew*.

Task 1: How is Social Class Portrayed in *The Taming of the Shrew*?

Discuss these statements:

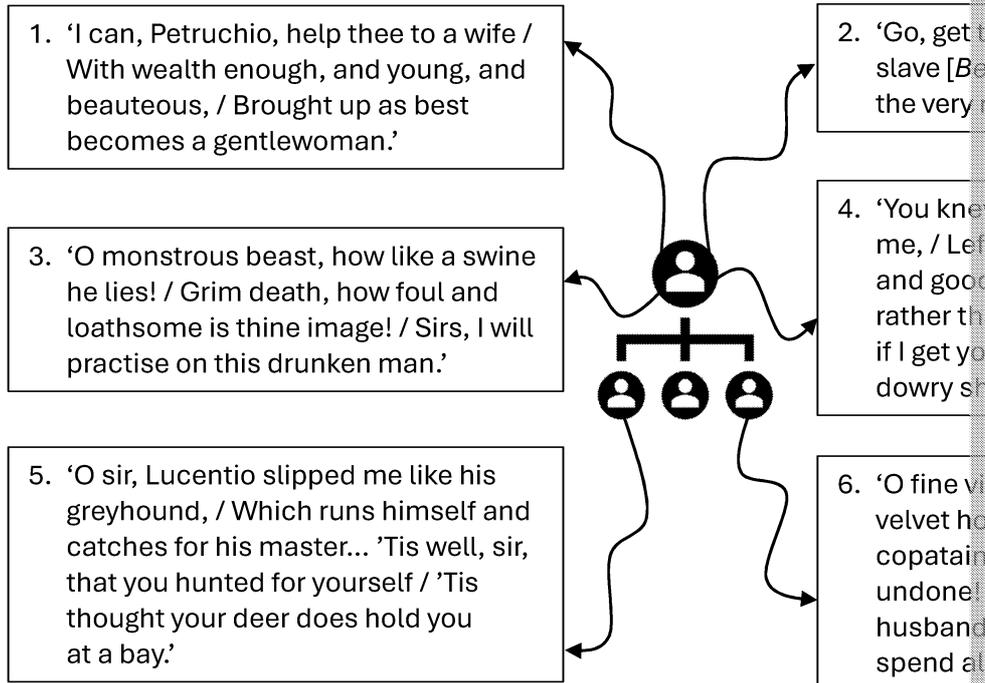
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|---|
| The play satirises the upper classes, who are revealed to be arrogant, cruel and dishonest. |
| The play exposes the upper classes as abusive and oppressive – but we are expected to accept it because masters dish out to their servants. |
| The lower classes are exploited by the upper classes, who use them to further their own interests. |
| Social mobility is not possible in the world of the play – servants who are more intelligent than their masters are not rewarded for their clever schemes. |
| Servants get away with a lot in this play – there is tolerance of cheeky behaviour. |
| The world of the play is snobbish. Marrying out of your social class is unthinkable. |
| The play is very subversive. The lower classes are portrayed as cleverer, more cunning than the upper-class twits and gullible elders who are supposed to be their betters. |
| The play is socially conservative. The final scene shows a return to a rigid social hierarchy with Petruchio firmly in control again. |
| Shakespeare uses disguises to question the social order and pose questions about identity, such as class. Tranio and Bartholomew are convincing in new identities when they are not, suggesting that identity is not fixed. |
| Nobody in this play can escape their predetermined (class or gender) role and so the play is socially conservative. |

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Task 2

Pair or small group work. Identify the speaker, context, act and scene these quotations are from. Analyse what they reveal about social class in the play.



Extension Task

Add more relevant quotations relating to social class to a mind map.

Task 3

Pair or small group work. Choose one of the scenes from the list below, or an extract from these scenes. Write a commentary / bullet-point list / flip chart on how social class is shown in the scene/extract.

Share your ideas with your classmates.

- Induction, Scene 1 or 2 – upper-class Lord playing a joke on working-class Slyvester
- Act 1, Scene 1 – Katherina raging at her father, Gremio and Hortensio as Bianca is betrothed to Petruchio
- Act 1, Scene 2 – Petruchio arrives with Grumio in Padua, where they meet Hortensio, Katherina and her dowry
- Act 2, Scene 1 – Tranio is disguised as upper-class Lucentio while Lucentio and Hortensio are lower-class schoolmasters
- Act 3, Scene 2 – Katherina's and Baptista's social shame on the wedding day when Petruchio turns up
- Act 4, Scene 1 – Petruchio's arrival at his country house and how he treats the servants
- Act 4, Scene 2 – Hortensio gives up on Bianca and decides to marry a wealthy widow
- Act 4, Scene 3 – Grumio torments Katherina with talk of food
- Act 4, Scene 3 – the incidents at Petruchio's house with the Haberdasher and the Weaver
- Act 4, Scene 4 – Tranio, Biondello and Lucentio devise further schemes to deceive Petruchio
- Act 5, Scene 1 – the deceptions in the subplot are revealed when the disguise is removed
- Act 5, Scene 2 – the men bet on their wives' obedience, and the servants are seated at the table

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Context: Shrew-taming Literature

Task 1: 'A Shrewde and Curste Wyfe'

Below you will find extracts from a popular verse tale, *A Shrewde and Curste Wyfe* published in England in 1580. Critics have suggested Shakespeare would have known served as a source text for *The Taming of the Shrew*. Work with a partner. Read the questions. You may find it helpful to read the extracts aloud.

1. Here is a description of the shrewish wife. Her husband and his workers come expecting to be fed. How does the shrewish wife behave, and how to do the

But when they came home to haue their meate,
The wife played the deuell then, like her mother.
With countenaunce grim and wordes smart,
She gaue them meate and bad them brast:
The pore folke that come from plow and carte,
Of her lewde wordes they were agast.
Saying eche to other what dame is this,
The deuill I trow hath brought vs here:
Our mayster shall know it by heauens blisse,
That we will not serue him another yeare.

haue = have
deuell = devil
brast = burst
lewde = obscene
deuill = devil

2. What does the husband decide to do to tame his shrewish wife?

She shall fynde me to her so vnkinde,
That I shall her coyle both backe and bone.
And make her blew and also blacke,
That she shall grone agayne for woe:
I will make her bones all to cracke,
Without that she her condicions forgoe.
I was neuer so vexte this time beforene,
As I am now of this wife alone:
A vengeaunce on her that euer she was borne,
for she maketh me often full woe begon...
I feare me I shall neuer make her good
Except I do wrap her in black Morels skin

blew = blue
condicions = conditions

3. Morel is the husband's old horse, lame and blind, and no longer able to work. How does the husband plan to kill Morel and wrap his wife in the horse's salted skin before beating her. Read this extract as he plans what to do?

Yet I am loth him [Morel] for to kyll
For he hath done me good seruice by nowe,
But if my wyfe fulfyll not my wyll
I must him flea by God I trowe
But at thys poynt nowe will I be,
I wyll be mayster as it is reason,
And make her subiect vnto me
For she must learne a newe lesson.

flea = flay

Her father did warne me of this beforene,
How I should it finde in euery degree:
But I did take it for halfe a scorne,
And would not beleeuue him then perdee.
But now I perceauue it very well,
He did it for good will ywis:
Wherefore I thinke that Morels fell,
Must mend all thing that is amis.

perdee = a mistake
ywis = certainly
amis = amiss

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4. How does the taming plan work out?
 And so he commaunded anon,
 To flea old Morell his greate Horse:
 And flea him then, the skin from the bone,
 To wrap it about his wiues white coarse. coarse = body
 Also he commaunded of a byrchen tree,
 Roddes to be made a good great heape:
 And sware by deare God in Trinity,
 His wife in his seller shold skip and leape. seller = cellar
- The hyde must be salted then he sayd cake,
 Bycause I would not haue it stinke:
 I hope herewith she will be meeke,
 For this I trow will make her shrinke. shrinke = be f
 And bow at my pleasure, when I her bed,
 And obay my commaundementes both lowde and still, still = quiet
 Or else I will make her body bleede,
 And with sharp rodde beate her my fill...
- He gaue her than so many a greate cloute
 That on the grounde the bloud was seene.
 Within a whyle, he cryed newe rodde newe
 With that she cryed full lowde alas,
 Daunce yet about dame, thou came not where it greiue, greiue = cause
 And sodainely with that in a sowne she was. sowne = swoo
- He spyed that and vp he her hente,
 And wrang her harde then by the nose:
 With her to Morels skin, straighte he wente,
 And therein full fast he did her close.
 Within a while, she did reuiue,
 Through the grose salte that did her smarte:
 She thought she should neuer haue gone on liue,
 Out of Morels skin so sore is her harte. hente = fetch,
 wrang = squee
- When she did spy that therein she lay,
 Out of her wit she was full nye:
 And to her husband then did she say,
 How canst thou doe this vilany.
 Nay how sayest thou, thou cursed wife,
 In this foule skin I will thee keepe,
 During the time of all thy life,
 Therein for euer to wayle and weepe.
5. What impact does being wrapped in Morel's skin have on the shrewish wife?
 But glad will your commaundementes obay,
 In presence of people and eake alone. eake = also
6. The husband invites his wife's family to dinner. This extract begins with the mother-in-law, who is shocked when she sees the cellar and hears what the husband says. What does the husband say to his mother-in-law? How do the dinner guests react to the man's treatment of his shrewish wife?
 Peace good Mother, or so haue I bliss,
 Ye must daunce else as did my wyfe:
 And in Morels skin lye, that well salted is,
 Which you should repent all the dayes of your lyfe.
 All they that were there, held with the yong man,
 And sayd he dyd well in euery maner degree,
 Whan dynner was done, they departed all than,
 The mother no lenger durst there be. lenger = longe
- The Father abode last and was full glad,
 And gaue his children his blessyng ywys,
 Saying the yong man full well done had. abode = left
 ywys = certain

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Extension Task 1

- Compare these shrew-taming methods with Petruchio's.
- Compare attitudes to assertive women in this tale and Shakespeare's.

