



**Social Studies  
School Service**

[www.socialstudies.com](http://www.socialstudies.com)

## Downloadable Reproducible eBooks

Thank you for purchasing this eBook from  
[www.socialstudies.com](http://www.socialstudies.com) or [www.writingco.com](http://www.writingco.com).

---

To browse more eBook titles, visit  
<http://www.socialstudies.com/ebooks.html>

To learn more about eBooks, visit our help page at  
<http://www.socialstudies.com/ebookshelp.html>

For questions, please e-mail [eBooks@socialstudies.com](mailto:eBooks@socialstudies.com)

---

## Free E-mail Newsletter—Sign up Today!

To learn about new eBook and print titles, professional development resources, and catalogs in the mail, sign up for our monthly e-mail newsletter at  
<http://socialstudies.com/newsletter/>

Advanced Placement in  
English Literature and Composition

Teaching Unit  
Individual Learning Packet

*King Lear*

by William Shakespeare

Written by Eva Richardson

Copyright © 2006 by Prestwick House Inc., P. O. Box 658, Clayton, DE 19938.  
1-800-932-4593. [www.prestwickhouse.com](http://www.prestwickhouse.com) Permission to copy this unit for classroom use is  
extended to purchaser for his or her personal use. This material, in whole or part, may not be  
copied for resale.

ISBN-10 1-58049-031-X  
ISBN-13 978-1-58049-031-3  
Reorder No. 301413

# King Lear

## Objectives

*By the end of this Unit, students will be able to:*

1. trace the development of the main plot in the play and indicate how and where the subplot parallels the main plot.
2. trace and analyze the development of the following characters: Lear, Cordelia, Regan, Goneril, Kent, Gloucester, Edgar, Edmund, Cornwall, Albany, Oswald.
3. trace the causes, symptoms, and consequences of the developing madness that plagues King Lear throughout the play.
4. trace and analyze relationships between characters, especially between Lear and Cordelia, Regan and Goneril, Edmund and Edgar, and Gloucester and Edgar.
5. analyze Shakespeare's use of language:
  - rhyme and meter
  - figurative devices such as metaphor, simile, personification, etc.
  - dramatic conventions such as pun, aside, allusion, subplot, etc.
6. analyze the function of the Fool.
7. define the concept of the tragic hero by looking at the example of King Lear.
8. trace the following themes in the play:
  - old age and the ingratitude of the young
  - the concept of Natural Order in terms of family relations and the influence of fate, the stars, and the gods
  - the meaning of "nothing"
  - the conflict between sight and insight, vision and blindness, ignorance and self-knowledge
  - reality versus appearance
9. respond to multiple-choice questions similar to those that appear on the Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition exam.
10. respond to writing prompts similar to those that appear on the Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition exam.
11. offer a close reading of *King Lear* and support all assertions and interpretations with direct evidence from the text, from authoritative critical knowledge of the genre, or from authoritative criticism of the play.

# King Lear

## Lecture

### I. Shakespeare and His Times

William Shakespeare was born in the town of Stratford-Upon-Avon in England in 1564. Queen Elizabeth I was the ruling monarch when Shakespeare came to live in London to develop his skills as a poet, playwright, actor, and theater director. In London, Shakespeare joined the Lord Chamberlain's Men, a theater company that allowed him to concentrate on his career as a writer and actor. Once King James I succeeded Queen Elizabeth in 1603, the company was renamed The King's Men. Shakespeare's company frequently performed at Court as well as in other theaters around the city. In 1616, Shakespeare died in Stratford-Upon-Avon, having become one of the most popular and renowned playwrights in English history.

The Elizabethan Age was a time of great prosperity and wealth in England. Furthermore, it was an era that was marked by significant scientific discoveries, explorations, and inventions. Scientists like Copernicus (1473-1543), for example, revolutionized Western thought by demonstrating, for the first time, that the planets revolve around the sun rather than the earth. Although many people at first hesitated to accept such startling new ideas, Shakespeare's time, a period also known as the English Renaissance (1500-1650), saw a decreased interest in the outdated ideas inherited from the Middle Ages and a growing fascination with new ideas that emphasized the importance and potential of each individual human being.

People like Martin Luther, Leonardo Da Vinci, and John Milton initiated significant changes in religious beliefs, politics, and the arts and stood as examples of the "Renaissance Man" who accumulates skills in a vast variety of subject matters and areas of study while actively participating in public life.

Several of the groundbreaking ideas that characterized the English Renaissance find their way into Shakespeare's *King Lear*, including:

- This was a new age, a time that required a shift in power from old to new, from old to young. This idea is evidently vital to the story of *King Lear* and centers on Lear's abdication of power and his struggle to find a place as an aging man in a changing world.

- This age saw a turn away from the idea of the “Great Chain of Being,” a belief that every being occupies a predetermined place in the hierarchy of the universe. This notion of the “Great Chain of Being” that could not be influenced or changed, because it was divinely preordained, invited human passivity, despondence, and a lack of initiative. A strong belief in the power and influence of the stars, fate, and the gods was closely related with the “Great Chain of Being” theory. The English Renaissance saw a shift away from the ideas associated with human passivity and the unquestionable influence of the gods and fate toward an emphasis on human self-determination, independence, and responsibility. This idea finds its way into a number of Shakespeare’s characters. Gloucester, for example, adheres to an antiquated world view focused on a passive belief in the stars and gods, whereas Edmund displays a growing belief in human responsibility.
- This was an age in which marriages were arranged, and women occupied a lower social status than men. Shakespeare’s play picks up on the idea of arranged marriages in the opening scene where Lear divides his kingdom among his daughters. The play implies that power and the accumulation of wealth were the deciding factors that had joined Regan and Goneril with their husbands. Cordelia’s suitors, too, have been selected based on the political and monetary advantages each potential union could offer. Shakespeare’s play, however, complicates the notion of female power. The development of the plot demonstrates that, while women did not have the power to make political decisions for the kingdom and were expected to agree with their husbands in every decision. Many women did, indeed, influence politics and social relations, hidden from public view, through their ability to scheme and privately impact their husband’s attitudes. In that sense, Shakespeare’s play attempts to draw a more realistic, less black-and-white image of the role women played.
- Humans had potential for development. Shakespeare’s play traces the interior development of a number of characters and suggests that human identity is not static and unchangeable.

## II. Shakespeare's Use of Language

### 1. Blank Verse

In all of his plays, the predominant rhythmic and metric pattern Shakespeare uses is blank verse, or unrhymed iambic pentameter. The following lines taken from a speech by Edmund demonstrate Shakespeare's blank verse:

EDMUND:  
Thou, nature, art my goddess; to thy law  
My services are bound. Wherefore should I  
Stand in the plague of custom, and permit (I.ii)

Changes to this pattern of blank verse can signal a significant change simultaneously occurring in the plot or atmosphere of the play. Alternatively, changes in verse and meter might serve to emphasize important ideas or passages in the play.

