

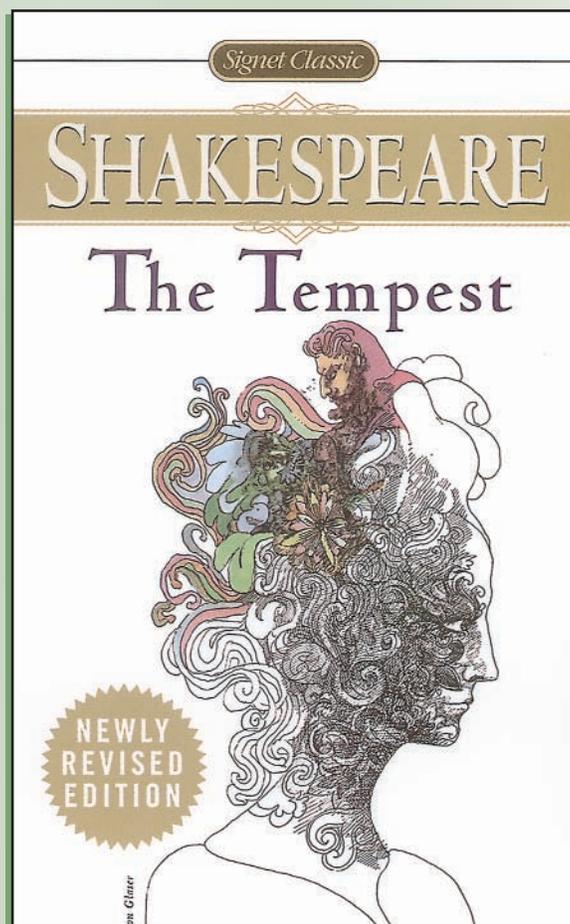


A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO THE SIGNET CLASSIC EDITION OF

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S

# THE TEMPEST

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## INTRODUCTION

*The Tempest* is generally regarded as Shakespeare's last play, first performed in 1611 for King James I and again for the marriage festivities of Elizabeth, the King's daughter, to Frederick, the Elector Palatine. Scholars attribute the immediate source of the play to the 1609 shipwreck of an English ship in Bermuda and travelers' reports about the island and the ordeal of the mariners. The period in which it was written, the seventeenth century age of exploration, the circumstances of its performance at court, and the context of the playwright's writing career suggest immediately some of its rich themes and ambiguities.

The play can be read as Shakespeare's commentary on European exploration of new lands. Prospero lands on an island with a native inhabitant, Caliban, a being he considers savage and uncivilized. He teaches this "native" his language and customs, but this nurturing does not affect the creature's nature, at least from Prospero's point of view. But Prospero does not drive Caliban away, rather he enslaves him, forcing him to do work he considers beneath himself and his noble daughter. As modern readers, sensitive to the legacy of colonialism, we need to ask if Shakespeare sees this as the right order; what are his views of imperialism and colonialism? What are our twentieth century reactions to the depiction of the relationship between the master and slave, shown in this play?

The theme of Utopianism is linked to the explorations of new lands. Europeans were intrigued with the possibilities presented for new beginnings in these "new" lands. Was it possible to create an ideal state when given a chance to begin anew? Could humans hope to recreate a "golden age," in places not yet subject to the ills of European social order? Could there be different forms of government? Would humans change if given a second chance in an earthly Paradise?

The play emphasizes dramatic effects. Because it was performed at court, there is a lot of stage business: music, dance, masque-like shows. The role of the artist is explored through Prospero's use of his magic, and parallels can be drawn to Shakespeare's own sense of his artistry.

Finally, knowing that this is Shakespeare's last play, it is intriguing to explore autobiographical connections. Does he see himself in Prospero? Does he feel somehow isolated, in need of reconciliation? How is this play a culmination of other themes he has explored?

These questions assume an audience of students who have previously encountered Shakespeare. So, this play will be most appropriate for high school seniors or college students. *The Tempest* is an excellent play for study, though, because it shows Shakespeare's final treatment of themes that have run through the other plays, e.g. good and evil, justice and mercy. In addition, this play provides a primary source perspective on 17th-century attitudes about imperialism. Students of world history might especially be interested by this view. Also, the low humor and pageantry in the play heightens its appeal to a wider audience. Students might especially have fun with the scenes involving Caliban and the members of the crew.

In this guide we will suggest activities and discussion questions which encourage students to explore these various ideas. Since the play may be challenging to high school students, teachers will need to carefully provide students with background knowledge in order to insure that their reading and enjoyment of the play is as rich as possible. As in previous Teacher's Guides to Signet Classics, we include a detailed synopsis of the play and suggested teaching activities for before students read, while they read, and after they read the play. A variety of activities is listed in each section, so the teacher can choose according to the themes, interests, background, and needs of students.

## OVERVIEW

### CHARACTERS BY RELATIONSHIP

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**Prospero**, the true Duke of Milan but now living on a deserted island  
**Miranda**, his daughter  
**Antonio**, brother of Prospero and usurper of the role of Duke of Milan  
**Ariel**, "an airy spirit" who does Prospero's bidding  
**Caliban**, a savage creature controlled by Prospero  
**Alonso**, King of Naples  
**Sebastian**, his brother  
**Ferdinand**, son of the King of Naples  
**Gonzalo**, former advisor to Prospero, now principally serves Alonso

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**SYNOPSIS****ACT I, SCENE I**

The play begins on the deck of a ship at sea in the middle of a violent tempest. Amid loud sounds of thunder and flashes of lightning, the sailors fight to bring down the sails in order to control the ship. The passengers, Alonso, Sebastian, Antonio, and Ferdinand, come on deck to see what is happening, but the sailors complain that they interfere with their work and make more noise than the storm. Soon all appears lost as the ship breaks apart. The passengers and crew believe they are about to drown.

**ACT I, SCENE II**

The scene changes to the island where Miranda and Prospero have viewed the plight of the storm-tossed ship through Prospero's magic powers. Removing his magical robe, Prospero tells Miranda the history of her birth and her true place and value. He describes how he and Miranda, then not quite three years old, were forced to board a rotting ship and put to sea to suffer certain death. The conspiracy to take over Prospero's power and station was the work of his brother who plotted with the King of Naples, Prospero's enemy. Now "by accident most strange," all these men have been brought close to the island where Prospero and Miranda have been shipwrecked for the last twelve years. Through magic and the spirit Ariel who is required to do his bidding, Prospero created the storm and chaos among the sailors and passengers so that they would be separated and believe the others drowned. However, Prospero has protected them all from harm and hidden the ship under a charm.