Task 2: 'The Tamer Tamed'

Small group work. Read aloud these extracts from *The Woman's Prize, or the Tamer Tamed* by John Fletcher, the 1611 sequel and response to *The Taming of the Shrew*. (All extracts from *The Tamer Tamed*, RSC, Nick Hern Books, 2003)

Extract 1

Katherina has died and Petruchio has married a new wife, Maria, who sets about her plans with her sister Livia and Bianca (dead Katherina's sister). Maria plans a sex scene to heel.

Maria To bed? No, Livia, there are comets hang
Prodigious over that yet. Ne'er start, wench.
Before I know that heat, there's a fellow must
Be made a man, for yet he is a monster;
Here must his head be, Livia.

Livia Never hope it.
'Tis as easy with a sieve to scoop the ocean as
To tame Petruchio.

Maria Stay, Lucina hear me,
Never unlock the treasure of my womb, if I do
Give way unto my married husband's will,
Or be a wife in anything but hopes,
Till I have made him easy as a child,
And tame as fear.
And when I kiss him, till I have my will,
May I be barren of delights, and know
Only what pleasures are in dreams and guesses!

Livia A strange exordium.

Bianca All the several wrongs
Done by imperious husbands to their wives
These thousand years and upwards, strengthen thee!
Thou hast a brave cause.

Maria And I'll do it bravely
Or I may knit my life out ever after.

Livia In what part of the world got she this spirit?
Yet pray, Maria, look before you truly,
Besides the disobedience of a wife,
So distant from your sweetness –

Maria Disobedience?
You talk too tamely. By the faith I have
In mine own noble will, that childish woman
That lives a prisoner to her husband's pleasure
Has lost her making, and becomes a beast
Created for his use, not fellowship.

Livia His first wife Katharine said as much.

Maria She was a fool,
And took a scurvy course; let her be nam'd
'Mongst those that wish for things, but dare not do 'em.
I have a new dance for him, and a mad one.

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- Livia Are you of this faith?
- Bianca Yes, truly, and will die in't.
- Livia Why then, let's all wear breeches.
- Bianca That's a good wench.
- Maria Now thou com'st near the nature of a woman.
 Hang these tame-hearted eyasses, that no sooner
 See the lure out, and hear their husbands' holla,
 But cry like kites upon 'em! The free haggard
 (Which is that woman that hath wing and knows it,
 Spirit and plume) will make an hundred checks
 To show her freedom, sail in ev'ry air,
 And look out ev'ry pleasure, not regarding
 Lure nor quarry till her pitch command
 What she desires, making her foundered keeper
 Be glad to fling out trains, and golden ones,
 To take her down again.
- Livia You are learned, sister;
 Yet I say still, take heed.
- Maria A witty saying;
 I'll tell thee, Livia, had this fellow tired
 As many wives as horses under him
 With spurring of their patience; had he got
 A patent, with an office to reclaim us
 Confirm'd by Parliament; had he all the malice
 And subtlety of devils, or of us women,
 Or anything that's worse than both –
- Livia Hey, hey, boys, this is excellent!
- Maria Or could he
 Cast his wives new again, like bells, to make 'em
 Sound to his will; or had the fearful name
 Of the first breaker of wild women: yet
 Yet would I undertake this man,
 Turn him and bend him as I list, and mould him
 Into a babe again, that aged women,
 Wanting both teeth and spleen, may master him.

Glossary

- Lucina – in Roman myth, the goddess Juno
- exordium – in classical rhetoric, the introductory part of an argument
- eyass – nesting hawk to be trained for falconry
- haggard – wild female hawk
- lure – a small, usually horseshoe-shaped object at the end of thin rope used to attract a bird in flight for falcons to catch

Questions

1. Summarise what Maria says about how and why she wants to tame Petruchio.
2. How do Bianca and Livia respond to Maria's plans?
3. What does Maria say about Katherina?
4. Compare how Fletcher and Shakespeare use imagery of falconry.

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Extract 2

Maria plays several tricks on Petruchio in her campaign to break his spirit. Petruchio then, in a last desperate attempt to win some compassion from his wife, pretends to be carried on stage. Maria appears in mourning clothes. Petronius is Maria's father.

Petronius Set down the body.

Enter Maria in black, and Grumio.

You are welcome to the last cast of your fortunes;
There lies your husband, there your loving husband,
There he that was Petruchio, too good for ye;
Your stubborn and unworthy way has kill'd him
Ere he could reach the sea. If ye can weep
Now ye have cause; begin, and after death
Do something yet to th' world, to think ye honest.
So many tears had sav'd him, shed in time
And as they are, so a good mind go with 'em,
Yet they move compassion.

Maria Pray ye all hear me,
And judge me as I am, not as you covet,
For that would make me yet more miserable.
'Tis true I have cause to grieve, and might cause,
And truly and unfeignedly I weep it.

Hortensio I see there's some good nature yet left in her.

Maria But what's the cause? Mistake me not: not this man,
As he is dead, I weep for – heaven defend it,
I never was so childish – but his life,
His poor unmanly wretched foolish life,
Is that my full eyes pity, there's my mourning.

Petronius Dost thou not shame?

Maria I do, and even to water,
To think what that man was, to think how simple,
How far below a man, how far from reason,
From common understanding, and all gentry.
He had a happy turn, he died. I'll tell ye,
These are the wants I weep for, not his person.
The memory of this man, had he liv'd
But two years longer, had begot more follies
Than wealthy Autumn flies. But let him rest;
He was a fool, and farewell he.

Petruchio Unbutton me,
I die indeed else. O Maria!
O my unhappiness, my misery!

Peter Go to him, whore. I swear, if I perish,
I'll see thee hang'd myself.

Petruchio Why, why, why, Maria?

Maria I have done my worst, and have my end: I've tam'd ye,
And now am vow'd your servant. Look not strangely,
Nor fear what I say to you. Dare you kiss me?
Thus I begin my new love.

Petruchio Once again?

Maria With all my heart.

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- Petruchio Once again, Maria!
 O gentlemen. I know not where I am.
- Hortensio Get ye to bed then: there you'll quickly know, sire.
- Petruchio Never no more your old tricks?
- Maria Never, sir.
- Petruchio You shall not need, for as I have a faith,
 No cause shall give occasion.
- Maria As I am honest,
 And as I am a maid yet all my life
 From this hour, since ye make so free profession,
 I dedicate in service to your pleasure.

(Act 5, Scene 3)

Questions

1. How does Maria react to Petruchio's supposed death?
2. Why do Petronius, Peter and Hortensio try to shame Maria?
3. Why does Petruchio suddenly get up from his coffin and say, 'Unbutton me...'
4. Is there any evidence that Petruchio is tamed?
5. Compare this final scene to the ending of *The Taming of the Shrew*.
6. How could you stage this extract to make the audience laugh?

Extract 3

Individual or pair work. Read the Epilogue of the play. Sum up its moral message.

*The tamer's tam'd. But so as nor the men
Can find one just cause to complain of when
They fitly do consider in their lives
They should not reign as tyrants o'er their wives,
Nor can the women from this precedent
Insult or triumph, it being aptly meant
To teach both sexes due equality;
And, as they stand bound, to love mutually
If this effect, arising from a cause
Well laid and grounded, may deserve applause,
We something more than hope our honest ends
Will keep the men, and women too, our friends.*



Extension Task 2

Pair or small group work. Gregory Doran, who directed *The Tamer Tame* says that the play is 'uncannily modern' and 'proto-feminist'. He also says the play is to emphasise the need for companionate marriage.' (Introduction Hern Books, 2003, p. xiii, p. xvii). Can you find any evidence in *The Taming of the Shrew* that Shakespeare wanted to promote female equality and companionate marriage?

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Context: Shakespeare's Italian Sources

In her essay, 'Shakespeare and Historical Context', Emma Smith observes that Shakespeare drew on previous literary texts as much as they did on real life. She writes, 'The sixteenth century was preoccupied with the learning and reusing of classical and contemporary literature. The aspiring writer made his or her name through skilfully retelling pre-existing stories and reworking was called *imitatio*. It was not seen as plagiarism.'

(Emma Smith, 'Shakespeare and Historical Context', *The Literature Reader*, ed. Lucinda Riley, Centre, 2019, p. 46)

Task 1: *Supposes*

George Gascoigne's *Supposes*, a 1566 translation of an Italian play by Ariosto, was one of Shakespeare's sources for *The Taming of the Shrew*. *Supposes* was intended to be performed for fashionable London lawyers. Ariosto's original play had drawn on Roman comedies. Shakespeare found inspiration in the suspense and intrigue offered by Italian comedies.

Read this summary of *Supposes* and answer the questions.

A young Sicilian named Erostrato arrives in Ferrara, intending to study. He falls in love with Polynesta, who is the daughter of a merchant called Damon. Erostrato swaps clothes with Dulipo so that he can gain access to Damon's house. With the help of Polynesta's maid, disguised Erostrato wins Polynesta's love, sleeps with her and reveals his true identity to her.