For example, the following passage demonstrates a shift from blank verse poetry to prose:

GLOUCESTER:  
No? What needed then that terrible dispatch of it into your pocket? the  
quality of nothing has not such need to hide itself. Let's see: come, if it be  
nothing, I shall not need spectacles. (I.ii)

Gloucester's prose speech here signals his initial encounter with the evil scheme of Edmund that will overthrow his life and eventually lead to his blinding and death. The presumed unnatural behavior of his son Edgar, which is discussed in this scene, finds its equivalent in the "unnatural" structure of the language, the interruption of iambic pentameter by several passages written in prose.

In the following passage, Kent's language shifts from poetry to prose, a movement that directly mirrors his speech. In answer to Cornwall's question, "What mean'st by this?" Kent says, "To go out of my dialect, which you discommend so much" (II.ii) – which is precisely what his language pattern is doing as well.

Other passages containing a shift from poetry to prose are the Fool's speeches, the language of Edgar disguised as a poor madman, and Lear's later speeches that are influenced by his insanity. The riddles of the Fool as well as the madness of Edgar and Lear are mirrored in the shift in language pattern.

## 2. Figurative Language

Many of Shakespeare's characters incorporate examples of figurative language into their speeches. Figurative language helps the audience to create a visual image of the scenes being discussed and acted out on stage. Often, writers like Shakespeare employ figurative language, such as metaphors, similes, personifications, or other imagery in order to put an abstract or complex idea into familiar yet interesting terms for the audience.

### A) SIMILE

Similes are among the most frequently used examples of figurative language in Shakespeare's plays. Generally speaking, similes introduce a comparison by using the words "like" or "as." Thus, paying attention to these signal words can hold the key to unraveling a complex passage. Many images are not to be taken as literal descriptions but function as comparisons in the form of similes.

The following passage from Act I, scene ii, for example, contains a number of similes:

EDMUND:  
Thou, nature, art my goddess; to thy law  
My services are bound. Wherefore should I  
Stand in the plague of custom, and permit  
The curiosity of nations to deprive me,  
For that I am some twelve or fourteen moonshines      5  
Lag of a brother? Why bastard? wherefore base?  
When my dimensions are as well compact,  
My mind as generous and my shape as true,  
As honest madam's issue? Why brand they us  
With base? with baseness? bastardy? base, base?      10  
Who in the lusty stealth of nature take  
More composition and fierce quality  
Than doth, within a dull, stale, tired bed,  
Go to the creating a whole tribe of fops,  
Got 'tween asleep and wake? Well then,      15  
Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land:  
Our father's love is to the bastard Edmund  
As to the legitimate: fine word, "legitimate"!  
Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed  
And my invention thrive, Edmund the base      20  
Shall top the legitimate. I grow; I prosper:  
Now, gods, stand up for bastards!

The simile in the above passage helps to demonstrate Edmund's frustration over the treatment he receives as a son born out of wedlock. When he states that his "dimensions are as well compact," his "mind as generous," and his "shape as true as honest madam's issue," he expresses his belief that his *bodily parts are as well-proportioned, his mind as functional, and his appearance as true to his father's likeness as a son born to a married couple*. In other words, Edmund does not believe that being a bastard makes him a less valuable person. In a number of other passages, Lear uses similes that draw a comparison between his daughters and vicious predatory animals who are suffocating him and stealing his life.

- In Act II, scene iv, Lear tells Regan that Goneril "hath tied sharp-tooth'd unkindness, **like a vulture**, here."
- Later in the same scene, Lear states that Goneril has "struck [him] with her tongue, most **serpent-like**, upon the very heart."

## B) METAPHOR

Metaphors, like similes, are comparisons, but they do not require the words "like" or "as" to form the comparison. Metaphors, too, help to visualize a particular statement and create a vivid image in the minds of the audience.

In the following passage from Act II, scene iv, for example, Lear uses a metaphor to express his disgust with Goneril's behavior:

LEAR:  
I prithee, daughter, do not make me mad:  
I will not trouble thee, my child; farewell:  
We'll no more meet, no more see one another:  
But yet **thou art my flesh, my blood**, my daughter;  
Or rather a **disease that's in my flesh**,  
Which I must needs call mine: **thou art a boil**,  
**A plague-sore, an embossed carbuncle**,  
In my corrupted blood.

This passage, filled with metaphors, helps to demonstrate how Lear perceives the behavior of his daughter. He feels that, like a terrible disease, Goneril's evil and deception are negatively impacting his health and infiltrating his body. Lear is suffering, because Goneril is mistreating him.



### III. Dramatic Conventions and Techniques

A number of dramatic conventions and techniques most frequently associated with Shakespeare's plays are:

- **Soliloquy:** A speech spoken by a character who is alone on stage. Often, soliloquies reveal insights into a character's thoughts, emotions, and motives for action.
- **Aside:** Words spoken by a character on stage that are meant to be heard by the audience, but not by any other characters who are on stage. The aside is often used to give the audience a unique insight into a character's interior world. In *King Lear*, for example, Cordelia addresses the audience several times in the first scene of the play in order to express her inner turmoil: "What shall Cordelia do? Love, and be silent." (I,i)
- **Subplot:** A secondary plot that runs alongside the main action of the play. In *King Lear*, the story of Gloucester and his two sons functions as a subplot that runs alongside and simultaneously mirrors the plot that is developing between Lear and his three daughters.
- **Allusion:** A reference to another text, event, or person with which the audience is presumably familiar. In *King Lear*, Shakespeare frequently alludes to Roman mythology. Act I, scene i, for example, contains an allusion to Hecate, a goddess from ancient Greek mythology:

LEAR:

Let it be so; thy truth then be thy dower:  
For by the sacred radiance of the sun,  
The mysteries of Hecate, and the night;  
By all the operation of the orbs  
From whom we do exist and cease to be;  
Here I disclaim all my paternal care.

- **Tragic Hero:** A prevalent feature of the Elizabethan theatre.
- **Madness:** Real or pretended, madness was a popular technique employed in Elizabethan plays.
- **Conflict:** In any play, conflict between characters and internal conflicts within particular characters drive the plot. In *King Lear*, the conflict between Lear and his daughters, between old and age and youth, leads to a power struggle of unexpected dimensions. Cordelia represents a character who struggles with an internal conflict when she ponders how to answer her father's request for an avowal of love truthfully instead of superficially. Edgar faces an inner conflict when he leads his father to the cliffs of Dover. He must decide between serving or protecting Gloucester.
- **Pun:** A device that achieves emphasis or humor by using two distinct meanings for the same word or for two similar sounding words. In *King Lear*, Shakespeare incorporates a pun in the word "conceive" in Act I, scene i: In answer to Kent's statement, "I cannot conceive you," Gloucester replies: "Sir, this young fellow's mother could." The word "conceive," here, has two distinct meanings: Kent uses the word "conceive" to mean "understand," whereas Gloucester uses the word to mean "becoming pregnant."