When Ariel appears reluctant to continue to serve Prospero, he reminds the spirit of its imprisonment by the witch Sycorax and Caliban, her child, until Prospero worked his magic. (Ariel's gender is unspecified.) Besides, Prospero promises complete freedom in just two days time if Ariel carries out his designs.

Prospero awakens Miranda and they visit Caliban, "the slave," who carries wood, makes fire, and serves their basic needs. Caliban curses Prospero, his master, for usurping his rightful rule of the island, and Prospero vows to punish Caliban for these insults and his continued insolent behavior. Prospero recalls how when he attempted to befriend Caliban and teach him language and manners, Caliban tried to "violate the honor" of Miranda.

Meanwhile Ariel's song and music has lured Ferdinand near to Prospero and Miranda. Miranda is immediately impressed by Ferdinand's good looks, and he is equally smitten by her beauty, calling her a "goddess." Prospero lets the audience know through the vehicle of asides that this attraction is exactly what he had planned and hoped for, and he only acts disapproving in order to make their bond even stronger. Miranda pleads with her father to spare Ferdinand while Prospero demands his subservience.

**ACT II, SCENE I**

Meanwhile Alonso, Sebastian, Antonio, and Gonzalo have washed up on another part of the island. Gonzalo counsels Alonso to see the optimistic side of their predicament. Even though Ferdinand is missing, they should rejoice that they are alive. This is, of course, the last thing that Alonso wants to hear. Meanwhile Sebastian and Antonio ridicule Gonzalo, making fun of his speeches. Cruelly, Sebastian even accuses Alonso of being responsible for Ferdinand's death. They wouldn't have been on this journey if Alonso had allowed his daughter to marry a European prince rather than the King of Tunis.

Gonzalo counsels moderation; no one is to blame. He also calls on the company to observe the beauty of the island. Then he begins to describe the type of government he would institute on this island. It would be a utopia of equality with no marks of wealth or social status. All would have leisure and their needs would be met "without sweat or endeavor."

Ariel, who is invisible, passes among the men playing music, and all of the company, except Antonio and Sebastian, suddenly fall into a deep sleep. Antonio uses this moment to describe to Sebastian the opportunity he now has to seize the crown from his brother.

With Alonso's son and daughter out of the way, Sebastian can easily claim the crown; all he has to do is kill Alonso. Antonio points to his own behavior as a model. He overthrew his brother and now enjoys success. He vows to kill Gonzalo to prevent his interference with their plot while Sebastian kills his brother. Sebastian decides to follow Antonio's "precedent," promising Antonio as his reward that he will no longer have to pay tribute to Naples.

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Just as they draw their swords, Ariel awakens Gonzalo, singing in his ear that treachery is at hand. Sebastian and Antonio are able to avoid suspicion by saying that they too had heard a loud noise and were protecting the king. The company now decides to continue their search for Ferdinand.

## ACT II, SCENE II

On another part of the island, a parallel scene occurs between Trinculo, a jester, Stephano, a butler, and Caliban. At first Caliban hides from Trinculo, fearing he will torment him. For his part Trinculo cannot tell if Caliban is fish or man, but decides to take shelter in Caliban's garments because he fears a storm is coming. Stephano, who has found the ship's liquor, doesn't know what to make of the "beast" he discovers with four legs, two voices, and a severe case of the shakes. Finally, Trinculo and Stephano discover each other, and Caliban is so impressed with Stephano's "celestial liquor" that he declares he will be his subject. Caliban promises to show Stephano all the fine points of the island and to give him food and drink; he vows he will no longer serve Prospero.

## ACT III, SCENE I

Ferdinand carries and stacks wood for Prospero, but declares that it is not odious work since he serves a sweet mistress. Miranda laments Ferdinand's heavy burden and offers to take his place. Prospero, observing this scene from a hiding spot, is happy because it confirms that the two young people are deeply in love. Miranda and Ferdinand declare their affections and decide to marry.

## ACT III, SCENE II

Caliban, who is quite drunk, continues to pledge his allegiance to Stephano. The invisible Ariel creates mischief among Caliban, Stephano, and Trinculo by making it appear that they are contradicting and interrupting each other. Stephano beats Trinculo for defying Caliban, finally forcing him to stand at a distance while he plots with Caliban to overthrow Prospero, marry Miranda, and rule the island. Their conspiracy is interrupted by Ariel's sweet music when Stephano and Trinculo follow the music in hopes of catching up with the musician.

## ACT III, SCENE III

Alonso and his company, exhausted from their search for Ferdinand, decide they must accept the fact that he is drowned. Sebastian quietly vows to Antonio to take advantage of the next opportunity and carry out their coup. Suddenly music is heard and spirits enter with a banquet table and invite all to eat. The men are amazed and wonder if anyone will believe their stories of these strange events when they return home. Just as they prepare to eat, Ariel arrives in thunder and lightning, looking like a bird of prey, and makes the table disappear. The spirit announces "you are three men of sin" who overthrew Prospero; the shipwreck is fair punishment. The three men are deeply affected with guilt and anger and run off in different directions. Gonzalo thinks they may harm themselves in their desperation and calls on the rest of the group to follow them and restrain them if necessary.

## ACT IV, SCENE I

Prospero agrees to the betrothal of Miranda and Ferdinand. He explains that the tasks he set were merely trials of Ferdinand's love, and he has proven to be true. However, Prospero cautions Ferdinand not to give way to his passions before the marriage ceremony.

Ariel is sent to gather the whole company while Prospero entertains the young couple with a magic show. Ceres and Juno are called to the earth by Iris to witness a contract of true love. They sing of the blessings to be bestowed on their marriage. Just as nymphs and reapers begin to perform a graceful dance, Prospero rises up in alarm and interrupts the show. He has just remembered the conspiracy of Caliban and his confederates.

Meanwhile Ariel's music has led the trio through a maze of briars and mud. Stephano and Trinculo are disgusted and angry with Caliban who still urges them to kill Prospero. But when they get to Prospero's home, the men are distracted when they see luxurious clothing hanging on a line. They start to fight over the garments and force Caliban to carry what they steal. Suddenly spirits in the shape of dogs attack them.