Meanwhile, Damon has decided to marry Polynesta to an aged lawyer, Cleander, who is a friend of his. Disguised as his master Erostrato, Dulipo becomes a suitor for Polynesta's hand in marriage. When his father is coming to town and will ratify a dowry as large as the one offered by Cleander, he persuades a Sieneese traveller to impersonate Phylogano, Erostrato's father. They instigate a fight between Cleander and Phylogano.

The real Phylogano arrives in Ferrara, intending to collect his son and take him home. He meets and argues with the fake Phylogano at the house where he has been installed. Erostrato and Dulipo pretend that they do not know the real Phylogano, who decides to marry Cleander because he thinks there has been foul play. When Phylogano and Cleander are reunited, it is revealed that Dulipo is really Cleander's long-lost son, Carino, who was lost when he was 18 years earlier.

Damon finds out what has been going on in his house behind his back when he overhears the Nurse and another servant. He imprisons and threatens Erostrato for seducing Polynesta. He will have to confess to everything and reveal his true identity to Damon. Damon marries his son-in-law because he is of the same social class as his daughter. Cleander decides to marry Polynesta when he is reunited with his son.

Two servants in the play are called Petrucio and Lytio.

Questions:

1. What has Shakespeare added to *Supposes*?
2. What has Shakespeare removed?
3. What do you think of the changes Shakespeare made?
4. Do you agree with critics who say that Shakespeare's additions and changes are more romantic than *Supposes*?

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Task 2: Classical Comedy

Pair work. Read this summary of a typical classical comedy. Apply these ideas to a situation in *The Taming of the Shrew*. Make a bullet-point list.

In classical comedy the hero begins the play down on his luck, either financially, socially or romantically. The audience is encouraged to sympathise with him because he's clever and likeable. He is a man who can exploit the weaknesses of others. The hero decides he wants to achieve something and goes on a journey to accomplish his purpose. What the hero wants may seem improbable or even impossible. The comic hero will encounter chaos, obstacles and confusion, which he will overcome. He is not afraid to make folly ridiculous and to deride things that are vile. Classical comedy begins with a hero who is down on his luck.

Task 3: Commedia dell'arte

Commedia dell'arte began in Italy in the 1500s and was at the height of its popularity in the 1600s. It influenced drama all over Europe. Shakespeare makes a direct reference to commedia in *The Taming of the Shrew* when he refers to Gremio as a 'pantaloon' in Act 2. A typical scenario in commedia involves an upper-class young man and woman whose love is thwarted by their parents. Except for the young lovers, the characters in commedia are stock characters. The romantic plot involving the young lovers is complemented by improvisations and slapstick nature. Stock characters developed over time, giving audiences a sense of familiarity. In commedia, the female roles, unlike on the English stage, where all female parts were played by men.

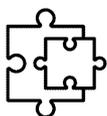
Pair work. Read through this list of the four stock character types from *commedia dell'arte*. Link the stock characters from commedia to the characters from *The Taming of the Shrew*.

- Innamorati**
Young, upper-class lovers who are romantic, good-looking, naive and idealistic. They are often pursued or lusted after by more than one male character.
- Zanni**
The *Zanni* were responsible for a lot of the physical (slapstick, tumbling, acrobatics) and verbal (wordplay, puns, riddles) humour of commedia. Two types of *Zanni* developed, the 'first Zanni' (cunning) and the 'second Zanni' (clumsy). Every commedia scenario always had at least two *Zanni*. Stock *Zanni* included:

 - Mezzetino* – a schemer and a troublemaker, who is often a good musician.
 - Arlecchino* (Harlequin in English) – a light-hearted, astute, mischievous man who is often in love with Columbina.
 - Columbina* – a maid who is in love with one of the male characters.
 - Brighella* – a cunning, sly man who is a good liar. He often serves as a foil for the other characters.
 - Scapino* – a cunning servant who is always on the lookout for ways to make his master's life easier.
 - Pulcinella* – an opportunistic, self-interested, crooked nosed, humpbacked, clumsy and loves to eat.
- Vecchi**
The *Vecchi* are wealthy, elderly men who are often misers. They are greedy and obsessed with property and women. *Vecchi* characters include:

 - Pantalone* – the metaphorical representation of money in commedia, a character who is greedy and lustful. He may be the father of one of the young lovers.
 - Il Dottore* – the comic foil to Pantalone. He is a pompous and pretentious man who gives long-winded speeches and loves the sound of his own voice. He may also be a friend of Pantalone.
- Il Capitano**
Il Capitano is an arrogant, braggart soldier who boasts of his military prowess and fierce. In negative scenarios he is a coward who is terrified of having to fight. *Il Capitano* is portrayed as a dreamer with noble feelings.

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Extension Task

Choose one of the commedia characters and write a paragraph explaining how Shakespeare has used this stock character to add to the dramatic impact of *The Taming of the Shrew*.

Context: Boy Actors

Task 1

Individual or pair work. Read the information below and answer the questions.

All female roles on the Elizabethan stage were played by boy actors. By the 1590s, when permanent venues were built, there were more openings for the young boys to play the female parts. A boy would be recruited at around the age of 10. He would be an individual in the adult acting company for seven years. This individual would train and then, as he grew, boy actors made a successful transition from female roles to adult male roles at the age of 17. Puberty occurred later in the 1500s, so boys could play female roles well into their late teens.

Puritans objected to boy actors playing female roles on religious grounds. They claimed that it violated Bible teachings and encouraged the sin of homosexual lust. However, audiences were entertained by the parts being played by boys, and many contemporary commentators remarked on the success of the boys in maintaining their female roles. Audiences knew that they were watching a constructed performance, but the theatre.

Michael Shapiro has suggested that the audience's acceptance of theatrical artifice is a way of seeing that these male performers were offering versions of femininity, versions which made female images of women... available to the culture.' Shapiro goes on to argue that *The Taming of the Shrew* draws attention to the way femininity is constructed. The play 'contrasts opposing images of the gentlewoman and the scold and juxtaposes the ideal fantasy with the dreaded nightmare of the audience's realization that these familiar cultural constructs were theatrical illusions.'

(Michael Shapiro, 'Framing the Taming: Metatheatrical Awareness of Female Impersonation in *The Taming of the Shrew*,' *The Yearbook of English Studies*, Vol. 23, 1993, pp. 143–66)

Questions:

- How many boy actors would you need to perform *The Taming of the Shrew* successfully? Which roles could be doubled? (Remember that actors took more than one role.)
- Could the play be performed successfully today with boys playing the female roles?
- Would the use of an all-male cast change the impact of the play? How?

Task 2

Pair or small group work. Make a list of 5–10 moments in the play, including the moments where Shakespeare draws attention to theatrical illusion and identity / gender roles / femininity. Now turn your list into a PowerPoint presentation on theatrical illusion and identity. Present to your classmates.

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Characterisation and Character Relationships

Task 1: Character Profile

Work in small groups, with group members covering different characters. Create a profile for each of the characters, using this template:

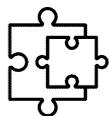
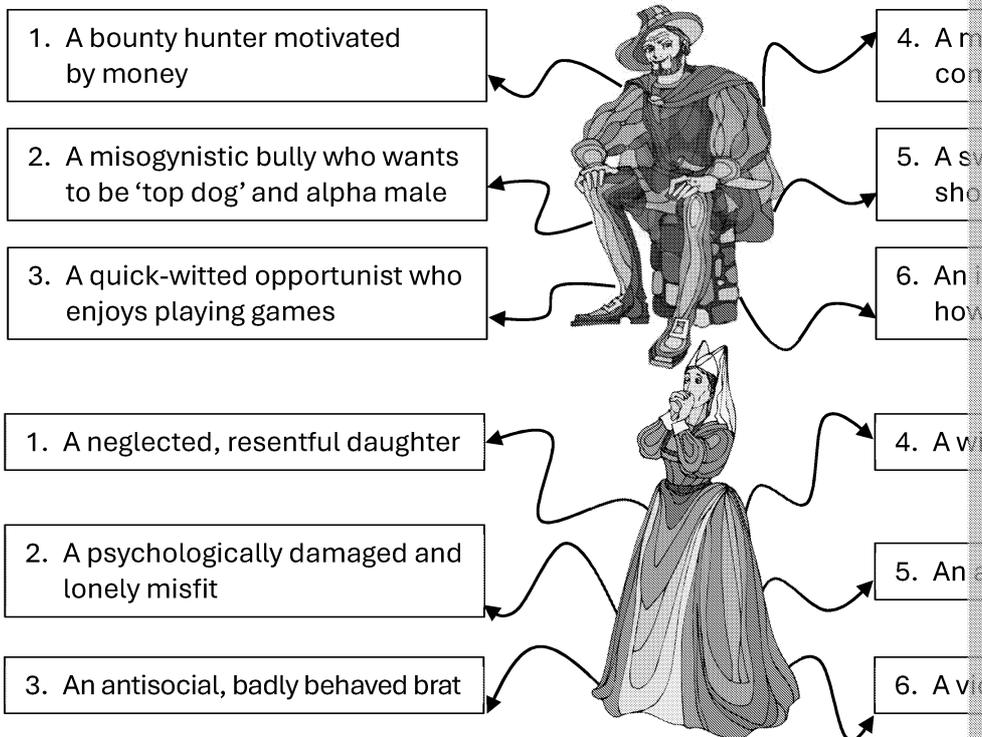
- Who am I?
- What is my situation at the start of the play?
- What is important to me, or what motivates me?
- Do I adopt a disguise? Why?
- What happens to me during the play?
- What is my situation at the end of the play, and how do I feel about it?
- How do I interact with others?
- What do others say about me?
- What is my role and/or function in the play?
- What are my key moments in the play? (up to five)
- Which themes am I linked to? (up to five)
- Five words to describe me...
- Five key quotations for my character...