#### IV. Classical Tragedy and the Tragic Hero

*King Lear* – like all of Shakespeare's plays – was written for the Elizabethan stage. Elizabethan tragedy generally builds on the elements of Classical tragedy. The Greek tradition of Classical tragedy was developed by Aristotle, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides and incorporates a traditional five-act structure and the fate of the **TRAGIC HERO**. The Roman writer Seneca also played a major role in developing Classical tragedy and was particularly influential to the Elizabethan theater.

According to Classical tragedy, the tragic hero is a figure who occupies a position of high social rank and ultimately falls to desolation and disaster. The protagonist's fate is determined by the tragic hero's flaw, or *hamartia*. The tragic hero falls from his high position because of an error in judgment, exaggerated hubris (excessive pride), or the workings of fate. In most of Shakespeare's tragedies, the hero's flaw is rooted within the protagonist himself and reveals itself through a failure or an inability to act correctly or to make the right decision. This "waste of human potential" is a central element of the Elizabethan tragedy. In *King Lear*, the protagonist's fate is determined by Lear's inability to distinguish between honest love and pretended love and his disastrous decision to divide his kingdom and give up his power entirely.

## V. Themes

### 1. Sight and Insight vs. Blindness and Ignorance

Among the most important recurring themes Shakespeare develops in *King Lear* is the idea of **SIGHT AND INSIGHT vs. BLINDNESS AND IGNORANCE**. Shakespeare continuously repeats and develops this thematic idea on a literal (**EYESIGHT/BLINDNESS**) as well as metaphorical level (**INSIGHT/IGNORANCE**).

For example, in Act I, scene i, Lear banishes Kent by exclaiming “Out of my sight!” and Kent replies with the warning “See better, Lear, and let me still remain / The true blank of thine eye”. Shakespeare develops the idea that “seeing” on a literal, physical level and “knowing” or “understanding” do not necessarily coincide.

Throughout the play, Lear must gradually learn to value insight and understanding – “seeing” on a metaphorical level – more highly than purely physical eyesight. This development eventually leads to his insight about the false love of Regan and Goneril and the honest love of Cordelia. Lear eventually “sees” that Cordelia is the daughter who loves him most. Shakespeare continuously demonstrates the ambiguous nature of seeing and blindness as indicators of knowledge, self-knowledge, and ignorance.

Other references that trace Lear’s development of sight/insight/knowledge can be found in the following lines:

- **REGAN:** ’T is the infirmity of his age: yet he hath ever but slenderly known himself (I.i)
- **LEAR:** Doth any here know me? This is not Lear:  
Doth Lear walk thus? speak thus? Where are his eyes?  
Either his notion weakens, his discernings  
Are lethargied – Ha! waking? ’tis not so.  
Who is it that can tell me who I am? (I.iv)
- **LEAR:** Old fond eyes,  
Beweep this cause again, I’ll pluck ye out  
And cast you with the waters that you lose  
To temper clay (I.iv)
- **ALBANY:** How far your eyes may pierce I cannot tell (I.iv)

The story of the Duke of Gloucester and his two sons, Edgar the legitimate son and Edmund the bastard, parallels the story of Lear and his daughters in numerous ways. The references to **SIGHT/INSIGHT/BLINDNESS** that haunt the story of Lear find their equivalent in Gloucester’s fate. In Act III, scene vii, Gloucester is captured by Regan and Cornwall who punish his allegiance to Lear by plucking his eyes out and, thus, blinding him:

**CORNWALL:** See ’t shalt thou never. Fellows, hold the chair.  
Upon these eyes of thine I’ll set my foot (III.vii)

Once Cornwall loses his eyesight, he, like Lear, undergoes a journey toward insight and knowledge. Although physically blind, Gloucester eventually gains insight and learns that the banished Edgar is in fact the honest son who is dedicated to helping his father, whereas Edmund has misled and betrayed his father.

## 2. Nature and Order

The plot of *King Lear* develops around notions of NATURE AND ORDER.

### a) NATURAL ORDER - FAMILY

Family and birthright are important themes in *King Lear*. At the onset of the play, for example, Gloucester firmly considers Edgar as his legitimate son. He calls him “a son by order of law” (I.i). Because Edgar is a legitimate son whereas Edmund is a son born out of wedlock, natural family order determines that Edgar not only has a right to the inheritance of his father’s property and possessions, but also to his father’s respect and love. Edmund, on the other hand, is ridiculed and less respected by his father, because he is considered an “unnatural” son without rights.

Shakespeare challenges these conventional notions of natural family order. When Edmund schemes against his brother and father, the natural family order becomes reversed, and Gloucester is quick to dismiss Edgar’s natural birthright:

GLOUCESTER: O villain, villain! His very opinion in the letter! Abhorred  
villain! Unnatural, detested, brutish villain! worse than brutish! (I.ii)

Gloucester disinherits Edgar and raises the “bastard” son in his esteem instead. It is not until later in the play that the natural family order is reestablished when Gloucester learns that Edmund has betrayed both him and Edgar. Gloucester learns that Edmund planned to forego natural order and birthright by tricking his father into giving him an inheritance:

EDMUND: A credulous father, and a brother noble,  
Whose nature is so far from doing harms  
That he suspects none; on whose foolish honesty  
My practices ride easy. I see the business.  
Let me, if not by birth, have lands by wit:  
All with me’s meet that I can fashion fit (I.ii)

Edgar, on the other hand, has remained loyal to his father despite his banishment.

We should not consider Shakespeare’s intention to be the reaffirmation of natural family order and birthright at the end of the play. Rather, Shakespeare alerts his audience to the fact that natural love, affection, and loyalty can only be recognized and understood once one looks beneath the surface of appearances and conventions and considers actions and behavior rather than legitimacy or illegitimacy as factors that determine a person’s character.

The tale of Lear and his daughters parallels the story of Gloucester and his two sons. According to natural law, Lear decides to divide his kingdom equally among his three legitimate daughters:

LEAR: Tell me, my daughters,  
Since now we will divest us both of rule,  
Interest of territory, cares of state,  
Which of you shall we say doth love us most? (I.i)

Lear believes that natural order must determine that all of his daughters must *naturally* love him and that they will treat him with respect once he has given away his kingdom. Shakespeare's tragedy upsets Lear's expectations: Although Lear believes that, by nature, his daughters must love him, Regan and Goneril are interested only in the land they are inheriting. They do not love their father and disrespect his wishes. Regan's and Goneril's personalities are disingenuous and ungenerous.