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**ACT V, SCENE I**

Prospero realizes that his project is almost completed. All his enemies are gathered together in one place. Ariel describes the sorrow and emotions of the company, adding that anything human would certainly feel compassion for them. Taking this cue, Prospero decides to show mercy. His reason and not his passion takes control. He realizes that “the rarer action is in virtue than in vengeance,” and since they are sorry for their crimes, he has accomplished his purpose. Ariel is sent to release them. Prospero uses his magic one last time to create music to sooth the senses and spirits of the conspirators. Ariel fetches Prospero clothes showing his true status as Duke of Milan. When the company revives, Prospero greets them and accuses them of their crimes. Alonso begs forgiveness and asks about Prospero’s life on the island. Everything would now be in order except that Alonso regrets deeply the death of his son. Prospero says he too has suffered a similar loss; he has lost a daughter. Then he bids the company to look into his home. There they see Miranda and Ferdinand playing chess, and all are happily united.

Ariel leads in the sailors who announce that the ship is safe and sound. Caliban and his conspirators are led forward, entangled in their stolen clothes and still reeling from drink. Caliban has a change of heart, realizing that Prospero is a true master, not the drunken Stephano. He vows to serve Prospero henceforth. The company retires to hear the story of Prospero’s life after which he promises them safe journey home.

**BEFORE READING**

These activities are designed to activate students’ background knowledge, thereby preparing them to anticipate the plot and some of the themes of the play.

(Note: Teachers might consult other Teacher’s Guides to Signet Classic editions of Shakespeare’s plays as they contain many ideas that could easily be adapted to this play.)

- One way to arouse students’ interest in studying *The Tempest* is a scavenger hunt. Make a list of objects related to the setting, characters, and themes in the play. Have students gather a range of objects, from easy to difficult, to bring to class to organize displays. Following are some suggestions:
  1. **SETTING:** sand; sea shells; a picture of a lush island with sandy beaches; a picture of a storm at sea; a sailing ship; a 17th-century map showing Naples, Milan, the Mediterranean Sea; an audio tape with the sound of the sea or ethereal music suitable for magic and romance.
  2. **CHARACTERS:** a magician’s hat, wand, or robe; a crown; a picture of halfman, halfbeast or a monstrous looking man; statues or pictures of a spirit, beautiful girl, or handsome man.
  3. **THEME:** objects which symbolize ambition, greed, drunkenness, revenge, romantic love, marriage, justice, mercy, harmony (prior to the scavenger hunt allow students to brainstorm ideas of objects which suggest these abstract qualities).

A week or two before beginning a unit on *The Tempest* organize the class into teams of four to six students and give instructions for the scavenger hunt.

**SCAVENGER HUNT INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Each group appoints a leader and plans who will get the objects, models, or pictures.
  2. Teams meet briefly during the week to check their progress.
  3. On the kickoff day for the unit, all teams present their objects, models, or pictures to be tallied.
  4. Teams set up class displays on tables or bulletin board. (Note to the teacher: These displays can be referred to during the discussions of the play.)
  5. Scoring:
    - a. two points for each object or model
    - b. one point for each picture
    - c. only one object, model, or picture counted per group for each word
    - d. extra credit for creativity in designing the display of the objects
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## **GENRE: ROMANCE, TRAGICOMEDY OR COMEDY?**

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*The Tempest*, like all great literature, is both complex and ambiguous, especially when attempting to characterize it by genre.

- Before reading the play, review with students other Shakespearian plays they have read and their genre classifications. Ask: What makes *Midsummer Night Dream* a comedy and *Hamlet* a tragedy? Have you read other Shakespearian plays, such as *Much Ado About Nothing*, in which the definitions of comedy and tragedy seem blurred? Why and how are they blurred?
- Have students draw a distinction between the literary definition of romance and popular notions of this term. If the students have read *The Scarlet Letter*, they will have encountered Hawthorne's specific definition of this term in "The Custom-House" introduction which precedes the novel. Hawthorne describes the goal of the romance writer to create "a neutral territory, somewhere between the real world and fairyland, where the Actual and the Imaginary may meet, and each imbue itself with the nature of the other" (p.38 *The Scarlet Letter*, Penguin Classics, 1983). Using Hawthorne's definition as a guide, ask the students: Is *The Tempest* best described as a romance? What expectations do you have about the setting or the events of the play?
- Roman, the word for novel in most western European languages, shows the connection between the relatively new narrative form of the novel with earlier romances, stories of knights, their adventures or quests, and their devotion to a lady who inspires chivalrous behavior. Depending on the students' background, have them compare and analyze how an epic like *The Odyssey* is different from *Gawain and the Green Knight* or Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*.

Ask them to consider: How does the emphasis or theme of an epic differ from a romance? What choices of the writer or poet create this difference in theme and tone?

- Have the class discuss several contemporary films classified as romances. What elements do these films have in common? Are these "romances" fundamentally different from the earlier tales of knights and ladies in distress? What elements have remained constant?

## **SHAKESPEARE, HIS THEATER, AND THE TEMPEST**

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Since most students have studied Shakespeare and previously read other Shakespearean plays, you can draw upon their background knowledge by means of an anticipation guide. Responding to questions will give students an opportunity to realize how much they know about Shakespeare and will also create some curiosity about the play they are about to read. (Read more about the anticipation guide and KW [Know, Want to Know, Learn] strategies in Ogle, D., "They Know, Want to Know, Learn Strategy," in *Children's Comprehension of Text*, edited by K. Muth, International Reading Association, 1989).

### **ANTICIPATION GUIDE QUESTIONS:**

1. List two facts you know about the life of William Shakespeare.
  2. List the titles of as many Shakespearean plays as you remember.
  3. Using the play you remember most clearly, list three things you remember about it.
  4. If you have seen a Shakespeare play performed, what was the play and what did you enjoy about the performance?
  5. If you have seen a Shakespeare play in a movie version, what was the play and what did you enjoy about the production?
  6. Describe what you think when you hear the phrase "Elizabethan or Shakespearean language." List words or phrases that come to mind when you think of Shakespearean language. What words that we use today do you identify with the Elizabethan period?
  7. *The Tempest* was first performed in 1611, the seventeenth century. List three facts you know about this historical period.
  8. What do you already know about the play *The Tempest* ?
  9. Just looking at the title, what might you suspect this play is about?
  10. This play is often classified as a romance. Knowing that, what might you suspect will happen in the play?
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After completing the anticipation guide, have students work in a cybernetic session, a collaborative brainstorming session, pulling out all the information they already know about Shakespeare, his theater, and the context of this play. (For more information about this strategy read: Maszfal, N. B., "Cybernetic Sessions: A High Involvement Teaching Technique," *Reading Research and Instruction*, vol. 25, Winter 1986, 131-36.)