Task 2: Character Relationships

Pair or small group work. Make a mind map showing the character relationships for the main play. Can you make links between the characters in the Induction and the main play?

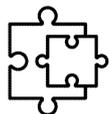
Task 3: Mind Maps

Pair or small group work. Look at the mind maps for Petruchio and Katherine. Add comments and textual evidence to support these ideas.



Extension Task 1

Can you add any further categories to these mind maps? Are there any other words you could use to describe BOTH Petruchio and Katherine?



Extension Task 2

Pair or small group work. Create mind maps like these for other characters in the Induction. Each pair/group could cover different characters.

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Themes: Romance and Marriage

Task 1 – Discussion and Comment

Pair work. Discuss these statements and add your comments:

Statement
a) The characters with romantic ideals are presented as ridiculous.
b) Wooing a partner is presented as a game or competition where there are winners and losers.
c) A happy marriage depends upon the subordination of women.
d) Marriage is presented as a hazardous business for both men and women.
e) The romantic subplot is undermined by the main plot and the Induction.
f) The play is more concerned with money, power and social status than love.
g) The play suggests loving partnerships are possible.
h) Marriage is an economic institution that benefits men.



Extension Task 1

Pair work. Find quotations to support or challenge one or more of these statements.

Task 2 – Tracking the Theme of Love and Marriage

Pair or small group work. Create a love and marriage theme tracker for the play, in which you record the key moments in the play. Present your theme tracker as a flow chart which can be shared with your classmates.

Task 3 – Analysing Quotations about Love and Marriage

Analyse the key quotations about love and marriage. Create a table – identify speakers, contexts and themes.

	Quotation	Speaker	Context
1	'My husband and my lord, my lord and husband, / I am your wife in all obedience' (Induction 2, lines 102–103)		
2	'I burn! I pine, I perish... If I achieve not this young modest girl' (Act 1, Scene 1, lines 146–147)		
3	'For in Baptista's keep my treasure is. / He hath the jewel of my life in hold,... beautiful Bianca' (Act 1, Scene 2, lines 112–113)		
4	'Then tell me, if I get your daughter's love, / What dowry shall I have with her to wife?' (Act 2, Scene 1, lines 115–116)		
5	'And therefore, setting all this chat aside, / Thus in plain terms... will you, nill you, I will marry you.' (Act 2, Scene 1, lines 259–260)		
6	'No shame but mine. I must, forsooth, be forced / To give my hand, against my heart, / Unto a mad-brain rudesby' (Act 3, Scene 2, lines 8–10)		
7	'Thus have I politicly begun my reign, / And 'tis my hope to end successfully' (Act 4, Scene 1, lines 159–160)		
8	'Kindness in women, not their beauteous looks, / Shall win my love' (Act 4, Scene 2, lines 41–42)		
9	'Then God be blessed, it is the blessed sun... What you will have it named, even that it is, / And so it shall be for Katherine.' (Act 4, Scene 5, lines 18–22)		
10	'We three are married, but you two are sped. /... 'Twas I won the wager, though you hit the white, - / And being a winner, God give you good night.' (Act 5, Scene 2, lines 185–188)		



Extension Task 2

Read and make notes on this commentary 'Marriage in Shakespeare's Day' www.english-teacher.com/2015/05/20/12950-marriage

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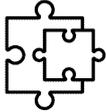


Themes: Money and Masculinity

Task 1 – Key Quotations

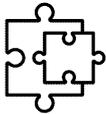
Pair work. Find quotations to support these points on money and masculinity.

Point
a) Women have no part in the financial dealings that determine their fate.
b) All the male characters are obsessed with money and financial gain.
c) Men use their possessions – including their wives – to show off their power.
d) The play is about men's love of games and sport, not romantic love.
e) Money is a prerequisite for marriage. No sensible man marries without a fortune.



Extension Task 1

Using one of the quotations you have found, write a paragraph about how it is presented in the play. Share your paragraph with a partner.



Extension Task 2

Pair or small group work. Respond to this essay question:
'The presentation of male attitudes to money undermines the comedy of the play. Discuss how Shakespeare presents male attitudes towards money in the play.'

Suggested extract choices:

1. Act 1, Scene 2, from line 47, where Petruchio tells Hortensio why he is marrying Katherina.
2. Act 2, Scene 1, from line 256 where Petruchio tells Katherina he will do whatever she wants.
3. Act 2, Scene 1, from line 315 where Tranio (disguised as Lucentio) asks Katherina for Bianca's hand in marriage.

Either make a five-point essay plan or write an introduction to the essay.

Themes: Education

Task 1 – Mind Map

Pair work. Create a poster. On your poster, create a mind map which illustrates the learning that occurs in the play and its Induction. Decorate your poster with images.

Task 2 – Debate

Debate this statement: 'No true learning occurs in the play.'

Task 3 – Essay Plan

Pair work. Make a five-point essay plan in response to this statement: 'The play shows that learning is a painful and humiliating process for both teacher and pupil.'

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Themes: Deception, Disguise and Identity

Task 1 – Deception and Disguise Countdown

Fill in this deception and disguise countdown grid. Discuss the contents of your cell with a partner.

Five examples of one character deceiving another			
Four examples of disguise			
Three examples of a fantastic story or lie being told			
Two examples of deception/disguise leading to potential danger			
One example of deception/disguise leading to a positive outcome			

Task 2 – Textual Evidence Search

Pair work. Find textual evidence and/or quotations to support and/or challenge the theme of identity and disguise.

- 'Petruccio is never really in disguise, even when he turns up to his wedding in disguise. He does not try to deceive anyone about his intentions.'
- 'Petruccio acts the role of eccentric wife tamer to create a new reality for himself.'
- 'Katherina pretends to be transformed so she can have a quiet life with Petruccio.'
- 'Bartholomew the Page's successful disguise as Sly's wife draws attention to the theme of deception, deceived by women, an idea also portrayed in the main play.'

Task 3 – Disguises Mind Map

Pair or small group work. 'People disguise themselves to get what they want.' Make a mind map to illustrate this point. Make sure you include the Induction, main plot and subplot.

Themes: Appearance and Reality

Task 1

Pair work. Choose one of these exam-style questions and plan a response to it. Your response can be a bullet-point list, a mind map, or notes.

- 'The plot of *The Taming of the Shrew* is built on the unmasking of false appearances. The play presents false appearances in the plot.'
- 'The confusion of appearances and reality undermines the concept of male dominance and trust that Katherina has really been transformed.' To what extent do you agree with this statement?
- 'Explore the darker aspects of the theme of appearance and reality in *The Taming of the Shrew*.'

Task 2 – Key Quotations

Collect five quotations related to the sense of sight which you could use to discuss appearance and reality in the play.

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Themes: The Individual and Society

Task 1 – The Individual and Society

What does the play suggest about the relationship between the individual and society? Work with a partner to find examples to illustrate these ideas:

A: It is important that people know their place in society and fit in with what is expected of them. People should 'stay in their lane'.	B: Social expectations are turned upside down in the play, and people challenge society.
--	--

Task 2 – Critical Opinion

Lisa Hopkins has argued that there are clear signs of social conservatism in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that it is not possible for people to reject or rebel against society, its customs and traditions. At the end of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* 'the two couples willingly return to the society they fled to take their allotted parts as leading members of it and, no doubt, to assist in its maintenance' (Lisa Hopkins, 'Marriage as Comic Closure', 1988, Edexcel Critical Anthology: Comedy).

Apply Hopkins' comments about the ending of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to *The Taming of the Shrew*.

You might want to discuss these questions:

- Are Tranio and Biondello happy 'back in harness' in Act 5, Scene 2?
- Do Katherina and Petruchio become the leading members of their society?
- How do you view the Widow and Bianca – are they social rebels, or will they be obedient wives?
- Are the fathers – Baptista and Vincentio – restored as authority figures at the end of Act 5, Scene 2?

Task 3 – An Unequal World?

Pair or small group work. How unequal is society in the world of the play? Come up with an essay plan to answer this question:

'Discuss the ways in which Shakespeare presents inequality in *The Taming of the Shrew*.'

Present your essay plan as a poster / on flip chart paper.

Task 4 – Duty Discussion

Small group work. Discuss the way duty is presented in the play, using these questions:

What is a child's duty to their parents?	What duties do husbands and wives have to each other?	What is the duty of a parent to their children?
What is a master's duty to their servants?	What is a servant's duty to their master?	Do the characters have a duty to society?

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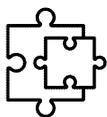


The Writer's Use of Language

Top Ten Quotations

Pair or small group work. Which themes could you use these quotations to illustrate? Create a table and add comments.