Cordelia, on the other hand, affirms her love for her father by stating that she loves him "according to [her] bond; nor more nor less" (I.i). Cordelia respects her father and offers him the honest affections of a daughter. But Lear does not understand that Regan and Goneril are merely flattering his ego when they avow their love for him, while Cordelia truly cares about her father but does not offer him empty words. Shakespeare challenges notions of natural love and order to demonstrate the importance of looking beneath the surface of relationships in order to determine true affection and love.

## b) NATURAL ORDER – FATE AND THE STARS

A number of characters in *King Lear* refer to the stars or the workings of fate in order to explain particular events in the story. This notion of **astronomical influence** was common during the Elizabethan Age. The progressive ideas of Galileo Galilei, who offered scientific explanations for the movements of the planets and stars, were, at the time of Shakespeare, still unaccepted by many who clung to the beliefs inherited from medieval times.

Gloucester is one of the major characters who calls on the stars for answers. In Act I, scene ii, Gloucester ponders the influence of the stars:

GLOUCESTER: These late eclipses in the sun and moon portend no good  
to us: though the wisdom of nature can reason it thus and thus,  
yet nature finds itself scourged by the sequent effects: love  
cools, friendship falls off, brothers divide: in cities, mutinies;  
in countries, discord; in palaces, treason (I.ii)

Another passage indicates how, for Gloucester, the gods and fate are the powers that arbitrarily determine the fates of human beings. In Act IV, scene i, he states, "As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods; / They kill us for their sport." (IV.i)

While Gloucester's contemplations indeed seem to foreshadow or predict the subsequent events of the story adequately, Shakespeare's play seems to raise the question of human responsibility. Lear, Gloucester, and other major characters must learn that as human beings, they cannot blame astronomical events for the ways their lives unfold. They must learn to stand up for their actions and take responsibility for their behavior.

This growing notion of **individual accountability** is central to the quickly developing **humanist conscience** of the English Renaissance. In fact, a number of prevalent writers and thinkers of the English Renaissance viewed their changing beliefs as indicators of a new world order, a modern age that would completely replace the antiquated beliefs that had dominated medieval times. An increased interest in public and political life required active participation as well as critical thinking and awareness. Shakespeare's play demonstrates an awareness of these changing notions of passivity versus activity. Whereas many of his characters in *King Lear* demonstrate an adherence to an old world order, other characters display a concern with the growing humanist ideals of activity and accountability.

Early in the play, Edmund raises the question of human responsibility and wonders why people blame the stars for their fortunes of misfortunes:

EDMUND: This is the excellent foppery of the world, that when we are sick in fortune—often the surfeit of our own behavior—we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon and the stars: as if we were villains by necessity, fools by heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves and treachers, by spherical predominance; drunkards, liars and adulterers, by an enforced obedience of planetary influence (I.ii)

Shakespeare's play indicates his belief that **NATURE** cannot determine the **ORDER** of the world. Neither **NATURAL FAMILY ORDER** nor the **NATURAL ORDER OF FATE AND THE STARS** can relieve human beings of responsibility of action.

### 3. Other Themes and Motifs

- Madness
- The Meaning of "Nothing"
- The Weather—The Recurring Storm

Note that we can also consider recurring references to the storm, the meaning of "nothing," and occurrences of madness as powerful symbols that help demonstrate complex ideas or themes in the play.

## VI. Historical Context and Sources

When Shakespeare wrote *King Lear* in 1605/1606, he built on a number of well-known texts that had previously developed the story of the old king and his daughters. Most of Shakespeare's plays, in fact, are not original inventions by Shakespeare himself. Like many of his contemporary writers and playwrights, Shakespeare used well-known tales and previously published plays or stories in order to gather inspiration for his plays. He then appropriated the stories and characters for his particular vision and turned them into the brilliant works we know today.

The earliest existing version of the story of King Lear is probably the *Historia Regum Britanniae*, written in the 12<sup>th</sup> century by Geoffrey of Monmouth. Even Monmouth's early version of the story of Lear, however, relies on a familiar tale about a father and his three daughters that had long been a part of English mythology. Many critics believe that Monmouth's *Chronicles* are loosely based on the **historical figure of King Lear**, who is believed to have ruled the British Island around the year 800. Most sources, however, are vague about the actual existence of the mythological king.

During the Elizabethan Age, a number of different versions of the play were published that probably served as direct sources for Shakespeare's play, among them most notably the *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland* published by Raphael Holinshed late in the sixteenth century as well as an anonymous text entitled *The True Chronicle History of King Leir*, published anonymously around the same time. Shakespeare routinely turned to Holinshed's *Chronicles* for inspiration; *Macbeth*, for example, as well as a number of his other historical plays, relies on Holinshed's *Chronicles* for historical context.

Although Shakespeare relied on a number of sources for the story of Lear, his play differs from Holinshed's *Chronicles* as well as from the anonymous *The True Chronicle History of King Leir* in a number of significant ways. First, Shakespeare added the subplot involving **Gloucester and his two sons Edgar and Edmund** as a story that parallels the fate of Lear and his three daughters. The story of Gloucester was borrowed loosely from yet another source, Sir Philip Sidney's *The Countess of Pembroke Arcadia*. There is no indication that a historical source for the figure of Gloucester exists in British history. Shakespeare added another significant change to the original tale of the old king and his daughters when he wrote the tragic ending to his play. In the texts that served as his source material, King Lear and his **faithful daughter Cordelia** (or Cordeilla) are happily reunited and reassume the royal power in the kingdom. Shakespeare, of course, deviates from this happy ending: both Lear and Cordelia die tragically, and the English kingdom is left in a state of desolation and turmoil. Another crucial aspect of Shakespeare's play, Lear's growing state of madness, is an original feature born in Shakespeare's imagination.

Shakespeare's play, then, uses a well-known basic outline of the story of a father and his daughters and turns it into his very own, unique, and dark vision of love and betrayal, honesty and deception, power and insanity. Indeed, Shakespeare's play was performed faithfully on the Elizabethan stage for only about twenty years. In the 1680s, Nahum Tate conceived an adapted version of Shakespeare's play that, for many years, became the only version that was performed. Tate's adaptation changed a number of details from Shakespeare's play, most notably his dark ending, which Tate turned into a happy ending. Clearly, Tate's adaptation is not a faithful rendition of Shakespeare's vision. It was, however, the story that English audiences wanted to see. For many years to come, the ending of *King Lear*, as Shakespeare had written it, was too disastrous and negative for the English audiences to endure.