### CYBERNETIC SESSION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Divide the class into six groups.
2. Each group has one large sheet of paper and a marker.
3. At the top of each sheet have the group scribe write one of following topics:
  - a. Biography of William Shakespeare: What we know/What we would like to know
  - b. Seventeenth Century England and Europe: Facts and Questions
  - c. Design of the Globe Theater and Acting in the Elizabethan Age
  - d. Other Shakespeare Plays and their Themes
  - e. What we know about *The Tempest* / What we would like to know
  - f. The Language of Shakespeare famous quotes
4. Have groups brainstorm for 4 to 5 minutes, writing down everything they know about their topic.
5. Call time. Have the groups move the papers clockwise to the next group and continue with brainstorming until each group has had an opportunity to work on each topic. (In rooms with sufficient space you may choose to have students move from paper to paper.)
6. Return each paper to the original group.
7. Have the group read, review, and discuss all the ideas listed on the sheet.
8. Each group makes a brief presentation (summary) of the main ideas and questions that have been generated.
  - Make no corrections or comments at this point. During the next session, you can use students' ideas to lead into discussion. Students' questions can be used as a guide in order to fill in areas where students show they need additional background. For example, direct students to "The Source of *The Tempest*" in the Signet edition in order to help them develop a clearer understanding of the contemporary context in which Shakespeare wrote the play.

### CHARACTER

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Following a common Shakespearean convention, characters are listed in order of their social importance. Have students do some of the following activities to help them understand how Shakespeare deals with character.

- List and arrange the characters according to their familial relationships. Examine the brief descriptions for each character and make predictions about how they will act in the play. As the students read the play have them refer to their list of characters in order to keep their relationships clear.
  - After they have finished reading the play, students can create a new list of characters, listed according to their moral behavior. This can lead to a discussion about how the moral behavior of these characters relates to their social standing. The following questions can stimulate the discussion:
    1. Who is the most moral person in the play and why?
    2. What is the role of the king or the father in Elizabethan society?
    3. How does King Alonso violate the right order?
    4. What is the right relationship of subjects to their king?
    5. What is the right relationship of children to their fathers?
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6. How does Prospero upset the right order of his relationship to his subjects?
7. What is the right relationship of rulers to their subjects?
8. Is Prospero “right” in the way he treats Caliban?
9. Is Prospero “right” in the way he treats his daughter?

After students have read Act I, have them draw pictures or clip pictures from magazines of the characters. Post the pictures on a bulletin board leaving space for captions of the character's speech. As the action of the play unfolds, have students change the captions to reflect the state of mind of the character.

## **PLOT**

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The action of *The Tempest* takes place during a short period of time at a very specific location, the island where Prospero lives with his daughter. Complications are caused when the travelers are shipwrecked and separated from each other; they assume that everyone else has been drowned in the storm. Here are some activities to help students keep track of the characters and the action.

- Draw a large map of the island, using information from “The Source of The Tempest” about a shipwreck off Bermuda that occurred in 1609. Figures representing the characters could be moved on the map to represent changes in location.
  - Create a three dimensional model of the island.
  - Create playing cards with the pictures of each character, using the back of the card to list information about the character. Students can add more details as they read the play. These cards can serve review purposes and show students how their general impressions of a character change as they see and hear the character in action.
  - The first scenes of this play, as is usual in most drama, give background information and set up action that follows, so it is useful to spend significant time reading aloud and acting out these scenes. Assign small groups of students to read different sections of scenes 1 and 2. Assign scene 1 in its entirety; divide scene 2 into appropriate sections, for example, lines 1106, lines 108185, lines 189257, and so on. Be sure the sections are short enough so students have time to read the lines aloud, to analyze the language, and feel confident they understand what is happening. Give students time to prepare for their performance of the lines for the class. Suggest the following to help students make their performances more interesting:
    1. use physical movements
    2. use classroom furniture or simple props
    3. use modern language in place of the Shakespearean language
    4. use significant passages and condense the scene as appropriate
    5. vary voice inflections to indicate the emotions of the characters
    6. be creative in planning the scene—think like a play director or film maker to create a visual representation of the emotions and themes of the short scene
  - Another technique that will help students better understand the play is to read aloud the first scene to the class. Emphasize the opening stage directions so students understand the action takes place on a ship at sea in a terrible storm with flashes of lightning and thunder. If you have an audio or video tape of a storm, play it prior to or during the reading to set the mood. Vary your voice to represent the different characters. Ask students: What did you learn about the characters in the first scene? How do the sailors relate to their passengers? How do the sailors act in the face of the tempest? How does their behavior compare to the way the noble passengers act?
  - To show how Shakespeare varies the dramatic tension in the play, contrast the opening scenes of Act 1. After reading scene 1, read orally the first passages of scene 2. Have students compare the mood of the two scenes by asking: What do we learn about the situation immediately? What do we learn about Prospero? How does the sudden change in mood affect the reader or spectator of this play?
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**LANGUAGE**

Since even experienced readers of Shakespeare's plays often have some difficulty interpreting every word of a play, students can engage in activities to help them become more confident and to give them strategies for reading the play.

- Demonstrate to students that the most important key to understanding the language is visualizing the action by reading scene 1 aloud. Ask: What do you know about the characters so far? (Note: students may reply that the nobles are fearful while trying to appear in control and the sailors have no time for their foolishness. The sailors are blunt and businesslike. They know what they need to do, and they don't want to stand around talking about what might happen. When the sailors cry out "All lost!" they really believe that they are doomed.) Cite a few lines from the scene; for example, Gonzalo says, "I have great comfort from this fellow. Methinks he hath no drowning mark upon him; his complexion is perfect gallows." Ask: What do these lines mean? What do they suggest about the importance of a person's appearance as a sign to their personality or fate? Have students read the note and see how it adds additional information, telling us that Gonzalo is quoting a proverb. Point out to the students that they didn't need the note to gain a general sense of the scene even if they did not understand every word or phrase. Since the action of a play moves quickly, students need to learn to rely on their first impressions.
- To help students carefully examine the language used by Miranda in the play, have them work in pairs to fill in the blanks in the Cloze passage below. They should not use their books to complete this activity; rather they should attempt to fill in the correct word through contextual and syntactical clues.

