

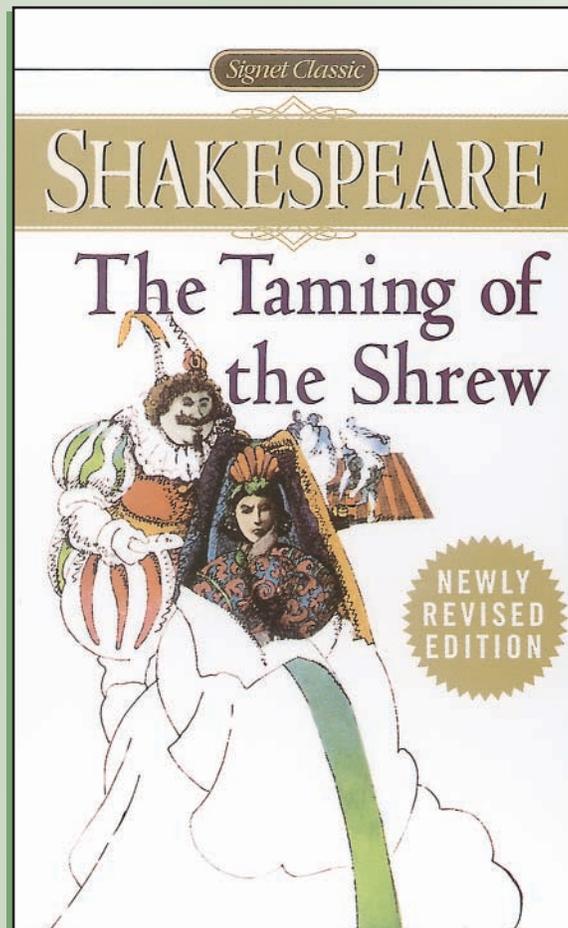
Signet Classic

A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO THE SIGNET CLASSIC EDITION OF

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

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S E R I E S E D I T O R S :

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INTRODUCTION

While *The Taming of the Shrew* is not one of the Shakespearean plays traditionally taught in English courses, the lively comic plot and appealing characters make it an excellent introduction to the Bard. Because the play deals with relationships between several different “courting” couples, it can capture the attention of adolescents and spark lively debate on the age-old “battle of the sexes.”

Less able readers can enjoy the action and intrigue of the story. They will also be able to appreciate the theme of the play: the problems that arise when people are expected to conform to the roles society expects them to play. More able readers will understand the contradictions between plot and subplot and the role of deception. All students will be able to compare the play to modern versions of the story, while more able students can look for parallels in literature. Study of *The Taming of the Shrew* offers students the opportunity to compare social customs surrounding courtship and marriage from Elizabethan England to those of other countries and to modern America. The play can promote important discussions about the role of respect, deception, romance, caring, and violence in the relationships between men and women.

This teacher's guide is divided into several parts: (1) a brief literary overview, including a synopsis and commentary on the play; (2) suggestions for teaching the play, including activities, discussion questions, and writing topics to be used before, during, and after reading the play; (3) ideas to extend students' learning beyond the play, including ways to address its themes, ideas for teaching literary analysis, techniques for using the play as a bridge to other works, and ways to use the play in interdisciplinary study; (4) bibliographies, including additional pedagogical sources, other works of literature addressing similar themes, and interdisciplinary sources.

Throughout this study guide, attention will be given to the ability level of the students, and specific activities, discussion questions, and topics will be labeled as to difficulty.

- * Appropriate for all students.
- + Most appropriate for nonacademic students.
- # Most appropriate for above average students.
- ~ Most appropriate for academic students.

OVERVIEW

The scene opens in an English country alehouse in the late 1500s. A nobleman discovers Christopher Sly, a drunken beggar, and decides to play a trick on him. He orders his men to take the passed out Sly to his own bedroom, dress the beggar in fine clothes, and tell him he is a nobleman who has been very ill for many years (Ind, i.) [pp. 45-50]. When Sly awakes, he proudly protests that he is no lord. Gradually, however, Sly comes to believe in his nobility and begins taking on lordly airs. He agrees to watch the performance of a wandering band of actors who have also been enlisted in the lord's plot (Ind, ii.) [pp. 50-56].

The action of *The Taming of the Shrew*, the play-within-a-play, begins in the Italian city of Padua. Lucentio, a young gentleman of Verona, arrives accompanied by his servant Tranio. Lucentio's discussion of his studies is interrupted by the appearance of Baptista Minola, his two daughters Katherina (Kate) and Bianca, and two would-be suitors for Bianca's hand—Gremio, an old man, and Hortensio, a gentleman of fashion. Baptista states that no one will be permitted to court Bianca until her older sister, Kate, has a husband. Gremio and Hortensio protest that no one wants to marry the bad-tempered Kate. Baptista intends to keep Bianca in seclusion and asks for tutors while she waits. While listening to this conversation, Lucentio has become totally smitten with Bianca. He plans to get to know Bianca by posing as a tutor while Tranio pretends to be Lucentio and joins the ranks of Bianca's “official” suitors (I, i.) [pp. 57-66].