## VII. The Elizabethan Stage and the Globe Theater

When Shakespeare wrote his more than thirty plays in London during the second half of the sixteenth century, Queen Elizabeth I was the ruling monarch, and England experienced a time of great prosperity and wealth. Theater was an integral part of life at Court. Shakespeare's theater company frequently performed at court, and it is very likely that many of Shakespeare's plays were attended by the monarch and other members of the royal family.

One of the admirable features of Shakespeare's plays, however, is their ability to appeal to a wide range of different audiences simultaneously. Shakespeare and his theater company not only wrote and performed for the queen or king and for the royal family. All of his plays were likewise performed in other theaters around the city, allowing a large number of people to attend his plays.

In 1599, Shakespeare designed and became the co-founder of the **Globe Theatre**, an impressive and innovative amphitheater located on the South Bank of the Thames River. The Globe Theatre was an octagonal structure, allowing for superior acoustic quality during stage performances. It seated up to 3000 spectators. The Globe Theatre was a unique space, as it allowed people from different social classes to attend plays and socialize. Ticket prices ranged from very cheap to expensive, allowing the poor and rich people alike to enjoy the play. In the 1990s, a faithful reconstruction of the Globe Theatre, which had burned down in 1613, was completed close to the site of Shakespeare's original. The reconstructed Globe serves as a place of entertainment, art, and education.



## Free-Response (Essay) Items

### PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 1:

In the following passage from Act I, scene ii, Edmund openly expresses his feelings toward his father, his brother, and his situation. Read the passage carefully and write a well-organized essay in which you analyze Edmund's character and evaluate his sentiments with regard to notions of natural family relations and the problem of legitimacy versus illegitimacy.

EDMUND:

Thou, nature, art my goddess; to thy law  
My services are bound. Wherefore should I  
Stand in the plague of custom, and permit  
The curiosity of nations to deprive me,  
For that I am some twelve or fourteen moonshines      5  
Lag of a brother? Why bastard? wherefore base?  
When my dimensions are as well compact,  
My mind as generous and my shape as true,  
As honest madam's issue? Why brand they us  
With base? with baseness? bastardy? base, base?      10  
Who in the lusty stealth of nature take  
More composition and fierce quality  
Than doth, within a dull, stale, tired bed,  
Go to the creating a whole tribe of fops,  
Got 'tween asleep and wake? Well then,      15  
Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land:  
Our father's love is to the bastard Edmund  
As to the legitimate: fine word, "legitimate"!  
Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed  
And my invention thrive, Edmund the base      20  
Shall top the legitimate. I grow; I prosper:  
Now, gods, stand up for bastards!

## PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 2:

In the following soliloquy from Act II, scene iii, Edgar seeks refuge in a forest near Gloucester's castle. The banished son, who has fallen victim to Edmund's evil schemes, now realizes that he will never be able to return to his father to regain his love and respect because everybody believes him to be a traitor who planned to kill his father. Read the passage carefully and write a well-organized essay in which you analyze Edgar's decision to assume the character of a poor madman. Explain Edgar's reasoning for becoming "nothing" and analyze how his disguise influences later actions and events in the play.

EDGAR:

I heard myself proclaim'd;  
And by the happy hollow of a tree  
Escaped the hunt. No port is free; no place,  
That guard and most unusual vigilance  
Does not attend my taking. Whiles I may 'scape 5  
I will preserve myself: and am bethought  
To take the basest and most poorest shape  
That ever penury in contempt of man  
Brought near to beast: my face I'll grime with filth,  
Blanket my loins, elf all my hair in knots, 10  
And with presented nakedness out-face  
The winds and persecutions of the sky.  
The country gives me proof and precedent  
Of Bedlam beggars, who with roaring voices  
Strike in their numb'd and mortified bare arms 15  
Pins, wooden pricks, nails, sprigs of rosemary;  
And with this horrible object, from low farms,  
Poor pelting villages, sheep-cotes and mills,  
Sometime with lunatic bans, sometime with prayers,  
Enforce their charity. Poor Turlygod! poor Tom! 20  
That's something yet: Edgar I nothing am.

### PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 3:

The Fool functions as a character who appears to ramble nonsensical commentary but, in fact, sees and speaks the truth. He displays a great sense of wisdom, although he speaks in riddles to his master, the former king. Read the following passage from Act III, scene ii, carefully and write a well-organized essay in which you analyze how the Fool uses irony in order to speak the truth. Describe and evaluate the images the Fool employs to express his wisdom and his concerns about the state of affairs in the kingdom.

FOOL:

When priests are more in word than matter;

When brewers mar their malt with water;

When nobles are their tailors' tutors;

No heretics burn'd, but wenches' suitors;

When every case in law is right; 5

No squire in debt nor no poor knight;

When slanders do not live in tongues,

Nor cutpurses come not to throngs;

When usurers tell their gold i' the field,

And bawds and whores do churches build;      10

Then shall the realm of Albion

Come to great confusion:

Then comes the time, who lives to see't,

That going shall be used with feet.

#### PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 4:

In a state of anger and confusion, Lear is desperately trying to deal with his disillusionment over the neglect and disrespect he has experienced at the hands of his daughters Regan and Goneril. Upon meeting Gloucester in Dover, Lear is able to recognize that Gloucester, too, has experienced a similar fate because of his contentious sons. Carefully study the following passage from Act IV, scene vi, and write a well-organized essay in which you analyze how Lear's commentary extends into a tirade on the insufficiencies and dangers of women. Describe Lear's commentary on women and explain his attitude against the background of his experiences.

LEAR:

Ay, every inch a king:

When I do stare, see how the subject quakes.

I pardon that man's life. What was thy cause?

Adultery?

Thou shalt not die: die for adultery! No:

5

The wren goes to't, and the small gilded fly

Does lecher in my sight.

Let copulation thrive; for Gloucester's bastard son

Was kinder to his father than my daughters

Got 'tween the lawful sheets.

10

To 't, luxury, pell-mell! for I lack soldiers.

Behold yond simpering dame,

Whose face between her forks presages snow,

That minces virtue and does shake the head

To hear of pleasure's name;

15

The fitchew, nor the soiled horse, goes to 't

With a more riotous appetite.

Down from the waist they are Centaurs,

Though women all above:

But to the girdle do the gods inherit,

20

Beneath is all the fiends';

There's hell, there's darkness, there's the sulphurous pit,

Burning, scalding, stench, consumption; fie, fie, fie! pah, pah!

Give me an ounce of civet, good apothecary, to sweeten my

imagination: there's money for thee.

25

### PRACTICE RESPONSE QUESTION 5:

Carefully read the following passage from Act IV, scene vii, and write a well-organized essay in which you analyze why Cordelia condemns her sisters for the acts they have committed against their father. Explain why Cordelia is shocked at her sisters' behavior and why she believes her father, at his old age, deserved better treatment.