**Miranda.**

If by your art, my dearest father, you have  
 Put the wild waters in this roar, allay them.  
 The sky, it seems, would pour down \_\_\_\_\_ pitch  
 But that the sea, mounting to the welkin's cheek,  
 \_\_\_\_\_ the fire out. O, I have suffered  
 With those that I saw \_\_\_\_\_! A brave vessel  
 (Who had no doubt some \_\_\_\_\_ creature in her)  
 Dashed all to \_\_\_\_\_! O, the cry did knock  
 Against my very \_\_\_\_\_! Poor souls, they perished!  
 Had I been any god of \_\_\_\_\_, I would  
 Have sunk the sea within the earth or ere  
 It should the good \_\_\_\_\_ so have swallowed and  
 The fraughting souls within her. (I, ii, 113)

Have several of the pairs read their completed passages orally. Discuss with the class reasons for their word choices. More advanced students may be able to move beyond context to syntax. Compare students' answers with the original. Which pairs came the closest to Shakespeare's words?

- Devise another Cloze passage for the epilogue at the end of the play. After quoting the complete first two lines, get students to tune into the rhythm and rhyme of the passage by leaving blank one of the rhyming words in each of the couplets; for example:

**Prospero.**

Now my charms are all o'erthrown,  
 And what strength I have's mine own,  
 Which is most faint. Now 'tis true  
 I must be here confined by \_\_\_\_\_,  
 Or sent to Naples. Let me \_\_\_\_\_,  
 Since I have my dukedom got  
 And pardoned. .. (Epilogue, 17)

- Insults and name-calling are used to indicate the relationships between characters and also to define the status of a character, according to the speaker's perspective. Have students look carefully at who is speaking and what his or her underlying motive or point of view might be. Use as an example how Prospero and Caliban interact exchanging insults.

**Prospero.**

Thou poisonous slave, got by the devil himself  
 Upon thy wicked dam, come forth! (I, ii, 519-520)

Caliban.  
 As wicked dew as e'er my mother brushed  
 With raven's feather from unwholesome fen  
 Drop on you both! A southwest blow on ye  
 And blister you all o'er! (I, ii, 521-524)

For discussion ask: Why does Caliban resent being called a "slave"? Why do Prospero and Miranda insist on using this word repeatedly? What European attitudes towards the people they conquered are shown through this language use? Have students find more examples in the same scene and discuss their reactions to the use of various derogatory terms.

- Shakespeare is a master of comic word play. Cite as an example Act II, scene ii when Caliban encounters Trinculo and Stephano. Ask students: What classic types of comedy does this scene employ? (answers: slap stick and word play). In small groups of three, have students read the scene and plan how they would act it out. Suggest that they try out various physical actions to show what is happening.
- Have the class do a "still photograph" of their favorite part of Act II, scene ii or another comic scene.
- Ask students to choose their favorite joke or word play and tell why they liked it.

## THEME

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### RULER AND SUBJECTS

An important theme of *The Tempest*, the right relationship between ruler and subjects, is set within the context of the discovery of new lands during the seventeenth century.

- Have students find and compare passages in the play that show the relationship between Prospero and Caliban to Prospero's relationship to his subjects as Duke of Milan. Ask: What happens when Prospero forgoes his duty for his own intellectual pursuits?

Why does Prospero assume that he has the right to rule on the island? What rights do the native inhabitants possess?

### REVENGE OR MERCY

- To enable students to see personal relevance in the revenge or mercy theme of *The Tempest*, present the class with a problem situation. Have them free write their responses and then share their reactions in pairs or small groups. Lead a whole class discussion using the students' responses or asking students to take a stand about the way they would act in the situation: take revenge or be forgiving.

"You have been elected President of the Student Council during the last election, but your brother betrays you. Because you are very involved with your studies, you allow your brother, who is Vice-President of the Student Council, to take over most of your duties.

He seems to enjoy the work, and this allows you to be free to really get into your multimedia and English classes. But you also enjoy the status of being President, and you make sure that the work of the Council is being done. However, early in the Spring semester, your brother engineers your downfall. He goes to the faculty advisor with whom he is friendly and enlists his help in deposing you. At a Council meeting, the advisor charges you with dereliction of duty and kicks you out of office. He installs your brother as President. Hurt and aggrieved, you withdraw within yourself to reflect on what has happened to you.

Through reflection, meditation, and study of the classics, you develop powers that you did not know you had before. Also, you discover that an audio tape you had been using to record environmental noise for your multimedia class somehow picked up the conversation of your brother and the advisor when they plotted to force you out. When the activity bus breaks down on a field trip that the Council officers and the advisor are taking, you offer the two a ride to get help. They are stunned when you put the tape in your tape player and play back their conversation to them. You have them in your power. Now you have a choice. Do you go for vengeance, get the advisor fired and your brother publicly dishonored and maybe suspended from school? Or do you go for mercy, forgive your brother and the advisor; have the advisor reinstate you as president and your brother as vicepresident? What would have to happen before you could feel merciful to your brother?"

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## LOVE

Ask students to list moments in film that depict love at first sight, such as the moment when Maria and Tony see each other across the crowded dance floor in *West Side Story*. Ask them why the moment of seeing each other is so important. What does it mean? Consider that in the middle ages it was a common belief that the soul could be seen through the eyes of a person. What is the significance of the look exchanged between lovers given this idea?