	Quotation	
1	'For how I firmly am resolved you know: That is, not to bestow my youngest daughter Before I have a husband for the elder.' (Baptista, Act 1, Scene 1, lines 49–51)	
2	'Why, nothing comes amiss, so money comes withal.' (Grumio, Act 1, Scene 2, lines 77–78)	
3	'Thou must be married to no man but me, For I am he am born to tame you, Kate, And bring you from a wild Kate to a Kate Conformable as other household Kates.' (Petruccio, Act 2, Scene 1, lines 264–267)	
4	'Faith, gentlemen, now I play a merchant's part, And venture madly on a desperate mart.' (Baptista, Act 2, Scene 1, lines 315–316)	
5	'Nay, look not big, nor stamp, not stare, not fret; I will be master of what is mine own. She is my goods, my chattels; she is my house, My household-stuff...' (Petruccio, Act 3, Scene 2, lines 217–220)	
6	'And, if she chance to nod, I'll rail and brawl, And with the clamour keep her still awake. This is the way to kill a wife with kindness. And thus I'll curb her mad and headstrong humour.' (Petruccio, Act 4, Scene 2, lines 177–180)	
7	'But I, who never knew how to entreat, Am starved for meat, giddy for lack of sleep, With oaths kept waking and with brawling fed.' (Katherina, Act 4, Scene 3, lines 7–9)	
8	'Love wrought these miracles. Bianca 's love Made me exchange my state with Tranio... What Tranio did, myself enforced him to; Then pardon him, sweet father, for my sake.' (Lucentio, Act 5, Scene 1, lines 98–104)	
9	'Fie, fie! Unknit that threat'ning unkind brow, And dart not scornful glances from those eyes, To wound thy lord, thy king, thy governor.' (Katherina, Act 5, Scene 1, lines 136–138)	
10	'The more fool you for laying on my duty.' (Bianca, Act 5, Scene 2, line 129)	



Extension Task

Small group work. Produce a set of 10 flash cards with more key quotations. Test each other's knowledge of the play. Write the quotation on one side and relevant themes on the reverse.

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Memory Board

Choose a word/phrase and comment on its significance/meaning.
Cross out each word/phrase as you go.

stichomythia	mutton	sovereign	curse
haggard	kiss	Ovid	jewe
lute	wasp	dowry	pup
fool	dream	wildcat	panta
devil	the moon	chattels	cap



Extension Task

In pairs or small groups, students could produce their own memory board with key quotations, words, themes, characters, critics, etc., which they can use to demonstrate their knowledge of the play.

Dramatic Methods

Task 1 – Literary Techniques

Small group work. Create a poster / mind map with examples of the following techniques.

- Alliteration (the same letter or sound occurs at the beginning of adjacent or closely connected words)
- Allusion (a reference to something from another text, e.g. the Bible, classical literature)
- 'Bawdy' humour (humour that relies on lewd, vulgar or sexual themes)
- Hyperbole (exaggerated statements, claims or descriptions)
- Insults
- Irony (verbal irony is when a character means something different from what they say; situational irony is when the difference between appearance and reality)
- Metaphor (a word for one thing used to refer to another thing to show they are similar)
- Motif (a repeated pattern of words, images or symbols which occurs again and again)
- Proverb (a short sentence or saying that expresses a common truth or gives advice)
- Repetition
- Rhetoric (the art of using language effectively to persuade, often in a lengthy speech)
- Rhyming couplet (two lines written in iambic pentameter that end in a rhyme)
- Simile (to compare one thing to another using 'like' or 'as')
- Stichomythia (dialogue in which two characters speak alternate lines of verse)
- Symbol (an object or a person that represents something)

Task 2 – Characters' Speech Styles

Small group work. Create a speech-style profile for each of the key characters. Each character should have a different profile. The profiles could be shared as PowerPoint presentations or posters.

- Do they speak at length?
- Do they use commands?
- Do they ask questions?
- Do they interrupt others?
- Do they finish off other characters' lines? (a sign of power)
- Do they complain?
- Do they use exclamations?
- Do they shout?
- How do they speak to others?
- Do they listen to others?
- Is their voice heard?
- What does their silence mean?

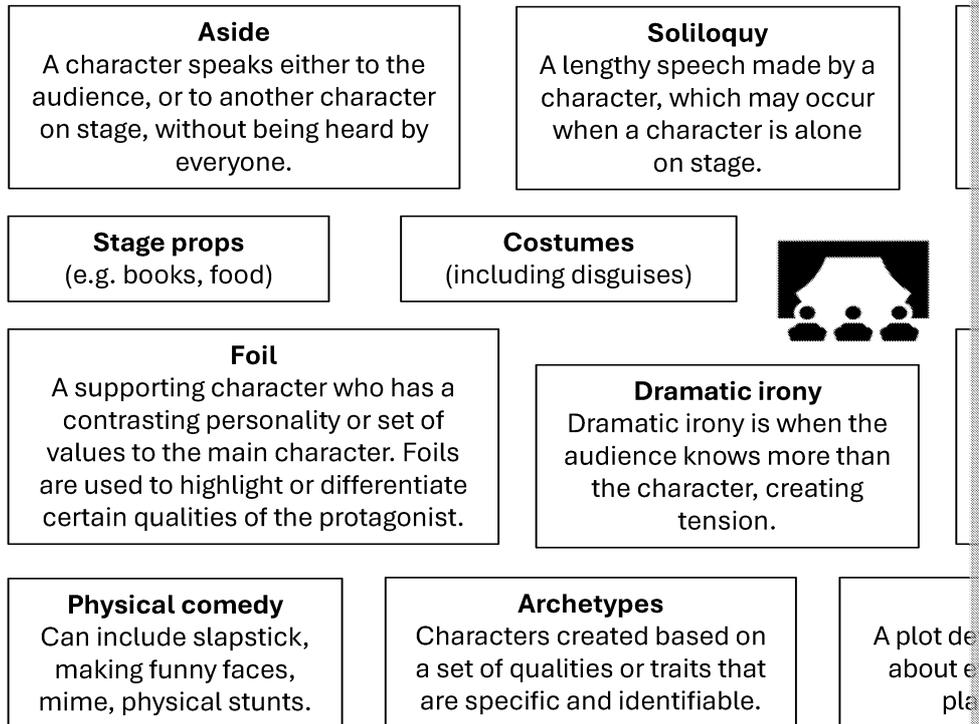
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Shakespeare's Stagecraft

Task 1

Pair work. Add examples to this mind map of Shakespeare's dramatic methods.



Use of Settings

Task 1

For more information about Shakespeare's use of Italy for his play's settings, read on this article:

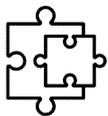
[zzed.uk/12950-italy](https://www.zzed.uk/12950-italy)

For all links go to z

Task 2

Pair or small group work. Which key events occur in each setting? Create a setting

1. Warwickshire – outside an alehouse
2. The Lord's English country house
3. The streets of Padua
4. The door of Hortensio's house in Padua
5. Baptista's house in Padua
6. Lucentio's house in Padua
7. The church(es) in Padua (r
8. A country lane on the way
9. Petruchio's country house



Extension Task 1

Add comments to your Task 2 mind map on how each setting contributes to themes, characterisation).



Extension Task 2

Why did Shakespeare choose Italy as a setting for 15 of his plays (13 of which are set in Italy)? It is partly because he drew on Italian sources for inspiration (see Contextualising Shakespeare also comments, 'Shakespeare never sets a play in his own time and place, but on 'the fictionality and distance of elsewhere.' Smith argues that part of his appeal would have been the sense of escapism that came from watching a story set in a foreign place as Italy. Shakespeare's theatre did not have much in the way of stage furniture, but characters spend time describing places in detail to help transport the audience to believe. Work with a partner. Can you find 3–5 examples of this in *The Taming of the Shrew*? (Emma Smith, 'Shakespeare and Historical Context', *The Literature Reader*, Ed

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Attitudes and Values

Attitudes to the Female Voice

Task 1 – Women’s Voices and the Devil

In the Elizabethan period, a woman’s tongue was often seen as an instrument of power. A popular Scottish ballad, ‘The Dumb Wife of Aberdour’, tells the tale of a husband who complains that his wife is unable to speak, and the devil offers to help him. The devil leaves under his wife’s tongue while she sleeps, and she will be able to speak when she goes to work, and the woman begins to talk – but more than her husband wants her to. Her husband and asks him to make his wife dumb again. The devil replies:

The least devil in hell
Can give a wife her tongue;
The greatest, I you tell,
Can never make her dumb.

You will find a link which includes more from the ballad here:

[www.bbc.co.uk/12950-ballad](http://www.bbc.co.uk/1/health/2012/08/120812_12950_ballad)

Laws and punishments related to shrewish behaviour were established in the medieval period. Women who were seen as scolds could be fined, sentenced to the ducking stool, or put into stocks. Other punishments included being put on display in the marketplace, where the scold would be ridiculed. Sometimes suggested that persistently shrewish women should have their tongues cut out, but this was never put into practice.

Work with a partner:

- Collect three references from the play that illustrate the link between the female voice and power.
- Collect three references from the play which show people think that Katherine is being ridiculed for being a scold.

Task 2 – Stevie Davies on Katherine’s Voice

‘It is often remarked of *The Shrew* that, whereas Kate is credited with the capacity to speak off against the males in an ear-shattering way, in fact she only speaks 207 lines in the play, as many as Petruchio, who speaks 564 lines and dominates the stage with a manic manner that reinforces his speeches. In Act 4, Scene 1, Kate is all but mute, and even in earlier scenes she is silent to his flamboyant harangues which her husband-to-be enjoys. There is a curious disparity between the amount of voice Kate actually emits and the hooliganism she is credited for by her fellow protagonists. Petruchio’s rancour, the males chorus their communal horror... The overreactions of the male characters are symptoms of mass neurosis.’ (Stevie Davies, *The Taming of the Shrew*, Penguin Classics)

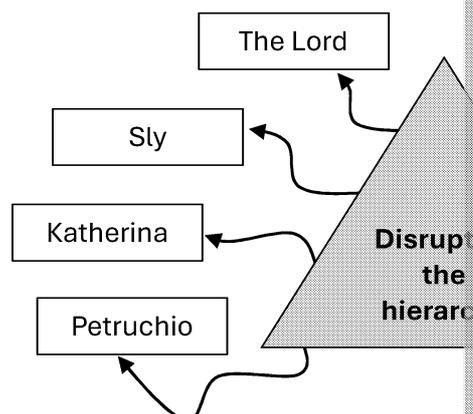
- Discuss Stevie Davies’ views with a partner.
- Create a mind map, ‘Katherine’s voice’. Add five examples of Katherine’s speeches. How do the male characters react to each speech by Katherine? Add comments to your mind map.