CORDELIA:

Had you not been their father, these white flakes  
Had challenged pity of them. Was this a face  
To be opposed against the warring winds?  
To stand against the deep dread-bolted thunder?  
In the most terrible and nimble stroke 5  
Of quick, cross lightning? to watch—poor perdu!—  
With this thin helm? Mine enemy's dog,  
Though he had bit me, should have stood that night  
Against my fire; and wast thou fain, poor father,  
To hovel thee with swine and rogues forlorn, 10  
In short and musty straw? Alack, alack!  
'Tis wonder that thy life and wits at once  
Had not concluded all. He wakes; speak to him.

#### PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 6:

The tragic hero, in the Classical tradition, often fails because of an error in judgment. In a well-organized essay, develop an argument in which you evaluate Lear's actions and the consequences of his actions and decide whether or not Lear's story functions as an example of the tragic hero's fate. Do not merely summarize the plot.

#### PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 7:

The Renaissance was a time that placed increasing emphasis on the individual. Active participation in public life replaced a passive and fatalistic attitude. Write a well-organized essay in which you demonstrate how *King Lear* functions as a play that reveals the transition from passivity to human accountability. Do not merely summarize the plot. Choose specific examples and passages from the text to support your assertions.

#### PRACTICE RESPONSE QUESTION 8:

Shakespeare's dark and fatalistic ending was disturbing to English audiences. For many decades, in fact, most theater companies performed an alternative version of the play in which Lear and Cordelia are happily united. Write a well-organized essay in which you explain the purpose Shakespeare may have had in mind when writing his unhappy ending. Draw a connection between your argument and the notion of "wasted human potential" that dominated many plays modeled after the pattern of Classical Tragedy.

## Discussion Topics/Questions

1. Identify parallels between the Gloucester subplot and the Lear plot by citing specific passages in the text. In which instance do the two plotlines diverge and why?
2. Complete a detailed character analysis for each of the following characters. Indicate their actions as well as their motives. Try to indicate who and what affects their attitudes and actions.
  - King Lear
  - Goneril
  - Regan
  - Cordelia
  - Gloucester
  - Edgar
  - Edmund
  - Oswald
  - Albany
  - Cornwall
  - King of France
3. Evaluate the following statement from Lear by referring to incidents and passages in the text: “I am a man / more sinn’d against than sinning.” (III.ii)
4. Point out how and to what extent Lear is an example of the classical tragic hero and develop an argument around the possibility of Lear’s error in judgment.
5. Trace occurrences of the “Natural Order” theme and explain how it reflects the changing spirit of Renaissance England.
6. Explain and analyze the function of the Fool. Identify passages that reveal the Fool’s attitude toward Lear’s actions.
7. Trace Lear’s developing madness through the text and identify causes, symptoms, and consequences of his growing mental instability.
8. Identify how the theme of “nothing” correlates with notions of property, value, and family relations.
9. How does Shakespeare’s play comment on family relationships, loyalty, and the status of women? Find specific instances in which the text reveals the attitudes of the author or of individual characters in the play.
10. Study the actions of Edmund, Goneril, Regan, and Lear and comment on the idea of “wasted human potential.”
11. Trace the theme of sight and insight, blindness and vision by citing specific passages from the text. Consider how this theme relates to the idea of reality versus appearance.

## Multiple Choice Questions

### PRACTICE MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS 1-10:

Read the following passage carefully before choosing your answers:

KING LEAR:

O, reason not the need: our basest beggars  
Are in the poorest thing superfluous:  
Allow not nature more than nature needs,  
Man's life's as cheap as beast's: thou art a lady;  
If only to go warm were gorgeous, 5  
Why, nature needs not what thou gorgeous wear'st,  
Which scarcely keeps thee warm. But, for true need, –  
You heavens, give me that patience, patience I need!  
You see me here, you gods, a poor old man,  
As full of grief as age; wretched in both: 10  
If it be you that stir these daughters' hearts  
Against their father, fool me not so much  
To bear it tamely; touch me with noble anger,  
And let not women's weapons, water-drops,  
Stain my man's cheeks! No, you unnatural hags, 15  
I will have such revenges on you both  
That all the world shall – I will do such things, –  
What they are, yet I know not, but they shall be  
The terrors of the earth. You think I'll weep;  
No, I'll not weep: 20  
I have full cause of weeping; but this heart  
Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws,  
Or ere I'll weep. O fool, I shall go mad! (II.i)

1. In lines 3-4, Lear argues that
  - (A) a man should be content when his basic needs are being met.
  - (B) a man requires more than the necessities in order to remain a human being.
  - (C) men are on the same level as animals.
  - (D) men should share their possessions with the animals.
  - (E) Regan and Goneril behave in an unnatural way.
2. What does Lear consider to be the weapon of women?
  - (A) deception
  - (B) noble anger
  - (C) revenge
  - (D) tears
  - (E) patience



3. Who is the “you” that Lear is referring to in line 11?
  - (A) old age
  - (B) Regan
  - (C) Goneril
  - (D) the gods
  - (E) the unnatural hags
4. Which literary device dominates the lines “And let not women’s weapons, water-drops, / Stain my man’s cheeks!”?
  - (A) alliteration
  - (B) allusion
  - (C) epitaph
  - (D) assonance
  - (E) enigma
5. Throughout this passage, Lear calls on the gods to give him
  - (A) need and noble anger.
  - (B) water-drops and noble anger.
  - (C) a hundred thousand flaws and noble anger.
  - (D) patience and noble anger.
  - (E) madness and noble anger.
6. In lines 16-19, Lear threatens to revenge himself by committing the following act:
  - (A) He threatens to cry.
  - (B) He does not know what he will do.
  - (C) He threatens to become mad.
  - (D) He does not swear revenge.
  - (E) He threatens to kill Regan and Goneril.
7. Which of the following is true for line 20?
  - (A) The line introduces a metaphor.
  - (B) The line presents a shift in point of view.
  - (C) The line is a short allusion.
  - (D) The line is shorter because it introduces an intertextual reference.
  - (E) The line is shorter in order to emphasize Lear’s resolution.

8. Line 23 is ironic because
- (A) Lear is not talking to the Fool.
  - (B) Lear is already crying.
  - (C) The roles between the Fool and Lear are being reversed.
  - (D) Regan and Goneril predicted this would happen.
  - (E) Regan and Goneril are safe from Lear's revenge.
9. The "full cause of weeping" Lear refers to in line 21 indicates
- (A) the betrayal Lear has experienced at the hands of Regan and Goneril.
  - (B) Lear's inability to find a suitable revenge.
  - (C) Lear's laments over his banishment of Cordelia.
  - (D) the rift between Cornwall and Albany.
  - (E) the approaching storm.
10. In line 15, Lear calls his daughters "unnatural hags" because they
- (A) have given birth to children out of wedlock.
  - (B) do not respect the workings of fate.
  - (C) have renounced their belief in the gods.
  - (D) refuse to forgive Cordelia.
  - (E) have deceived their father about their dedication as faithful daughters.