Another young gentleman of Verona, the bold Petruchio, arrives at the home of his friend Hortensio proclaiming he has come to Padua to find a wealthy wife. Hortensio replies he knows a lady, Katherina Minola, who is both rich and beautiful, but unfortunately she is a terrible shrew. Petruchio does not care just as long as she is rich. Hortensio agrees to introduce Petruchio to Kate's father if Petruchio will help him gain access to the younger sister. The old suitor Gremio has found Cambio, a Latin tutor for Bianca. Cambio is really Lucentio. The ranks of the suitors for Bianca increase when Tranio makes his grand entrance posing as Lucentio. All three—Hortensio, Gremio, Tranio/Lucentio—agree to finance Petruchio's courtship of Kate since his success will open the way for them (I, ii.) [pp. 66-77].

Baptista must intervene in a fight between Kate and Bianca. When he chides Kate for her actions, she claims her father likes her younger sister best. Petruchio arrives, accompanied by various suitors and tutors. He immediately inquires about the hand of Baptista's daughter Kate, assuring Baptista he is from a good family. Petruchio presents Hortensio, now posing as the music tutor Litio. Not to be outdone, Gremio introduces the Latin tutor, Lucentio/Cambio. Baptista welcomes the tutors and sends them to meet their pupils while Tranio/Lucentio officially becomes a candidate for Bianca's hand. Baptista decides Petruchio's offer of marriage is a good one, but he must win Kate's love first. Petruchio is confident he can do so.

Petruchio's first encounter with Kate generates sparks as the two engage in rough-and-tumble verbal sparring. Petruchio announces that he is the perfect husband for Kate and tells Baptista and the others not to take note of her behavior; they have agreed she will still pretend to be shrewish in public even though she really loves him madly. Sunday is set for the wedding day. Since Kate now seems to be spoken for, Gremio and Tranio/Lucentio face off to negotiate for Bianca's hand. Baptista is impressed by Tranio/Lucentio's promises of enormous riches, but, to be on the safe side, he wants Tranio/Lucentio's father, Vincentio, to make good his son's offer. Tranio realizes the "supposed Lucentio" must now get busy and find a "supposed Vincentio" to pose as his father (II, i) [pp. 78-93].

In the garden of Baptista's home, the disguised suitors begin their covert courtship of Bianca. Lucentio/Cambio, between the lines of a Latin lesson, tells Bianca who he really is. Bianca is cautious, but does not discourage Lucentio's attentions. Their actions raise the suspicions of Hortensio/Litio (III, i.) [pp. 94-97].

Everyone but the groom gathers for the much anticipated wedding of Petruchio and Kate. Kate is humiliated to think she has been left standing at the altar. When Petruchio arrives both his dress and his behavior are outrageous. Baptista protests, and Petruchio replies that Kate is marrying him, not his clothes, and he drags her off to the church. Tranio meanwhile brings Lucentio up to date on his plan to find someone to pretend to be Vincentio. When the wedding party returns, Petruchio announces they have to leave right away and will not be staying for the wedding feast. Although everyone objects to his plan, Petruchio says he will be master of what is his, especially of his wife. He sweeps her up and carries her away from her father's house (III, i i.) [pp. 98-107].

The journey to Petruchio's home is not a pleasant one. Petruchio and Kate arrive cold, dirty, tired, and hungry. Petruchio, furthermore, is in a rage and declares the supper to be unfit. He decides he and Kate will fast, and he packs her off to bed. Petruchio announces his plan to tame Kate as he would a falcon, starving her into submission. But every time he denies her sleep or sends back her food, he will claim it to be done in loving care of her. Thus will he "kill a wife with kindness" (IV, i.) [pp. 108-116].

Hortensio/Litio and Tranio/Lucentio give up their quest for Bianca's hand when they discover her kissing Lucentio/Cambio, a common tutor. Hortensio decides instead to marry a wealthy widow. With one suitor now out of the way, Tranio finds an old man to pretend to be Vincentio and thus secure his "suit" (IV, ii.) [pp. 116-120]. Kate, meanwhile, is showing signs of wear from Petruchio's "kindnesses." Petruchio surprises her by announcing they will go back to Padua for her sister's wedding. Kate's hopes for new clothes for the occasion are dashed because she has not mastered her temper. Petruchio decides they will go back to her father's dressed as they are. After all, clothes will not change who they are inside (IV, iii.) [pp. 121-128].

The seesaw action returns to Padua where Lucentio and Bianca have run away to get married (IV, iv) [pp. 129-133]. Meanwhile on the road back to Padua, Petruchio is about to win the battle he has been waging with Kate. He declares the moon is shining brightly. When Kate disagrees with him, he announces they will return home. At last Kate sees the point and says it is the moon or the sun, or whatever he wants it to be. They are joined by an elderly man, the real Vincentio, on his way to Padua to check up on his son Lucentio (IV, v) [pp. 133-136].

While Lucentio and Bianca go to the church, the real Vincentio arrives at his lodgings. The poor man does not know what is going on because Lucentio's servants swear they have never seen him before. Vincentio is rescued by the real Lucentio who shocks everyone with the news he and Bianca are married. Everyone, but Petruchio and Kate, heads to Baptista's house to sort matters out. Petruchio demands a kiss from Kate. Kate balks at first, but at last grants his request. The battles appear to be over (V, i) [pp. 137-143].