## UTOPIAS

While for most Europeans the colonies represented vast economic advantages, at least some thinkers saw the “new lands” as an opportunity to experiment in forms of government and social systems, to overcome some of the failures of the past. Shakespeare alludes to this utopian urge in the speeches of Gonzalo. To help students understand the utopian theme, have them do the following:

- Describe the world you would create if you were given the chance to design an “ideal” society.
- Compare your ideas to Gonzalo’s description of an ideal commonwealth in Act II, i, 152-172. What do you think of his vision? Have you used any of these features in the world you described? Would such a state be able to survive? How would success be defined in this world? What would keep people from competing?
- Role play: How would it feel to live in the utopia described by yourself or Gonzalo? To prepare for the role play, make a list of the positive and negative aspects of life in an ideal state. Then with two other students, prepare a scene from the daily life of your utopia. Create dialogue for the scene which suggests some of the positive and negative aspects of the life.
- Read another piece of utopian literature (suggestions in the bibliography). The selection can be short, such as the description of Candide’s journey to El Dorado or More’s description of the daily life of the people in Utopia. Ask: What elements do these writings have in common with Gonzalo’s speech? Are you aware of similar attempts to create ideal communities in the modern world? What is the impulse behind such communities? Why do they so often fail?

Do the writers intend for these ideas to be a blueprint for a community, or do they have some other purpose in mind?

## ENCOUNTERS WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

To help students understand how Shakespeare deals with the theme of the encounter between Europeans and indigenous peoples, have them read the excerpt from Montaigne’s “Of the Cannibals” in the Signet edition. Ask: What commentary does he make about the European approach to the culture of indigenous peoples?

- Role play or imagine through free writing or dramatic play what it would be like to live on a Caribbean island in the seventeenth century and to witness the arrival of Europeans. List the feelings of native peoples. List the kinds of behavior they might show to the Europeans. List the way the Europeans might react to the natives. Ask: What do you think would pose the greatest difficulty to the two groups surviving together?
- Read out loud an excellent picture book, *Encounter by Jane Yolan* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992) which tells the story of the Spanish invasion of San Salvador from the point of view of a native Taino child. Discuss the way in which a native, as opposed to a European viewpoint, creates fundamental differences in the way events and persons are described.

## ROLE OF THE ARTIST

Prospero, the magician, who seems to manipulate the other characters, may represent Shakespeare’s idea of the power of the artist to heal and restore order. Perhaps as some critics have speculated, Shakespeare saw himself in the character of Prospero. Although we can’t know for sure, it is interesting to look at the way Prospero uses his art for good or ill and what this says about the role of the artist.

- Remind students or have them brainstorm other works they have read in which the main character is an artist, such as Joyce’s *Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man* (1916) or Virginia Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own* (1929). Or you may wish to use brief excerpts from these works as a way to stimulate discussion about the role of artists in a society. Remind students that Plato did not want artists in his ideal society because he considered their way of creating illusions dangerous. Ask: What do you think about the role of contemporary artists, writers, painters, musicians? What is their role? Do we need artists? Why?

## WHILE READING

These activities and writing prompts are designed to aid students' reading and develop their initial reactions to the play. Many of these activities and questions follow up on the themes and ideas explored in the prereading activities.

- As students are reading the play, have them brainstorm what they already know and also what they would like to know, i.e. questions they have about the action and characters. These lists can be displayed in the classroom and can be reviewed at intervals as the students read more of the play. Using the lists generated in brain storm sessions, students can connect what they already know about character and plot, adding new information or generating new questions to begin next day's discussion, moving toward a deeper understanding of the overall themes of the play.
- Have students write their own KWL lists, what they already know and what they would like to know before reading a new section of the play. Share these lists in small groups, and decide together a key question to guide their reading of the next scene. Read the next scene as a group, stopping from time to time to discuss what they are learning. Have each student write a response to the question posed by the group after the complete scene has been read. These questions and answers can then be used for wholeclass discussion.
- Model for the students how to read a key scene. Select one that occurs early in the play, for example a section of Act I, scene ii where Prospero explains their history to Miranda or where he questions Ariel about the events on board the sinking ship.
  1. Read orally approximately one page of the scene just as you would read it silently.
  2. Go back over the lines, thinking aloud about difficult passages and asking yourself questions. Draw on your background knowledge to make connections.
  3. Summarize the action and make connections to some of the themes identified in initial discussions of the play.
  4. Have the students, working with partners, try out this technique using the next page of the scene.
  5. Discuss with the students how the technique works for them. Ask: What do you like about the technique? What would you rather do? List on the board the strategies suggested by different students, making it clear that different strategies work effectively for individual readers.
  6. Follow up by asking students to read another section with a partner, this time using any technique they prefer.
  7. After reading, have each student "free write" his or her understanding of the passage, explaining the reading technique tried and indicating the preferred technique. Suggest that students use their reading strategy on the reading assigned for that day.
- Assign sections of the play for dramatic acting using the guidelines described earlier (p. 13 of this guide). Good scenes are:
  - Act I, i : This scene reveals the characters of Antonio and Gonzalo.
  - Act I, ii, 375-504: In this scene Miranda and Ferdinand meet.
  - Act II, i, 225-331: Sebastian and Antonio attempt to murder Alonso and Gonzalo.
  - Act II, ii: This is the comic scene where Trinculo and Stephano discover Caliban.
  - Act III, iii, 52-110: Alonso feels guilt at deposing Prospero.
  - Act V, i, 1-215: Prospero, Alonso, Miranda, and Ferdinand are united.

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## READER RESPONSE

- Reader response is an excellent technique for helping students understand the play in increasing depth. Have students respond personally, subjectively, and freely to what they have read; however, provide some structure so that students will not be frustrated not knowing where to begin. Invite students to express their reactions to the reading and the ideas of the play by writing a quote from the play on the board or directing students to passages in the play. Have students explain what the quote means to them and how it connects to other ideas they already have about the play. Tell them to write freely for three to five minutes about any ideas the quote brings to mind. Have them share their responses in pairs, small groups, or to start a wholeclass discussion.
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The following quotations may lead to rich responses:

### ACT I

1. "Me (poor man) my library was dukedom large enough." (I, ii, 109-110)
2. "But as 'tis, we cannot miss him. He does make our fire, fetch in our wood, and serves in offices that profit us." (I, ii, 310-313)
3. "You taught me language, and my profit on't is, I know how to curse." (I, ii, 363-364)
4. "Sitting on a bank,  
Weeping again the King my father's wrack,  
This music crept by me upon the waters,  
Allaying both their fury and my passion  
With its sweet air." (I, ii, 390-394)
5. "There's nothing ill can dwell in such a temple. If the ill spirit have so fair a house, good things will strive to dwell with't." (I, ii, 457-459)