Disrupting the Hierarchy

Task 1 – Mind Map

(For the purposes of this task, the hierarchy = the Elizabethan social class structure and the patriarchy)

- How do characters (try to) disrupt the hierarchy?
- Why do characters (try to) disrupt the hierarchy?
- Are they successful?
- How does the hierarchy deal with their disruptive behaviour?



Pair work. Add your thoughts to a mind map like this...

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Task 2

'There is no place outside the patriarchal system for women in the world of the play.
Write a paragraph in response to this statement.

Matching Game

Pair work. Match the quotations to the 'best-fit' social attitudes/values. Some quotations may match more than one point – but try to use them all for separate points.

Attitudes and Values

1. Good servants obey their masters.
2. Husbands should be able to control and direct their wives – this is the natural order.
3. A woman's reputation is very important.
4. Money is an important consideration when you decide to marry.
5. You should marry into the same social class you are born into.
6. Well-born people fear social shame and public humiliation.
7. Parents have the right to control their children's lives.
8. Good children obey their parents.
9. Upper-class people have a right to exploit their social inferior.
10. Education is important to the merchant class, who invest in their children's education.

Quotations

- A. 'O monstrous beast, how like a swine he lies!... Sirs, I will practise on this drum / To make him drunk / And then I will be gone / And leave you to your shame.' (Bianca, Act 1, Scene 1, lines 28–31)
- B. 'Gentlemen, importune me no farther / For how I firmly am resolved you know / I will not have my youngest daughter / Before I have a husband for the elder.' (Baptista, Act 1, Scene 1, lines 10–13)
- C. 'And, for I know she taketh most delight / In music, instruments and poetry, / I will bestow on my house / First to instruct her youth.' (Baptista, Act 1, Scene 1, lines 92–95)
- D. 'Sir, to your pleasure humbly I subscribe. / My books and instruments shall be at your service / And I will practise by myself.' (Bianca, Act 1, Scene 1, lines 81–83)
- E. 'In brief, sir, sith it your pleasure is, / And I am tied to be obedient – ... I am content / To do as you shall please, so well I love Lucentio.' (Tranio, Act 1, Scene 1, lines 203–208)
- F. 'Hortensio, peace. Thou know'st not gold's effect. / Tell me her father's name / And I will give thee gold.' (Baptista, Act 1, Scene 2, lines 89–90)
- G. 'Nay, now I see / She is your treasure, she must have a husband. / I must dance attendance / On her, for your love to her, lead apes in hell.' (Katherina, Act 2, Scene 1, lines 30–33)
- H. 'Yet if they thoughts, Bianca, be so humble / To cast thy wand'ring eyes on every man / That comes in sight, / I will be gone / And leave you to your shame.' (Hortensio, Act 3, Scene 1, lines 86–88)
- I. 'Well, forward, forward! Thus the bowl should run / And not unluckily against the ground.' (Tranio, Act 1, Scene 5, lines 24–25)
- J. 'The sister to my wife, this gentlewoman, / Thy son by this hath married. Who is she? / She is of good esteem, / Her dowry wealthy, and of worthy birth' (Petruccio, Act 2, Scene 1, lines 10–13)

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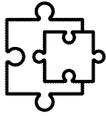
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Structure and Form

Task 1

What is the purpose of the Induction? Work with a partner to make a list of five things that Shakespeare presents in the play. Share your ideas with your classmates.



Extension Task 1

'The Induction is a crucial part of *The Taming of the Shrew* because it encourages the audience to understand key ideas about power in the play.' In light of this, how does Shakespeare present ideas about power in the Induction and elsewhere in the play?

Work with a partner to choose an extract from the main play to accompany your response to this essay question.

Task 2

Pair work. Write headlines for each scene in the play. Cut them out and mix them up. Give them to another pair to arrange into the correct order.

Task 3

Critics have suggested the play is structured around social rituals. Work with a partner to identify the social rituals that occur in:

- The Exposition (Acts 1 and 2)
- The Comic Climax (Act 3)
- The Resolution (Acts 4 and 5)

(See Freytag's Pyramid on page 6 for a diagram of the five-act structure.)

Task 4

Compare the main plot and the subplot. How does Shakespeare use characters, themes, and motifs to link them? Add comments and examples to a table like this:

Main plot		
	Male wooers	
	Brides-to-be	
	Father figures	
	Servants	
	Disguise and deception	
	Love and marriage	
	Education	
	Wooing and wedding	
	Arranging a marriage	
	Celebrating a marriage	

Task 5 – The Lord and Petruchio

'The Lord and Petruchio are both alpha males who control and direct the lives of those around them. The Induction and play within a play are structured around them.' Work with a partner to make a list of five points to support and/or challenge these statements.

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Genre

Task 1 – Shakespearean Comedy

Pair work. Richard Gill identifies these features as typical of Shakespearean comedy.

- The opposition between the old and the young
- Love as the motivating force
- The importance of scheming
- Confusion in the middle scenes
- The importance of characters achieving self-knowledge
- The experience of being fooled
- The need to understand and to change
- The overcoming of differences
- Marriage and the promise of new life

(Richard Gill, *Mastering Shakespeare*, Macmillan, 1998, p. 90)

Apply this list to *The Taming of the Shrew* and make a mind map or notes.

Points to consider

Critics have suggested that comedy comes from the differences or disparities between what competing characters in a play know. Knowledge is power, and those who know most become powerful winners. One of the joys of comedy for the audience is that they always know more than any of the characters. Explore these ideas in relation to *The Taming of the Shrew*.

Task 2 – Comic Release and Resolution

To what extent does *The Taming of the Shrew* provide comic release and resolution? Write a paragraph explaining what you think. Then share your paragraph with a partner.

- Comic release = a sense of fun, festivity, hilarity and game playing, which characterises comedy.
- Resolution = at the conclusion of the play any loose ends are tied up and problems or characters should be resolved.

Do you think Elizabethan audiences might have answered the question about comic release and resolution differently?

Discussion Point

Aelius Donatus, a fourth-century Roman grammarian, said that comedies begin in trouble and end in peace. Is this true in *The Taming of the Shrew*?

Task 3 – The Moral Lesson of Comedy – Class Discussion

Ancient Greek and Roman comedies, which influenced Elizabethan dramatists, often offered moral lessons for the audience, e.g. how to avoid harlots and braggarts or how to deal with women. One of the main purposes of comedy was to make people laugh at ugly or ridiculous things, so that they would behave better. This was the Renaissance, as suggested by Shakespeare's contemporaries. In *The Defence of Comedy*, John Lyly wrote that, 'Comedy is an imitation of the common errors of our life, which [the dramatist] represents in a ridiculous and scornful sort that may be, so as it is impossible that any beholder can be ignorant of the fault which is laughed at.'

- What moral lessons do you think *The Taming of the Shrew* teaches?
- Would Shakespeare's audiences take the same moral lessons from the play that we do? What audience might?

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Task 4 – Essay Questions

Pair or small group work. Choose one of these questions and produce a five-point supporting examples. Present your essay plan as a poster / on flip chart paper.

EITHER

1. What is the significance of the play's title to the comedy of *The Taming of the Shrew*?

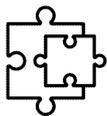
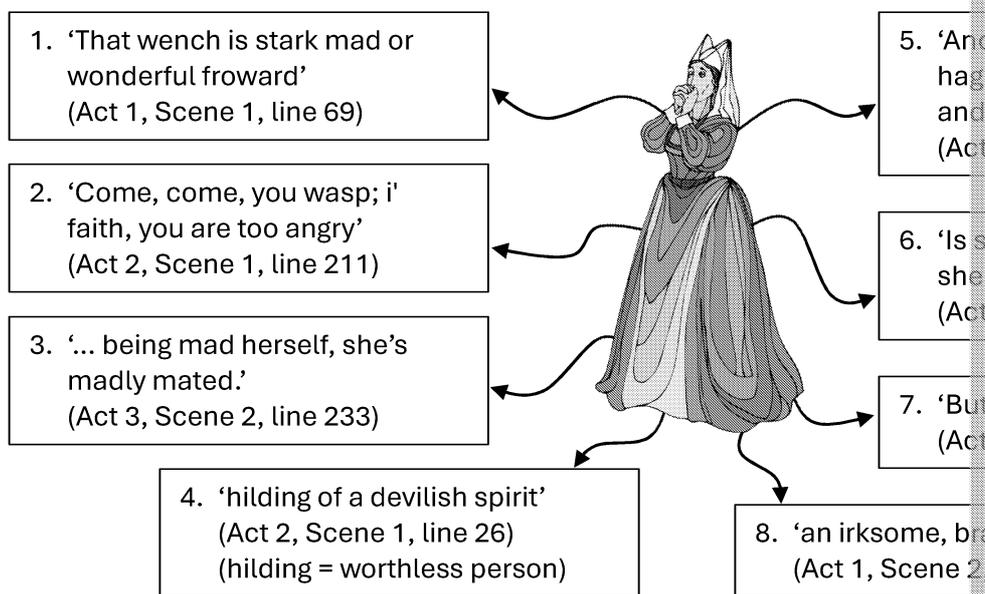
OR

2. 'Katherina's willing submission to Petruchio in Act 5 provides an uplifting end to the play. To what extent do you agree with this view?'