The mood is festive at the wedding feast for the three newly married couples, but everyone agrees Petruchio has the worst of the wives. Petruchio suggests the three men wager to see whose wife is the most obedient. Bianca and the Widow refuse to come when summoned by their husbands. Kate, on the other hand, not only comes when summoned, but also lectures the other wives on the kind of duty each owes her husband-to make him a happy home while he works to take care of them both. The assembled crowd is amazed at Kate's transformation. Petruchio and Kate have won both the bet and the battle the other two couples are just now beginning. Or have they? (V, ii) [pp. 143-151].

COMMENTARY

The play contains three stories of deception. In the Induction, the drunkard Sly is tricked into believing he is a nobleman because he is dressed and treated as one. Later, in the play-within-a-play, Petruchio pretends to be a male counterpart to the shrew, beating and berating his servants and yet treating Kate with exaggerated kindness. His object is to give her a taste of her own medicine, while at the same time allowing her to take on the role of a gentlewoman. Deception and disguise are integral parts of the Lucentio-Bianca plot where four characters assume someone else's identity in order to gain access to Bianca. Bianca also pretends to be sweet and submissive, but in reality she shows signs of being self-centered and willful. While students may find the Lucentio-Bianca plot difficult to follow, they should see how the outcomes of the stories differ. Which man, Lucentio or Petruchio, will have the more suitable wife?

Modern audiences can laugh at the actions of Kate, especially when she is getting the better of the foppish suitors; however, her behavior toward her sister, Petruchio's treatment of her, and her last speech, pose problems. Students should understand that the play mirrors societal attitudes of Shakespeare's time. The shrew was a standard character in comedy. Noah's wife, for example, was often portrayed as shrewish in the cycle plays popular just before Shakespeare's time. A later example of the shrew is the character of Joe's wife in Dickens' novel *Great Expectations*. The shrew was a woman who was out of control, unreasonably angry, and sometimes cruel. In the comic convention, she usually got what she deserved. Shakespeare treats his shrew with a little more dignity. Kate is, after all, the title character of his play. Petruchio sets out to tame her much as the sportsman of his day tamed his falcon or the cowboy of this time breaks in a horse. Kate learns not only to play Petruchio's game but also to enjoy it. In the final analysis, it is left to the audience to interpret Kate's last speech: Has she truly been tamed or is she just playing the game?

BEFORE READING

Below are several techniques you can use to introduce *The Taming of the Shrew* to students:

1. Tell the story of the play, introduce the main characters and explain how the Induction and Bianca-Lucentio subplots fit into the Kate-Petruchio story. You may want to refer students to the Dramatis Personae to help them identify characters and their relationships.*
2. Ask students to think about ways society expects them to behave. Ask the students: Do you ever feel torn between the expectations of others and your own expectations for yourself? Do teachers expect unfair or uncomfortable behavior from you? When faced with peer, society, or school pressure to conform, how do you react?*
3. Discuss the title *The Taming of the Shrew*. Ask the students to define shrew. Webster defines shrew as "a vexatious, scolding, or brawling woman." Kate is also described in the play as headstrong, cursed, mad, and choleric. Ask the students: What images do you get from the word taming? Webster defines tame as "changed from the wild state, domesticated." Ask: What is suggested by the word domesticated? Webster offers, "converted to the home life; tame." Students can see that the play will be about "a scolding, brawling woman who is changed from the wild state and converted to home life." That idea alone ought to prompt a lively classroom discussion.
4. Like most of Shakespeare's plays, *The Taming of the Shrew* was based on familiar plots and employed theatrical conventions (accepted practices) Shakespeare's audiences understood that may seem strange to modern viewers. It is important to help students identify and understand these conventions before they read the play.
 - a. The play mixes English comedy with Italian comedy heavily influenced by Commedia dell'arte.
 - b. Both styles are considered to be farce, a broad comedy employing simple plots, stereotyped characters, and physical comedy or slapstick. Today, many movies and TV situation comedies are farces. Cartoons and short films, such as the Three Stooges, use slapstick, a kind of action where there is a lot of violence, but no one actually gets hurt. Ask students to identify farcical films, sit-coms, or cartoons. Discuss the comedy found in them to determine the elements of a farce. This discussion will enable students to better visualize the action of the play as they read it.*
 - c. It might be helpful to provide students with a brief introduction to and picture of traditional Commedia productions. Commedia dell'arte was an improvisational theatre. Companies presented a series of standard plots or scenarios. Each actor and actress specialized in a particular type of character called a stock character: sweet and innocent lovers-juvenile, male lover and ingenue, female lover; the stingy old man-Pantaloon, generally after the sweet young thing; the Braggart Soldier-more talk than action; befuddled parents; impertinent servants; and tricksters. Students can look for these stock characters as they read the play.# ~

5. Most students are familiar with the idea of conventional plot. Ask the students: What do you expect to see in a buddy film or a disaster movie? What do you think are the conventions of romantic comedies? What do you think of when you hear the term battle of the sexes? Students can use their answers to anticipate the action in *The Taming of the Shrew*.^{*} More mature students can identify and discuss elements of sexual tension existing between characters in romantic comedies on TV or film. Ask the students: What elements combine to create these tensions? Why and how do relationships between characters change when they become sexual? (Later, students can discuss why Kate and Petruchio apparently do not consummate their marriage until the end of the play.)#