### ACT II

1. I' th' commonwealth I would by contraries  
Execute all things. For no kind of traffic  
Would I admit; no name of magistrate;  
Letters should not be known; riches, poverty,  
And use of service, none; contract, succession,  
Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none;  
No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil;  
No occupation; all men idle, all;  
And women too, but innocent and pure;  
No sovereignty. (II, i, 152-161)
2. "Misery acquaints a man with strange bedfellows." (II, ii, 40-41)

### ACT III

1. "I would not wish any companion in the world but you; Nor can imagination form a shape, besides yourself, to like of." (III, i, 54-57)
2. "Travelers ne'er did lie, though fools at home condemn 'em." (III, iii, 26-27)

### ACT IV

1. "All thy vexations were but my trials of thy love, and thou hast strangely stood the test." (IV, i, 5-7)
  2. "Do not give dalliance too much the rein; the strongest oaths are straw to th' fire i' th' blood." (IV, i, 51-53)
  3. "We are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with a sleep." (IV, i, 156-157)
  4. A devil, a born devil, on whose nature  
Nurture can never stick; on whom my pains,  
Humanely taken, all, all lost, quite lost!  
And as with age his body uglier grows,  
So his mind cankers. (IV, i, 188-192)
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**ACT V**

1. "The rarer action is in virtue than in vengeance." (V, i, 47-48)
2. "I'll break my staff, bury it certain fathoms in the earth, and deeper than did ever plummet sound I'll drown my book." (V, i, 54-57)
3. "How many goodly creatures are there here! How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world that has such people in't! (V, i, 181-183)
4. "This is as strange a maze as e'er men trod, and there is in this business more than nature was ever conduct of." (V, i, 242-244)

**ORAL RESPONSE**

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- Students' personal responses to the play can be deepened through wholeclass discussions. The goal of the discussion is not to summarize the plot, but to clarify and deepen understanding of the motives of the characters and the themes of the play. Vary your role throughout the discussion by doing some or all of the following:
  1. Ask questions.
  2. Keep the discussion focused.
  3. Summarize ideas.
  4. Be a participant, following the lead of students' questions.
  5. Select and adapt any of the following questions to develop the students' own initial responses to the play. These questions can also be used as writing prompts.

**ACT I**

1. Why is it significant that the play begins with a storm at sea?
  2. Why does Miranda have such immediate empathy for the men in the ship? Since we learn that she has lived on a deserted island with her father since childhood, where would she have learned these ideas of pity and mercy?
  3. Why is she so merciful towards the shipwreck victims but has only contempt and hatred for Caliban? Where and how would she have gotten her ideas?
  4. What does it mean that Prospero has to take off his robe, his "magic garment," before he can tell Miranda about her history?
  5. Think about how you might tell your own child or a close friend the story of your past. How would you tend to characterize yourself and your actions in your story? What about Prospero's story? Does he take any responsibility for what happened to him? Should he?
  6. What crimes does Antonio, Prospero's brother, commit? What motivates him? For which crimes is he most responsible? How do you judge him?
  7. In Prospero's questioning of Ariel, we learn that the storm is part of Prospero's design. Does he want to punish the conspirators or lead them to repentance?
  8. Ariel was imprisoned by Sycorax. Why? How does the physical description of Sycorax compare to your impressions of Ariel?
  9. What connection does Shakespeare establish between outward appearance and inner spirit? Do you think this is true? Why or why not?
  10. What is your reaction to Prospero's treatment of Caliban? Does Caliban have a legitimate complaint against Prospero? Why does Prospero keep Caliban as his servant even when he despises him? Why do you think Caliban attempted to "violate the honor" of Miranda? Did he or is this the way his acts were interpreted by Prospero and Miranda?
  11. Prospero is happy that when Miranda first sees Ferdinand she is immediately captivated by his appearance? Why? What is his plan?
  12. Ferdinand and Miranda fall in love at first sight; Prospero says, "They have changed eyes." Why does this seem feasible, given the emotional state of the two young people?
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**ACT II**

1. What type of person is Gonzalo? What was his role in the plot against Prospero? Does his behavior seem consistent with how he acts now?
2. Sebastian and Antonio ridicule Gonzalo. What does this tell us about their characters?
3. What is Gonzalo's idea of the type of government or life style that could be possible on this island? Why does he say this at this time?
4. Antonio incites Sebastian to kill his brother and take the crown of Naples. Why? What does this tell us about Antonio's motives? What does Sebastian's response tell us about him? What could Shakespeare be saying about human nature?
5. Is it surprising that Caliban willingly worships Stephano and desires to give him control of the island when he resents Prospero for usurping what he considers his rightful claim to the island? What does this show about Caliban?

**ACT III**

1. How has Ferdinand's and Miranda's love deepened from their first attraction? What is Shakespeare suggesting about the true nature of love?
2. What does Caliban hope to accomplish by his plot against Prospero? Why does Shakespeare include this subplot mirroring the conspiracy of the nobles?
3. How does the apparition of the banquet affect Alonso and his retinue? How is the banquet used as a symbol? Why aren't the men allowed to eat the food? Is this an effective moment for Ariel to accuse them of their sins?

**ACT IV**

1. How is Ferdinand different from Caliban in his relationship to Miranda? Why does he pledge to keep her honor safe?
2. Why is Miranda's virginity so important to Prospero?
3. What is the overall impact of the Masque-like? How is it supposed to affect the two young lovers? What is its message about the sanctity of the marriage bond?
4. Why does the masque suddenly disappear when Prospero remembers the plot against him by Caliban and his crew? What is Shakespeare suggesting by contrasting these two events?
5. How are Stephano and Trinculo distracted from their plot? What does this show about their natures? What does Caliban think about their behavior?

**ACT V**

1. Why does Prospero decide to show mercy to his enemies? Why is Ariel the first to speak of mercy? Do you think Prospero had planned to forgive them from the beginning?
  2. Why does Prospero decide to give up magic? What does his choice show about what he thinks happened in the past? How does he plan to live in the future? What has Prospero learned? Has he changed in any fundamental way or had the change already occurred before the beginning of the action?
  3. Are Caliban and Prospero reconciled?
  4. Are Alonso, Antonio, and the other conspirators truly sorry for their plot against Prospero? Has their ordeal on the island changed them?
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## AFTER READING

After students have read and discussed various themes in the play, conduct activities which will deepen their interpretations and provide a creative outlet.