Imagery

Task 1 – Imagery Associated with Katherina the Scold

Identify who is describing Katherina in each quotation and analyse the imagery.



Extension Task 1

Write a summary of how the imagery used to describe Katherina is intended to make the audience feel about her. Share your summary with a partner.

Task 2 – Imagery Associated with Petruchio

Pair work. Create a similar mind map for Petruchio – is he portrayed in a way that is different from Katherina?

Task 3 – Key Images Mind Map

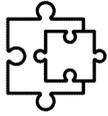
Small group work, with each group taking a different topic. Find examples of the following imagery in the play:

- Money
- Sports and games (e.g. cards, gambling, hunting, hawking)
- Animals (e.g. birds, shrews, horses, deer)
- Clothing
- Food
- War
- Madness

Add examples to a PowerPoint presentation and analyse how they are used in the play.

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Extension Task 2

Pair work. Make a five-point essay plan in response to this question: 'Explain how Shakespeare uses imagery to develop characters and themes in *The Taming of the Shrew*.'

Choose relevant images from your Task 3 mind map / the text to support your plan.



Extension Task 3

Write a paragraph about the importance of food in the play.

Critical Reception

Task 1

Read through these critics' opinions. Highlight one key idea from each critic. Discuss your thoughts with a partner.

1. A Nineteenth-century View

William Hazlitt (1778–1830) – from *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* (1817)

'*The Taming of the Shrew* is almost the only one of Shakespeare's comedies that has a downright moral. It is full of bustle, animation, and rapidity of action. It shows how one degree of ridiculousness is got the better of by stronger will, and how one degree of ridiculousness is got the better of by another still greater. Petruchio is a madman in his senses; a very honest fellow, and succeeds in all his tricks and impostures. He acts his assumed character with the most fantastical extravagance, with complete presence of mind, with untiring industry, and without a particle of ill humour from beginning to end.

The situation of poor Katherine, worn out by his incessant persecutions, becomes almost ludicrous, and it is difficult to say which to admire most, the unaccountable and unalterableness of his resolutions. It is a character which most husbands ought to be ashamed of. The very audacity of Petruchio's attempt might alarm them more than his success.

The concluding scene, in which trial is made of the obedience of the new-made wife (Katherine Petruchio), is a very happy one.'

You will find a link to these comments here:

[zed.uk/12950-hazlitt](https://www.oxfordjournals.org/doi/10.1093/zed/12950-hazlitt)



2. A Feminist View

Stevie Davies, *The Taming of the Shrew*, Penguin Critical Guides, 1995, pp. 61–62

Davies argues that the play is an offensive and disturbing endorsement of patriarchy.

'When we move back from Shakespeare's development of the shrew or scold to the subversive wit in *Much Ado* and of subversive authority in *The Winter's Tale*, the painfully reactionary character of the play's ideal heroine, Katherine in *The Shrew*, the painfully reactionary character of the play's ideal heroine, the girl's profound isolation and vulnerability come into relief, for she has no friends like the other heroines of Shakespeare's comic world. Shakespearean romantic comedy offers a system of support and nurture for female individuals' but 'Kate has only Kate. Her world of money-grubbers, hand-in-glove relatives and "subtle Dr Petruchio" is a world of his so-called "therapy" on her... That loneliness remains with me when the laughter is away. It corresponds with an experience many dissident or anomalous women have: that of persons who are a joke to their neighbours and who are bullied by the common people. But what if the joke is your soul? Laughter is sometimes described as a kind of pain.'

Davies goes on to compare Petruchio to a bull 'who reinforces through comic exaggeration what we all recognize because we live in the world and see its manipulations and deceptions. When Shakespeare wrote *The Taming of the Shrew*; he merely added various embellishments; gave the bull an uproarious acting role and choreographed its spectacular mating routine. If we are *not* offended by the tragedy of Shakespeare's play, something wrong: the offensive world has implicated us too.'

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3. A Marxist View

Natasha Korda, 'Household Kates: Domesticating Commodities in *The Taming of the Shrew*', *Quarterly*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (Summer, 1996), pp. 109–131

Korda argues that Katherina is portrayed as a commodity in a play which shows the development of the commodity form.' She notes that the marriage of Petruchio between the gentry and mercantile classes and thus, land and money, status and shrews were 'typically portrayed as reluctant producers within the household who refused to engage in the forms of domestic labour expected of them' – brewing and weaving. Shakespeare breaks with this tradition. Instead of writing a play about a woman that she will work for him in his household, Shakespeare portrays Petruchio as a consumer in her new role as consumer.' According to Korda, Petruchio wants a wife who is a caretaker of commodities' and 'consume things for her husband's benefit'.

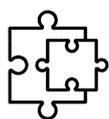
To do this Petruchio has to teach Katherina to behave in ways which will benefit and enhance his social status. Katherina must learn to behave like a good wife, who does not demand expensive lutes or demanding the latest costly fashions. Korda comments on Petruchio's clothing: 'this destruction of riches shows that Katherina has been successfully integrated within the symbolic order of things.' By the final scene, when Katherina throws away Petruchio's command, we know that she has learned to play the role of a woman of her social class. She is no longer a drain on her father's resources as an unmarried daughter because he has taught his wife how to be as 'conformable as other household members'.

4. A Twenty-first-century View

Emma Smith, *This is Shakespeare: How to Read the World's Greatest Playwright*

'But however much theatrical productions and critical interpretation strive to do, they want to stress something different here. *The Taming of the Shrew* prompts a different reading of them. The question of how to interpret the play is hard wired into its very structure and ongoing reception. Shakespeare's talent for interrogation and scepticism is one of his strengths and its history has exemplified one of our most persistent and inevitable reactions to Shakespeare. We make his work mean what we want it to mean. Whether Katherina at the end of the play thus becomes a sharper interpretive parallel: how to read Shakespeare's work.'

Crucial to Katherine's contested role in the play is an extended speech she gives in Act 4, Scene 1. The length is part of the point. She addresses her fellow women on stage, admonishing them for being disagreeable to their menfolk... The tone of this is wonderfully ambiguous. Is she reduced, broken-spirited? In some ways the language of "our weakness past correction" is, on the other hand, the very fact of holding forth on stage for an uninterrupted forty-five minutes anyone in the play by far, counteracts this. Is she sarcastically rehearsing a piece of advice? Her condemnation of her sex is so long that perhaps it becomes satirical through repetition, undermining its ostensible meaning. And surely calling women "wretches" is



Extension Task 1

Choose one of these critics. Write a paragraph supporting or challenging the chosen critic's ideas. You might find it helpful to include textual evidence to support your argument. Share your ideas with a partner.

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Task 3 – Ranking Points

Rank these arguments which incorporate critics' opinions (1 = best). When you have discussed with a partner how they could be improved and/or developed further. Finish by ranking these arguments.

- A) Walter Kerr says comedy occurs when there is no way out. This idea can be seen in Katherina in Act 4. Isolated in his country house, Katherina cannot escape her situation who collude with him. It is possible to present life in Petruchio's house as amusing scenes with the tailor and haberdasher. However, the sight of a starving, hungry man is not for a modern audience to laugh at.
- B) Hopkins says audiences are forced to question what they think when they watch. I think this is true because I have lots of questions at the end of *The Taming of Petruchio* makes Katherina throw her cap on the ground and give a long speech. This is sexist, as is pointed out by the critic Bates.
- C) Shakespeare's presentation of Bianca is full of irony. As Karen Newman has a great success on the marriage market with her 'mild behaviour and sobriety' (1, 1), she defies her father's authority by choosing and marrying a husband in secret, all the while being an obedient daughter. Her unmasking as a shrew in Act 5 should come as no surprise. She is a fool, but really, she has made fools of all the male characters. By pretending to meet the expectations of her, she has actively forged her own destiny.

Performance History

Task 1

Pair or small group work. Research the performance history of the play and make a presentation. The research could be turned into a poster or PowerPoint presentation. Each pair should research a century/decade/ production. You might find these websites useful:

- zzed.uk/12950-history1
- zzed.uk/12950-history2
- zzed.uk/12950-history3
- zzed.uk/12950-history4
- zzed.uk/12950-history5
- zzed.uk/12950-history6

Task 2

Read these reviews of productions of the play and decide which one you would most like to see.

- Production 1: zzed.uk/12950-production1
- Production 2: zzed.uk/12950-production2
- Production 3: zzed.uk/12950-production3
- Production 4: zzed.uk/12950-production4

Glossary

- Alliteration – the same consonant sound is repeated in pairs or groups of words which are close together, e.g. 'the devil's dam', 'Kate the curst', 'mad mistaking'.
- Ambiguity – being open to more than one reading or interpretation.
- Antithesis – a literary device whereby opposites or contrasts are created.
- Arranged marriage – a marriage which is arranged by the parents or guardians of the couple themselves.
- Aside – a speech which a character speaks either to the audience, or to another character, but not by everyone.
- Assonance – repetition of vowel sounds in words that are next to or near each other, e.g. 'foot, shrew and through'.