The Taming of the Shrew also includes a subplot—the courtship of Bianca. Ask students to consider how this plot, which follows a more traditional romantic comedy format, fits the title *The Taming of the Shrew*.^{*}

6. If this is the first Shakespearean play students have read, they should be introduced to the conventions of the Elizabethan stage.^{*} Below are ones you may wish to introduce:
- The play-within-a-play—A play performed as part of the story for some dramatic purpose. For example, in *Hamlet*, Hamlet asks a group of players to perform a play with a plot similar to what he suspects are the actual events of his father's murder. The main action of *The Taming of the Shrew* is a play-within-a-play.
 - The use of disguises—A character puts on a disguise to hide, trick, or spy on others. Shakespeare's audience accepted the fact that none of the other characters ever recognized the person disguised. Students can look for examples of this in the play.
 - Love at first sight—This is a common device in romantic comedies.
Lucentio falls head over heels the minute he sees Bianca. Students may be asked to look for other examples in the play.
 - Fluid action—Shakespeare's stage used little in the way of set or props; everything was portable. Modern critics called Shakespeare's plays filmic, since the action can move quickly from one locale to another in much the same way a movie script can. The action of this play shifts between various locations in Padua and Petruchio's house.
 - Asides—Shakespeare's characters often make comments to each other or to the audience the other characters never hear. These asides usually comment on the action. For example:
 - Hortensio. I promised we would be contributors and bear his charge of wooing, whatsoever.
 - Gremio. And so we will, provided that he win her.
 - Grumio. [Aside] I would I were as sure of a good dinner.—(I, ii, 214-217) [p. 74]
 - Soliloquy—Speeches in which characters think out loud, alone on stage, for the benefit of the audience. Sometimes they are talking directly to the audience, sometimes not. Petruchio does this prior to his first meeting with Kate:

I'll attend her here
 And woo her with some spirit when she comes.
 Say that she rail, why then I'll tell her plain
 She sings as sweetly as a nightingale.
 Say that she frown, I'll say she looks as clear
 As morning roses newly washed with dew.
 Say she be mute and will not speak a word,
 Then I'll commend her volubility
 And say she uttereth piercing eloquence.
 If she do bid me pack, I'll give her thanks
 As though she bid me stay by her a week.
 If she deny to wed, I'll crave the day
 When I shall ask the banns and when be married.
 But here she comes, and now, Petruchio, speak.—(II, i, 168-181) [p. 84]

7. Students unfamiliar with reading plays may need help in learning how to read dialogue. Because characters are usually active, students need to visualize what they are doing. Shakespeare helps by suggesting their action in the dialogue. Show students an example and discuss it with them:*

But for my bonny Kate, she must with me.
 Nay, look not big, nor stamp, nor stare, nor fret;
 I will be master of what is mine own.
 She is my goods. . . .
 And here she stands. Touch her whoever dare,
 I'll bring mine action on the proudest he
 That stops my way in Padua. Grumio,
 Draw forth thy weapon, we are beset with thieves.
 Rescue thy mistress, if thou be a man.
 Fear not, sweet wench; they shall not touch thee, Kate.
 I'll buckler thee against a million.—(Petruccio, III, ii, 227-239) [pp. 106-107]

Ask the students: What are Petruccio, Kate, and Grumio doing during Petruccio's speech?

8. Shakespeare's language is often a formidable obstacle. Most students need help in learning how to use footnotes to interpret unfamiliar words and phrases. It is useful to introduce students to typical Shakespearean language:*
- a. Banter/plays on words/puns—dialogue with a double meaning:

Kate. I pray you, sir, is it your will
 To make a stale of me amongst these mates?
 Hortensio. Mates, maid? How mean you that? No mates for you
 Unless you were of gentler, milder mold.—(I, i, 57-60) [p. 59]

Often the banter has bawdy (sexual) tone:

Petruccio. Myself am moved two woo thee for my wife.
 Kate. Moved! In good time, let him that moved you hither
 Remove you hence. I knew you at the first You were a movable.
 Petruccio. Why, what's a movable?
 Kate. A joint stool.
 Petruccio. Thou has hit it; come sit on me.
 Kate. Asses are made to bear and so are you.
 Petruccio. Women are made to bear and so are you.
 Kate. No such jade as you, if me you mean.—(II, i, 194-201) [p. 85]

Characters can deliberately misunderstand each other:

Petruccio. Here, sirrah Grumio, knock, I say.
 Grumio. Knock, sir? Whom should I knock? Is there any man has rebused your worship?
 Petruccio. Villain, I say, knock me here soundly.
 Grumio. Knock you here sir? Why, O sir, what am I, sir, that I should knock you here, sir?
 Petruccio. Villain, I say, knock me at this gate. And rap me well or I'll knock your knave's pate.—(I, ii, 5-12) [p. 67]

- b. Invective—vivid expression of anger:

O monstrous arrogance!
 Thou liest, thou thread, thou thimble,
 Thou yard, three-quarters, half-yard, quarter, nail!
 Thou flea, thou nit, thou winter cricket thou!
 Braved in mine own house with a skein of thread!
 Away, thou rag, thou quantity, thou remnant,
 Or I shall so bemetee thee with thy yard
 As thou shalt think on prating whilst thou liv'st.
 I tell thee, I, that thou hast marred her gown.—(Petruccio, IV, iii, 106-114) [p. 125]

c. Scenes which take place offstage—description of offstage action:

Tell thou the tale. But hadst thou not
crossed me thou shouldst have heard how her
horse fell and she under her horse. Thou shouldst
have heard in how miry a place, how she was be-
moiled, how he left her with the horse upon her,
how he beat me because her horse stumbled, how
she waded through the dirt to pluck him off me;
how he swore, how she prayed that never prayed
before; how I cried, how the horses ran away, how
her bridle was burst, how I lost my crupper, with
many things of worthy memory which now shall
die in oblivion, and thou return unexperienced to
thy grave.—(Grumio, IV, i, 68-80) [pp. 110-111]

d. Types of language—Prose is generally reserved for servants or other low-born characters. Sly, when he believes that he is himself, speaks in prose:

What, would you make me mad? Am not I Chris-
topher Sly, old Sly's son of Burton-heath, by birth
a peddler, by education a cardmaker, by transmu-
tation a bearherd, and now by present profession
a tinker? Ask Marian Hacket, the fat ale-wife of
Wincot, if she know me not. If she say I am not
fourteen pence on the score for sheer ale, score
me up for the lying'st knave in Christendom.—(Ind, ii, 17-24) [p. 51]

But when he thinks he's a gentleman, he speaks in poetry, the language of the well born:

Am I a lord, and have I such a lady?
Or do I dream? Or have I dreamed till now?
I do not sleep: I see, I hear, I speak,
I smell sweet savors and I feel soft things.
Upon my life, I am a lord indeed
And not a tinker nor Christopher Sly.—(Ind, ii, 67-73) [p. 53]

Most of the time, Shakespeare's dialogue is written in blank verse, unrhymed iambic pentameter. The rhythm of iambic pentameter (unstressed syllable, stressed syllable) is considered to be closest to conversational speech. Occasionally the characters speak in rhymed verse or couplets. A couplet often ends an act or a scene:

Have to my widow, and if she be froward,
Then hast thou taught Hortensio to be untoward.—(Hortensio, IV, v, 78-79) [p. 136]

WHILE READING

Shakespeare's plays are meant to be performed. The more students visualize the characters and action, the more they will understand and enjoy the play. The activities presented below are designed to help students visualize and become actively involved with the play as they read.

1. Because the action can be confusing when characters adopt disguises, suggest students wear hats or masks to represent certain characters as they read the play aloud. They can change the hat or mask as the character adopts a disguise, becoming a new character.
2. Choose some scenes for students to read aloud; assign parts prior to the reading so students can prepare.* Or, have students assume the role of a character walking through the action as you summarize the scene.+
3. Divide students into groups, each of which has responsibility for presenting the major action of a particular scene or act in story theatre form. One student should be the narrator while the other students pantomime the action of the scene or use brief dialogue to convey the sense of the speeches.*

The following scenes are good for the creative drama activities suggested above:

- a. Ind, ii, 1-143 (Sly, 3 Servingmen, Lord, Page, Messenger) Sly is convinced he is a lord. [pp. 50-56]
 - b. I, i, 47-145 (Baptista, Gremio, Kate, Hortensio, Tranio, Lucentio, Bianca) Baptista declares Bianca off-limits until Kate is married. [pp. 58-62]
 - c. II, i, 1-36 (Bianca, Kate, Baptista) Kate and Bianca fight. [pp. 78-79]
 - d. II, i, 182-355 (Kate, Petruchio, Baptista, Gremio, Tranio) Petruchio's first meeting with Kate. [pp. 85-92]
 - e. III, i, 1-90 (Lucentio, Hortensio, Bianca, Messenger) Lucentio tells Bianca who he really is. [pp. 94-97]
 - f. III, ii, 1-252 (Baptista, Kate, Tranio, Biondello, Petruchio, Grumio, Lucentio, Bianca, Gremio, Hortensio) Kate and Petruchio's wedding. [pp. 98-107]
 - g. IV, ii, 72-121 (Biondello, Tranio, Lucentio, Pedant) Tranio brings the Pedant into the plot. [pp. 119-120]
 - h. IV, iii, 61-194 (Grumio, Kate, Petruchio, Hortensio, Tailor, Haberdasher) Petruchio orders new garments for Kate. [pp. 123-128]
 - i. IV, v, 1-79 (Petruchio, Kate, Hortensio, Vincentio) Kate and Petruchio meet an old man on the road. [pp. 133-136]
 - j. V, ii, 1-189 (The entire cast) The wedding feast. [pp. 143-151]
4. To help keep the characters and actions clear, construct an action line for each plot line (Kate-Petruchio, Bianca-Lucentio, Christopher Sly). Allow groups to represent different characters and add to the action line each day.*
 5. Suggest that students present a "News Update" of events of the day's assigned reading commenting on issues raised by the events (as in *Nightline* which presents a current event and then explores some aspect of it). For example, students can recount the events of the Induction and then comment on the ethics of the lord's practical joke on commoner Sly.*
 6. Have students choose a particular character to study in depth by doing one or more of the following:
 - a. Keep a list of words used to describe the character or that the character uses to describe him/herself. For example, Kate is referred to as mad, cursed, and suffering from too much choler. Look up these words in a standard dictionary, one of the special Shakespeare glossaries (such as C. T. Onions' *A Shakespeare Glossary*), or use the footnotes in the text.*
 - b. Imagine that you are going to portray this character in a production of the play. Keep a written journal of what the character feels, the reasons for the character's actions, and what his/her goals are in each scene.#
 7. Several issues or themes explored by the play offer possibilities for small group or class discussion:*
 - a. Power relationships-Discuss how power is used, abused, or subverted in each of the following relationships:
 1. Master-servant
 2. Father-child
 3. Husband-wife
 4. Nobility-lower class
 - b. Courtship/dating-Discuss how these issues affect events in the play and current opinions of each:
 1. Male ideas on courtship/dating
 2. Female ideas on courtship/dating
 3. Boyfriend/girlfriend as a status symbol or possession
 4. Parental interference in courtship/dating
 5. Romantic love/love at first sight
 6. Male/female expectations in relationships
 7. Honesty and deception in relationships
 - c. Sisters-Discuss how Shakespeare draws on realistic conflicts between sisters in these situations:
 1. Rivalry/jealousy
 2. Resentments of comparison