## PRACTICE MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS 11-20:

Read the following passage, in which Kent converses with a Gentleman, carefully before you choose your answers:

KENT:  
Sir, I do know you;  
And dare, upon the warrant of my note,  
Commend a dear thing to you. There is division,  
Although as yet the face of it be cover'd  
With mutual cunning, 'twixt Albany and Cornwall;      5  
Who have – as who have not, that their great stars  
Throned and set high? – servants, who seem no less,  
Which are to France the spies and speculations  
Intelligent of our state; what hath been seen,  
Either in snuffs and packings of the dukes,      10  
Or the hard rein which both of them have borne  
Against the old kind king, or something deeper,  
Whereof perchance these are but furnishings, –  
But, true it is, from France there comes a power  
Into this scatter'd kingdom; who already,      15  
Wise in our negligence, have secret feet  
In some of our best ports, and are at point  
To show their open banner. Now to you:  
If on my credit you dare build so far  
To make your speed to Dover, you shall find      20  
Some that will thank you, making just report  
Of how unnatural and bemadding sorrow  
The king hath cause to plain.  
I am a gentleman of blood and breeding,  
And from some knowledge and assurance offer      25  
This office to you. (III.i)

11. Lines 1-2 reveal Kent's
  - (A) trust in the gentleman based on prior knowledge of his loyalties.
  - (B) hope that the gentleman will deliver a very important note to Cordelia.
  - (C) revelation of Edmund's secret letter to Goneril.
  - (D) fear of being overheard by Cornwall and Albany.
  - (E) revelation of Lear's whereabouts.
12. In lines 5-6, Kent suggests that the division between Albany and Cornwall
  - (A) has brought great fear to the King of France.
  - (B) has lead to deception between Regan and Goneril.
  - (C) has been kept a secret by the Dukes.
  - (D) is a symbol of their evil and deceiving natures.
  - (E) proves the dishonesty of Albany and Cornwall.

13. Lines 6-7, “as who have not, that their great stars / throned and set high,” indicate that
- (A) all rich men who have been favored with riches by fate have servants.
  - (B) all men who have been favored by the gods are rich.
  - (C) all men who believe in the stars will receive a throne.
  - (D) all kings believe in fate and the stars.
  - (E) the throne will soon be taken over by another man.
14. According to Kent, the King of France receives intelligence about the British kingdom from
- (A) Cordelia.
  - (B) servant spies.
  - (C) Edgar disguised as a beggar.
  - (D) the Duke of Albany.
  - (E) his troops who have landed in Dover.
15. The “hard rein” Kent mentions in line 11 refers to the
- (A) strict leadership of the Dukes of Albany and Cornwall.
  - (B) treatment Lear has received at the hands of his daughters.
  - (C) political crisis that threatens the peace in the kingdom.
  - (D) storm that has been raging in the country for days.
  - (E) firm and steady leadership of Lear before he divided his kingdom.
16. Line 12 contains an example of which literary device?
- (A) metaphor
  - (B) assonance
  - (C) personification
  - (D) allusion
  - (E) alliteration
17. The word “some” in line 21 refers to
- (A) Goneril and the Duke of Albany.
  - (B) Regan and the Duke of Cornwall.
  - (C) Edgar, Lear, and the Fool.
  - (D) knights of Lear’s retinue.
  - (E) the French army and Cordelia.

18. What does Shakespeare's word choice, especially his use of "wise" in line 16, "just" in line 21, and "unnatural" in line 22 reveal that Kent
- (A) is loyal to the Dukes of Albany and Cornwall.
  - (B) fears being captured for treason.
  - (C) supports the King of France.
  - (D) is interested in keeping peace in the kingdom.
  - (E) desires to avoid a division between Albany and Cornwall.
19. The "office" Kent mentions in line 26 refers to
- (A) The gentleman's secret assignment.
  - (B) The secret meeting place of Albany and Cornwall.
  - (C) A royal title Kent promises to confer upon the gentleman.
  - (D) A bag of money.
  - (E) A position as Lear's companion.
20. Kent wants the Gentleman to report that
- (A) the Duke of Albany and Cornwall are in disagreement.
  - (B) Regan and Goneril are in disagreement.
  - (C) Lear has been mistreated by his daughters and their husbands.
  - (D) Lear must go to Dover.
  - (E) Lear is losing his mind.

## PRACTICE MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS 21-30:

Read the following passage carefully before choosing your answers:

ALBANY:  
How have you known the miseries of your father?  
EDGAR:  
By nursing them, my lord. List a brief tale;  
And when 'tis told, O, that my heart would burst!  
The bloody proclamation to escape  
That follow'd me so near, – O, our lives' sweetness!     5  
That we the pain of death would hourly die  
Rather than die at once! – taught me to shift  
Into a madman's rags, to assume a semblance  
That very dogs disdain'd: and in this habit  
Met I my father with his bleeding rings,                     10  
Their precious stones new lost; became his guide,  
Led him, begg'd for him, sav'd him from despair;  
Never – O fault! – reveal'd myself unto him,  
Until some half-hour past, when I was arm'd;  
Not sure, though hoping, of this good success,             15  
I ask'd his blessing, and from first to last  
Told him my pilgrimage: but his flaw'd heart, –  
Alack, too weak the conflict to support! –  
'Twixt two extremes of passion, joy and grief,  
Burst smilingly. (V.iii)                                     20

21. The word “list” in line 2 means
- (A) tell.
  - (B) enumerate.
  - (C) count.
  - (D) listen.
  - (E) cunning.
22. The “bloody proclamation” Edgar mentions in line 4 refers to
- (A) the threat of a French invasion.
  - (B) the division between Albany and Cornwall.
  - (C) the blinding of Gloucester.
  - (D) Lear's fateful division of his kingdom.
  - (E) Edgar's banishment and pursuit.
23. Edgar's exclamation “O, that my heart would burst!” in line 3 is an example of
- (A) understatement.
  - (B) allusion.
  - (C) epitaph.
  - (D) simile.
  - (E) hyperbole.