- Review the definitions of romance, tragedy, comedy, and tragicomedy. What is *The Tempest*? Have small groups of students select one of these four genre and have them argue that *The Tempest* should be classified in this genre. A lot of the discussion should focus on the end of the play. Did a true change occur in the characters or have they been manipulated by Prospero's magic so that they have not changed in any fundamental way?
- One of the prereading activities was to read a picture book, *Encounter*, which told of the landing of Columbus in the "new world" from the viewpoint of a native child. Have students create their own picture book telling of the landing of Prospero and Miranda on the island and what happened from the point of view of Caliban. Use his speeches from the play to create his dialogue and to gather concrete details for illustrations.
- Since *The Tempest* was Shakespeare's last play, critics liken him to Prospero when Prospero breaks his wand and returns to Milan without his magical powers. Form small groups and have students list the instances in the play when magic is used by Prospero. Then have them brainstorm and list ways Shakespeare's work as a playwright and poet mirror the use of magic by Prospero. (Students will need knowledge of other plays to complete this successfully.)
- Show one or parts of several films either based directly on the story of *The Tempest* or that use its themes. For example:
  1. *Forbidden Planet* (1956 Director: Fred McLeod Wilcox) is a science fiction version of Shakespeare's play. Space travelers visit a planet where the ruler has built his own empire, with only his daughter and Robby the Robot as companions.
  2. *Tempest* (1982 Director: Paul Mazursky) is a comedy loosely based on Shakespeare's play. The main character, played by John Cassavetes, is a New York city architect with a midlife crisis who decides to move with his daughter to a Greek island.
  3. *Prospero's Books* (1991 Director: Peter Greenaway) gives most of the dialogue to Prospero, played by John Gielgud, while the other characters perform masquelike dances. (Note: There's a great deal of nudity in this film which may make viewing it inappropriate for classroom uses, except for carefully edited sections.) If you use this film, the idea of Prospero manipulating the action like a puppet master may be intriguing to students. They can use a similar performance technique for a scene in which the characters act but all the speeches are given by Prospero.
- Depending on availability, have students view one or more of these films for an independent or group project. Have them make an oral presentation to the class about the different approaches used by directors to cast the various characters or to explain the motivation of characters. In the presentation use short film clips to illustrate the different approaches of several directors. Discuss why the directors chose the approaches they employed. Which are the most successful and why?
- For classrooms having access, the World Wide Web contains a growing body of information to aid teachers and students studying Shakespeare. Divide the class into teams to explore a specific site and make presentations to the class about the resources found related to *The Tempest*.

<http://daphne.palomar.edu/shakespeare/>

This site provides an excellent guide to scholarly Shakespearean resources on the Web. It includes links to information about Shakespeare, his works, educational approaches, performance aspects, Renaissance studies, sources of the plays, and other miscellaneous sites. All of the other sites described here ultimately link from this main site.

<http://www.cc.emory.edu/ENGLISH/classes>

This site explores nineteenth-century paintings, criticism, and productions of Shakespeare's plays. Paintings for each play and the artists are listed alphabetically. Students can use these paintings to evoke their own creative writing of poems or fiction. Of course, the paintings can be inspiration to the artists in your class to create their own paintings of scenes or characters in the play.

<http://www.rdg.ac.uk./globe/>

This site provides an online guide to Shakespeare and the Globe Theater. It includes links to sources covering the design and building of the original and restored Globe theaters and information about the Globe Exhibition and performances.

<http://shakespeare.eb.com/>

The *Encyclopedia Britannica's* special website on Shakespeare which includes biographies, essays, maps, and audio and video excerpts. The site features 25 quizzes on factual information about Shakespeare and his work which students can take and submit online for grading. The quizzes resemble Trivial Pursuit questions but can be fun for students to take. However, *The Tempest* is not dealt with directly. This site also contains a bibliography of all of the movies made for each of Shakespeare's plays. Two movies are listed for *The Tempest: Prospero's Books* (mentioned earlier) and *The Tempest*, a 1979 film directed by Derek Jarman and produced in the United Kingdom.

<http://www.cs.usyd.edu.au/~matty/Shakespeare/>

At this site, students can search all of Shakespeare's works for occurrences of key words or phrases.

Use these web sites to develop interdisciplinary units and/or encourage students to create their own research links between disciplines such as history and visual arts.

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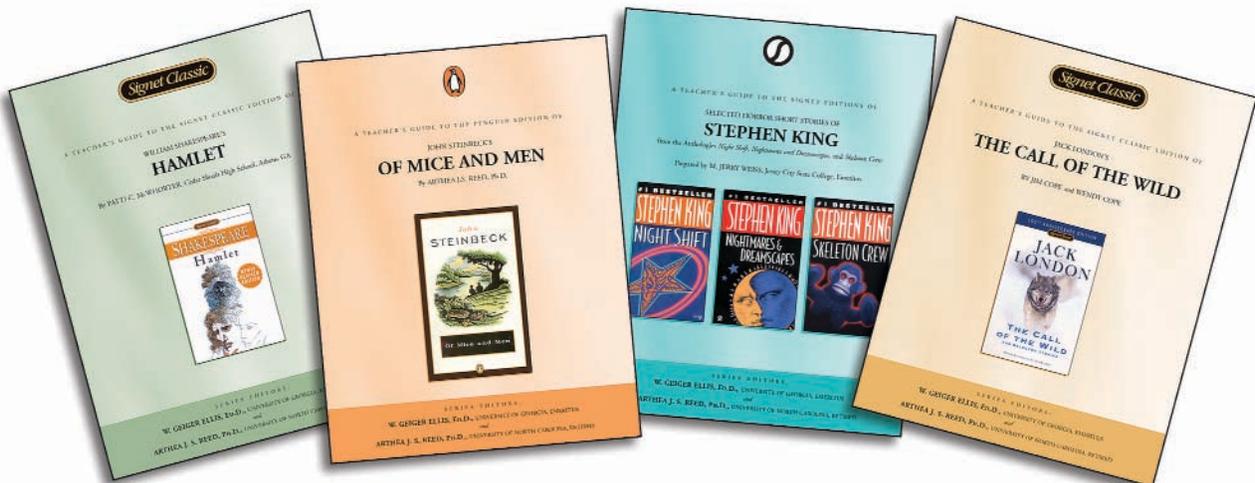
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