- d. Deception-Discuss the roles deception and disguise play in each of the following characters' relationships and examine if each is more deceptive or deceived:
1. Lucentio
 2. Tranio
 3. Petruchio
 4. Bianca
 5. Kate
- e. Social roles and society's expectations about them-Discuss how pressure to conform affects the characters.
8. All of the plot elements are in place by the end of II, i. Divide the class into small groups and ask each group to predict how the Bianca-Lucentio and Petruchio-Kate plots will develop and be resolved. Remind students that they must have a reasonable basis for their predictions. As the students read the play, have them return to their predictions and adjust them showing what actually happened and why.*
 9. Ask students to bring one factual and one discussion question to class based on the assigned reading for that day. Form small groups and have students answer each other's questions. At the end of the small group discussions, have the students present their answers to the class.*
 10. At the end of each class, have students briefly write about the day's reading. Students can use this opportunity to react to events, predict what might happen next, or ask questions about what they do not understand. These responses can provide a quick check for student comprehension and enjoyment of the play and can be used in class discussion.*+
 11. As the scenes are read in class, ask students to determine what is funny in each scene, why it is funny, and what kinds of humor Shakespeare used. Provide students with these examples: verbal humor (plays on words, puns, double entendres); wit (humorous comments, repartee, banter); action (physical gestures or movement, slapstick); situational (plot developments, i.e. Sly begins to believe he is a lord); and character (foolish or repeated characteristics).

AFTER READING

Below are some suggested assignments to be completed by individuals or as small groups.

ACTIVITIES FOR WRITING AND DISCUSSION

1. Write an essay using notes and ideas collected during the reading of the play on one or more of the following topics.
 - a. Develop a character sketch for the character you chose in #6a above. Use three or four of the words from your list, explain each word, and give examples of the character's actions to support your interpretation of the character.*
 - b. Using the notes made for #6b, describe what you would emphasize if portraying a character. Use quotations from the play as examples and explain how the character would deliver them. What actions will the character use? What is the meaning of the quote?#
 - c. Explain how the play is an example of comedy. Use the definitions of comedy discussed in class.*
 - d. Analyze one of the issues or themes in #7 above.*
2. Rewrite Kate's final speech in modern language or update her speech. Deliver the speech to the class.*
3. Read one of the feminist commentaries following the Signet Classic edition of *The Taming of the Shrew* (Germaine Greer's excerpt from *The Female Eunuch* or Linda Bamber's essay "Sexism and the Battle of Sexes in The Taming of the Shrew") and write a response to the author.-
4. Suppose that Kate and Petruchio each decide to write an advice column. Write a letter from a modern figure who asks for advice on marriage or dating, and then write the reply that Kate and Petruchio would give. (For example, what would Kate and Petruchio tell Roseanne of TV sitcom fame?)*
5. Suppose that Lucentio and Bianca, Petruchio and Kate, and Hortensio and the widow meet again one year after their marriage to celebrate their anniversaries. What might they say to each other? In small groups, write an anniversary banquet scene.* (Or improvise this second banquet scene.)+

6. Petruchio says that he is “rough and woo[s] not like a babe” (II, i, 137) [p. 83]. How violent is he? We have a different understanding of domestic violence now. Would he be considered abusive today? Imagine that Kate has him arrested. Write a newspaper report of the arrest and the charges.* Or as a TV newscaster, report the events including interviews with Kate, Petruchio, the servants, etc.+
7. Kate and Bianca do not particularly get along. Imagine that you are a family counselor who has interviewed both women. Write a summary of Kate's complaints about Bianca and also a summary of Bianca's complaints about Kate. Suggest changes to each woman to help them improve their relationship.* Or play out a counselling session bringing Kate and Bianca together with other family members.+
8. Write a last scene for the play explaining what happens to Sly,* or, as Sly, tell a newspaper reporter what happened.+

PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES

1. Improvise scenes from the play or related to the play.* (See “While Reading the Play” #2 for suggested scenes.)
2. With a small group, rehearse and formally present one of the scenes using some costumes or properties. Lines may be read or memorized.* (Note to teachers: The banquet scene is good to present under your direction; it can involve the entire class in performance and/or in technical jobs such as finding props, costumes, music, food, or video taping the performance.)
3. The Fifteen Minute Shrew. With a small group, select lines from each act emphasizing important actions, plot elements, and characters. Condense the action and speeches to include the most important points. Prepare the script and rehearse it to present to the class.#
4. Memorize one of the monologues and perform it for the entire class.# Some suggested monologues are listed below:
 - a. Lord-Ind, i, 44-68 [p. 47]
 - b. Sly-Ind, ii, 5-12, 17-25 [p. 51]
 - c. Lucentio-I, i, 148-158 [p. 62]
 - d. Petruchio-II, i, 168-181 [p. 84]
 - e. Kate-III, ii, 8-20 [p. 98]
 - f. Biondello-III, ii, 43-63 [pp. 99-100]
 - g. Gremio-III, ii, 158-165, 167-183 [pp. 104-105]
 - h. Petruchio-III, ii, 222-239 [pp. 106-107]
 - i. Grumio-IV, i, 68-80, 82-90 [pp. 110-111]
 - j. Petruchio-IV, i, 182-205 [pp. 115-116]
 - k. Kate-V, ii, 136-179 [pp. 150-151]
5. View one of the films of *The Taming of the Shrew* and discuss the changes and interpretation of the director. How do the costumes, scenery, and appearance of the actors affect your response to and understanding of the play?~

CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

1. Using pictures from magazines or newspapers, construct a collage representing one of the characters. Explain how each of the pictures relates to the character.*
 2. Prepare a collage to illustrate Kate's final speech; be sure each picture refers to a line or idea in the speech.*
 3. Plan a modern dress production of *The Taming of the Shrew*. Using magazines and catalogs, find pictures of the clothing of each of the character. Prepare a portfolio containing pictures for each character and explain how the costume reflects the character. If a character undergoes a change, a second costume should reflect that change.#
 4. Draw two pictures for any or all of these characters: Petruchio, Kate, Bianca, Lucentio. One picture should represent the public image the character presents and the other the private self.*
 5. Present a debate on this topic: “Americans should return to the custom of arranged marriages.”* Or debate this question as characters in the play.*
 6. Create a video version of scenes from the play.*
-

7. Working in small groups, create a game based on *The Taming of the Shrew*. The game can be created entirely by the group or based on existing games; for example, a board game (i.e.: Trivial Pursuit), a card game (i.e.: Old Maid), a TV game show (i.e.: *Jeopardy*, *Family Feud*, or *The Dating Game*.) Group members are expected to teach their game to other students.*
8. In small groups, prepare a narrative version of the play using popular music to represent events and/or characters.+
9. Create a musical version of the play writing your own words and music or finding popular songs and writing your lyrics to fit events in the story.*
10. In the manner of *Saturday Night Live*, create a parody of *The Taming of the Shrew*.

EXTENDED LEARNING

Studying the classics offers the opportunity to extend learning to literature and other content areas. Below are suggested activities to be used before, during, or after reading the play.

RESEARCH ON THE ELIZABETHAN PERIOD

1. In Petruchio's speech IV, i, 184-191 [p. 115], he compares his method of taming Kate to that of taming a falcon. Female hawks were the ones taught to hunt. Explore the sport of falconry. How appropriate is the comparison?# If Petruchio lived in modern times, what sports comparison might he make when planning his taming? Rewrite the speech using this comparison.+
2. Queen Elizabeth I ruled England when *The Taming of the Shrew* was first presented. Her life shows the limits of a woman's role during that time as well as the unusual freedom her position gave her. Research her life with particular focus on the many political marriages that were proposed for her.#
3. Gremio is called a pantaloone, a character found in Commedia dell'arte. Some readers and directors have found the Commedia dell'arte style reflected in *The Taming of the Shrew* and have designed productions emphasizing it. Research Commedia to discover how it relates to this play.-
4. By the end of the play, three couples have married for various reasons. Courtship and marriage are the social structures around which the play is built.
 - a. Research Elizabethan practices in marriage and courtship to see how typical the three couples are.*
 - b. What was the understanding of the duties and role of a husband and wife in Elizabethan England? Do Petruchio and Kate fit this ideal? Do Lucentio and Bianca? How would the characters fare in today's society?*
5. Research the Globe Theatre and how plays were produced in the Elizabethan period.* Decide how *The Taming of the Shrew* was probably produced when it first appeared.#
6. Research Shakespeare's life with a particular focus on his own marriage and his relationship to his daughters.#
7. Research the sources Shakespeare used for *The Taming of the Shrew*. What alterations did he make? Share your findings with the class.-
8. Music played a prominent part in the production of Shakespeare's plays. Research the music of the period and find selections that might have been or could have been used in *The Taming of the Shrew*.*