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- Bawdy humour – a style of comedy using lewd, vulgar or sexual themes and language, often testing the boundaries of what is socially acceptable.
- Blank verse – traditional English form of unrhymed verse, which Shakespeare characteristically used (metre with 10 syllables per line).
- Climax (of the play) – a Greek term meaning ladder, the climax is the highest point of the play, where the central conflict is brought to a head.
- Companionate marriage – a marriage in which the partners have equality and companionship.
- Dark comedy – a comedy with gloomy or disturbing elements which may make light of tragedy.
- Denouement – the final part of the drama where loose ends are often tied up and major conflicts resolved.
- Double entendre – a way of wording something so that it has a double meaning. It may refer to socially unacceptable ideas.
- Dramatic irony – dramatic irony is when the audience knows more than the characters.
- Exposition – the part of the play that sets the stage for what is to follow.
- Falling action – the part of the plot which follows the climax, where tension decreases.
- Farce – a type of comedy where there is buffoonery, physical comedy, and horseplay, often involving stereotypes, and they find themselves in situations which are unlikely or become ludicrous.
- Foil – a supporting character who has a contrasting personality or set of values to the protagonist, to highlight or differentiate qualities of the protagonist.
- Foreshadowing – a plot device whereby hints or warnings about events to come are dropped.
- Hyperbole – exaggerated comments or descriptions that are not meant to be taken literally.
- Iambic pentameter – a line of verse with five metrical feet, each made up of one short syllable followed by one long (or stressed) syllable, e.g. ‘Her silence flouts me, and I’ll be revenged.’ (Act 5, Scene 2). Iambic pentameter is supposed to be similar to natural speech, although it has the rhythm and structure of poetry.
- Imagery – the use of figurative language and descriptions to create images, impressions, and feelings in the reader or listener’s senses.
- Induction – an explanatory scene that stands apart from or introduces the main play, often used to comment on, summarise or draw attention to what the main play is about.
- Irony – verbal irony is when someone means something different from what they say, often highlighting a difference between appearance and reality.
- Main plot – the central characters appear in the main plot, which is the most important part of the play.
- Metaphor – a word for one thing which is applied to another to show they are similar, e.g. Petruchio referring to Katherina as his falcon or haggard (wild untamed bird).
- Metre – the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line of verse.
- Mirroring – a device whereby characters, themes, or plot points reflect each other, highlighting a sense of symmetry.
- Motif – a repeated pattern of words, images or symbols which occurs repeatedly, e.g. the references to the shrew in *The Shrew*.
- Ovidian comedy – Ovidian comedy did not have a political, moral or satirical agenda; it focused on the human condition.
- Prose – lines spoken by characters which are not in verse; prose does not conform to a regular metrical pattern.
- Protagonist – the main character in a story or play.
- Pun – a play on words.
- Resolution – the final outcome of the main events of the play.
- Rhyming couplet – a pair of successive lines that rhyme, e.g. ‘Twas I won the wager, and I was being a winner, God give you good night.’ (Act 5, Scene 2, lines 186–187)
- Rising action – major plot developments, which occur before the climax of the play.
- Satire – the use of humour, irony, exaggeration or ridicule to expose and critique stupidity or politics or other topical issues.
- Simile – comparing two things using ‘like’ or ‘as’, e.g. ‘thy greyhounds are as swift / As breath is to the wind.’ (Act 5, Scene 2, lines 186–187)
- Slapstick – a type of comedy involving exaggerated physical activity. It may involve bodily harm or violence, often resulting from characters’ use – and misuse – of props.
- Soliloquy – a lengthy speech made by a character, which may occur when a character is alone on stage.
- Stichomythia – dialogue in which two characters speak alternate lines of verse. It often involves a heated argument.
- Stock character – a stock character is a character archetype who audiences recognise from previous theatrical tradition, e.g. young lover, old miser.
- Subplot – a secondary storyline which may develop separately from the main plot, or may be intertwined with the main plot. Sometimes, as in *The Shrew*, the main plot and subplot become intertwined.
- Symbolism – meanings attached to objects, characters or situations which are used to represent ideas or emotions, e.g. Petruchio’s wedding outfit.
- Wordplay – the witty exploitation of words and their meanings for fun, or joking about language.

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Further Reading (to be used for res

- <https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/taming-shrew> (Emma Smith podcast on the play)
- <https://www.folger.edu/explore/shakespeares-works/the-taming-of-the-shrew/the-perspective/> (Karen Newman on the play)
- <https://www.shakespearesglobe.com/> (The Globe Theatre website – lots of info)
- <https://www.rsc.org.uk/learn> (RSC website – lots of information and images)
- <https://www.folger.edu/explore/shakespeares-theater/> (Shakespeare's theatre)
- <https://www.shakespeare-online.com/plots/tamingps.html> (Summaries of plots)
- [https://www.rsc.org.uk/the-taming-of-the-shrew/about-the-play/dates-and-sources#:~:text=Classical%20tales,%2C%20%20Suppositi%20\(1506\)](https://www.rsc.org.uk/the-taming-of-the-shrew/about-the-play/dates-and-sources#:~:text=Classical%20tales,%2C%20%20Suppositi%20(1506)) (RSC website)
- <https://shakespearecomesalivefall2016.wordpress.com/historical-background/> (Context)
- <https://revisionworld.com/gcse-revision/history-gcse-revision/elizabethan-era/life-and> (Elizabethan pastimes)
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/z28vdmn/revision/2> (Elizabethan popular culture – includes links to other relevant topics)
- <https://www.worldhistory.org/article/1577/clothes-in-the-elizabethan-era/> (Elizabethan clothing)
- <https://www.shakespearesglobe.com/discover/blogs-and-features/2019/04/16/elizabethan-fashion-policing-in-shakespeares-england/> (Sumptuary laws)
- <https://crossref-it.info/textguide/the-taming-of-the-shrew/43/3382> (Clothing)
- <https://crossref-it.info/textguide/the-taming-of-the-shrew/43/3385> (Gender roles)
- <https://theamm.org/ceremony-scripts/129-the-book-of-common-prayer-1552-christian-context> (Elizabethan wedding ceremony, Christian context)
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_the_Apostle_and_women (St Paul on women)
- <https://www.englishliterature.info/2023/02/main-features-shakespearean-comedy/> (Context)
- <https://www.rsc.org.uk/shakespeare-learning-zone/the-taming-of-the-shrew/stage> (Stage directions)
- <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/ebo/A14538.0001.001?view=toc> (Context – gender roles)
- <https://www.luminarium.org/renascence-editions/jest.html> (Shrew taming literature)
- <https://www.britannica.com/art/commedia-dellarte> (Commedia dell'arte)
- <https://www.britannica.com/art/comedy> (Classical comedy)
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_chain_of_being (Great Chain of Being)
- <https://allthatsinteresting.com/scolds-bridle> (Punishments for scolds)
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zn8yf82/revision/5> (Elizabethan punishment)



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Teacher's Notes and Indicative Pre-reading Activities

Indicative/suggested content and further suggestions for teaching are included here.
Many tasks could be added to PowerPoint slides to reduce photocopying.
Quizzes could be transferred to Kahoot (or a similar website).

Task 1

Students choose a topic to research and report back on. They can work individually or in pairs. This can be via PowerPoint presentation/handout or marketplace/carousel activity where they share what they have found out. If students are presenting their work as handouts, they may choose to use a timeline, mind map, table, Q & A format. It may be appropriate to give specific guidelines, a maximum of 10 slides, and the handout must be one or two sides of A4 with subheadings. This can be a homework, or as a class activity if students have access to computers / the Internet during lessons.

There is a lengthy list in the 'Further Reading' section, to enable large classes to have a choice. You can edit the list so that it is relevant to your exam board's expectations of context coverage.

Task 2

This is a good homework task to ensure all students participate in researching terminology found in the 'Glossary'.

Task 3

Students could cut up and pass round the statements provided to generate discussion about them in pairs or small groups. As suggested, students could also jot down their own thoughts in response (on board / PowerPoint slide) before sharing ideas. This would give everybody a chance to contribute their voices / most confident students do not dominate. The aim of this task is for students to be aware of the text. Students need to be aware that their attitudes may differ from others' and are not universal. They also need to recognise that attitudes to love and marriage have changed over time. Students could be asked to identify attitudes to love and marriage in the text.

Task 4

This activity follows on from Research Task 1 and Glossary Task 2. The list of key features of the text so that students understand the terms used. Student response required.

Task 5

A follow-on activity from Task 4. Or, if you prefer, this discussion could precede Task 4. This could make a wall display about comedy. Student response required.

Task 6

You could introduce students to Gustav Freytag's Pyramid (1863), a concept which may help to structure. Students may well argue about where the climax of *The Taming of the Shrew* occurs and is tied up in the denouement. Students to discuss and use later when studying the play.

Induction 1

Task 1

- Transport him to the Lord's house and put him in bed in the best room.
- Wrap him in fine clothes.
- Put rings on his fingers.
- Put a meal next to his bed.
- Install well-dressed servants to attend him when he wakes up.
- Dress the room with erotic, sexy pictures.
- Bathe Sly's head with clean water.
- Burn sweet wood (juniper) to perfume the air in the room.
- Have music ready to entertain Sly.
- Speak to Sly respectfully as if he is a lord and ask him what he wants.
- Wait on him with a silver basin, full of perfumed water and a towel so he can wash if he wants.
- Have expensive clothing ready to dress him in.
- Tell him he has horses and hounds he can use as his own.
- Tell him he is married to a woman who is sad about his sickness.
- Persuade him he has been mad.
- Tell him he is a lord.

The Lord wants to befuddle and overwhelm Sly, so he is deceived into thinking he is living with a lord who has been sick/lunatic.

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Preview of Answers Ends Here

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