READING OTHER LITERATURE

1. *The Taming of the Shrew* presents a play-within-a-play. Other Shakespearean plays that present a play-within-a-play are *Hamlet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Read one of them and compare its dramatic structure to *The Taming of the Shrew*.-
2. Disguise and deception are parts of many Shakespearean comedies. Read *As You Like It* or *Twelfth Night* and compare its use of disguise and deception to *The Taming of the Shrew*.- Find examples of movies which use disguise and deception as part of the plot and compare them to *The Taming of the Shrew* (i.e.: *Some Like it Hot*, *Mrs. Doubtfire*, *Overboard*, *True Lies*.)+
3. Analyze Kate and Bianca's relationship as sisters and compare it to sisters in other works such as Chekhov's *Three Sisters*, Beth Henley's *Crimes of the Heart*, Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, or Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*.* Compare Kate and Bianca's relationship to sisters in movies or TV situation comedies or dramas.+

RELATING THE PLAY TO OTHER SUBJECTS

1. Arranged marriages and the importance of a dowry are characteristic of many societies. Research marriage customs in other times or in other societies for comparison.*
2. Retell *The Taming of the Shrew* as if it took place in contemporary America. Make sure that your modern version reflects today's customs for courtship and marriage.+
3. What advice do women receive nowadays on "how to get a man"? Survey some current magazines offering advice on this topic. How might this advice relate to Kate or Bianca?*
4. Despite the fact that the play is called *The Taming of the Shrew*, most of the action is presented from Petruchio's and Lucentio's points of view. Retell the events as Bianca or Kate might have seen them.*
- 5a. See a videotape of the musical *Kiss Me Kate*. What parts of Shakespeare's play are used? What is left out? What seems to be the message or purpose of the musical?#
- 5b. Listen to the recording of *Kiss Me Kate*. What scenes or lines of *The Taming of the Shrew* are the inspirations for the songs? Are any of Shakespeare's actual lines used in the lyrics? What other Shakespeare plays are referred to in the lyrics? Choose one of the songs to play for the rest of the class and explain how it fits into the story of *The Taming of the Shrew*.-
6. The battle of the sexes has a long history as a theme in comedy.
 - a. Read other literature with this theme, such as Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, Chaucer's "Wife of Bath's Tale," Congreve's *The Way of the World*, and Shaw's *Man and Superman*. Who wins and who loses?-
 - b. Bantering couples are a staple of some Hollywood films of the 1930s and 1940s. View one of these and compare it to the Kate and Petruchio story (i.e.: *It Happened One Night*, *His Girl Friday*, *The Thin Man*, *The Philadelphia Story*, the numerous films starring Spencer Tracy and Katherine Hepburn, and just about anything with John Wayne and Maureen O'Hara).*
 - c. Find examples of bantering couples from modern movies or TV situation comedies.+
 - d. Find examples of stories, such as *The African Queen*, where the woman tames the man.*
7. Suppose Petruchio and Kate or Bianca and Lucentio were to visit a modern TV talk show. What might happen? Plan and portray their appearance.+

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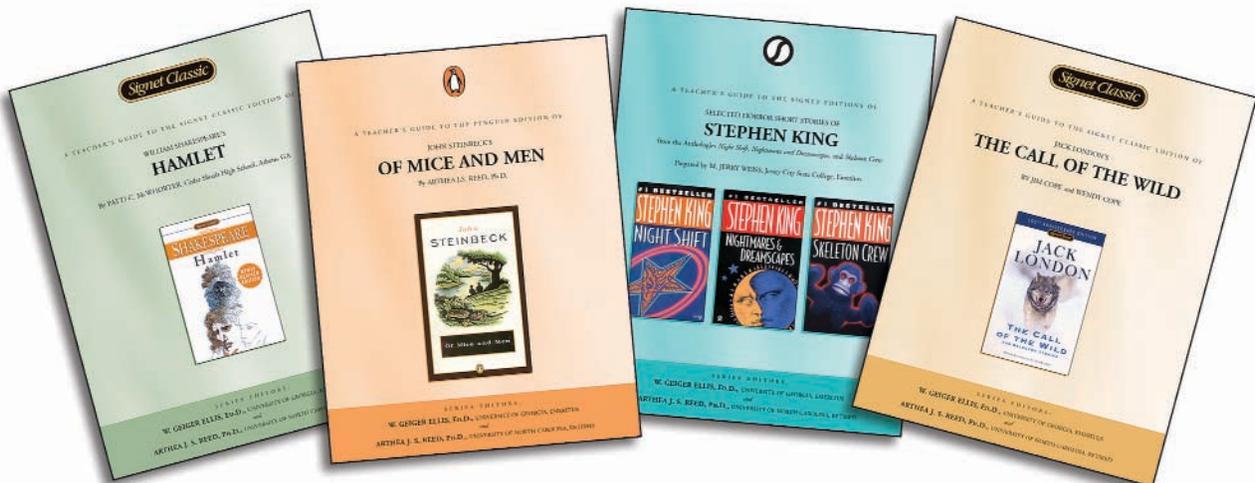
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