24. Lines 6-7 “O, our lives sweetness! / That we the pain of death would hourly die rather than die at once” mean that
- (A) human beings prefer the constant threat of death to death itself.
  - (B) all human beings can die at any time without warning.
  - (C) the lives of human beings are under the control of fate.
  - (D) death will be sweeter than life for Edgar.
  - (E) death will be sweeter than life for Gloucester.
25. After his banishment, Edgar decides to
- (A) leave the country.
  - (B) assume the disguise of a madman.
  - (C) help his father, Gloucester, to Dover.
  - (D) revenge Edmund.
  - (E) find Lear.
26. the “bleeding rings” Edgar mentions in line 10 refer to
- (A) Gloucester’s eyes.
  - (B) Lear’s and Gloucester’s hearts.
  - (C) the hatred between Regan and Goneril.
  - (D) the battlefield.
  - (E) his disguise as a madman.
27. Edgar did **not** do the following for his father:
- (A) beg for him.
  - (B) guide him to Dover.
  - (C) reveal himself.
  - (D) alleviate his desperation.
  - (E) promise him to avenge his loss of eyesight.
28. In line 13, Edgar confesses that he
- (A) regrets not revealing his true identity to Gloucester earlier.
  - (B) blames himself for Gloucester’s fate.
  - (C) blames Edmund for Gloucester’s and his own fate.
  - (D) made the mistake of revealing his true identity to his father.
  - (E) made the mistake of leading his father to Dover.
29. The “good success” Edgar mentions in line 15 refers to
- (A) his defeat of Edmund.
  - (B) his ability to save Gloucester from committing suicide.
  - (C) his success in connecting with Cordelia.
  - (D) his successful enlistment into the French army.
  - (E) his defeat of Albany and Cornwall.
30. The “conflict” and “two extremes of passion” that lead to Gloucester’s death are
- (A) the division between Albany and Cornwall.
  - (B) the difference between Edgar and Edmund.
  - (C) his joy over recognizing Edgar and his fear for Edgar’s life.
  - (D) his joy over recognizing Edgar and his grief over losing his eyesight.
  - (E) his joy over knowing that Lear is alive and his fear for Lear’s life.

## Multiple Choice Answers

### With Explanations

1. In lines 3-4, Lear argues that
  - (A) a man should be content when his basic needs are being met.
  - (B) **a man requires more than the necessities in order to remain a human being.**
  - (C) men are on the same level as animals.
  - (D) men should share his possessions even with the animals.
  - (E) Regan and Goneril behave in an unnatural way.

Lear compares the life of a man who only has the basic necessities to the life of a beast: “Allow not nature more than nature needs, / Man’s life’s as cheap as beast’s.” According to Lear, if we do not allow human beings to have more than they need, then their lives are no better than the lives of wild animals.

2. What does Lear consider to be the weapon of women?
  - (A) deception
  - (B) noble anger
  - (C) revenge
  - (D) **tears**
  - (E) patience

Lear states, “Let not women’s weapons, water-drops, / Stain my man’s cheeks!”

3. Who is the “you” that Lear is referring to in line 11?
  - (A) old age
  - (B) Regan
  - (C) Goneril
  - (D) **the gods**
  - (E) the unnatural hags

“You” grammatically refers to the gods Lear calls on in line 9: “You see me here, you gods, a poor old man.”

4. Which literary device dominates the lines “And let not women’s weapons, water-drops, / Stain my man’s cheeks!”?
  - (A) **alliteration**—Alliteration is the repetition of a consonant sound at the beginning of words placed in close proximity. In this example, the consonant “w” is repeated several times.
  - (B) allusion—An allusion is a reference to another work.
  - (C) epitaph—An epitaph is a verse carved on a tombstone.
  - (D) assonance—Assonance is a repetition of the same vowel sound in close proximity within a sentence.
  - (E) enigma—An enigma is a riddle.



5. Throughout this passage, Lear calls on the gods to give him
- (A) need and noble anger.
  - (B) water-drops and noble anger.
  - (C) a hundred thousand flaws and noble anger.
  - (D) **patience and noble anger.**
  - (E) madness and noble anger.

In line 8, Lear begs, “give me that patience, patience I need!” and in line 13, Lear demands, “touch me with noble anger.”

6. In lines 16-19, Lear threatens to avenge himself by committing the following act:
- (A) He threatens to cry.
  - (B) **He does not know what he will do.**
  - (C) He threatens to become mad.
  - (D) He does not swear revenge.
  - (E) He threatens to kill Regan and Goneril.

Lear threatens to exact a terrible vengeance on his two daughters that will resemble “the terrors of the earth.” At this point, however, Lear does not know what exactly that revenge will be: “I will do such things, – / What they are, yet I know not.”

7. Which of the following is true for line 20?
- (A) The line introduces a metaphor.
  - (B) The line presents a shift in point of view.
  - (C) The line is a short allusion.
  - (D) The line is shorter because it introduces an intertextual reference.
  - (E) **The line is shorter in order to emphasize Lear’s resolution.**

This line is much shorter for emphasis. This is the only reasonable answer.

8. Line 23 is ironic because
- (A) Lear is not talking to the Fool.
  - (B) Lear is already crying.
  - (C) **The roles between the Fool and Lear are being reversed.**
  - (D) Regan and Goneril predicted this would happen.
  - (E) Regan and Goneril are safe from Lear’s revenge.

The Fool, who traditionally talks and acts like a madman, will take on the voice of reason, whereas Lear will become a raving maniac.

9. The “full cause of weeping” Lear refers to in line 21 indicates
- (A) **the betrayal Lear has experienced at the hands of Regan and Goneril.** Lear is angry because Regan and Cornwall do not admit him to their castle and because he finds Kent in the stocks. He is also angry that Regan and Goneril do not want him to keep as many knights as he chooses.
  - (B) Lear’s inability to find a suitable revenge. Lear does not seem concerned about his momentary inability to choose a revenge. His tears are caused by the treatment he has received.
  - (C) Lear’s laments over his banishment of Cordelia. At this point, Lear does not recognize his mistake in banishing Cordelia.
  - (D) the rift between Cornwall and Albany. Lear is concerned about the rift, but he is not moved to tears.
  - (E) the approaching storm. At this point, Lear is unaware of the approaching storm.
10. In line 15, Lear calls his daughters “unnatural hags” because they
- (A) have given birth to children out of wedlock.
  - (B) do not respect the workings of fate.
  - (C) have renounced their belief in the gods.
  - (D) refuse to forgive Cordelia.
  - (E) **have deceived their father about their dedication as faithful daughters.**

This allusion to the NATURE theme shows how Lear is slowly beginning to realize that his daughters do not love him, even though he believes that, by nature, all daughters should love their fathers. Thus, he considers Regan and Goneril to be unnatural.

11. Lines 1-2 reveal Kent’s
- (A) **trust in the gentleman based on prior knowledge of his loyalties.** Kent trusts the Gentleman based on some kind of previous knowledge he has of the Gentleman’s trustworthiness.
  - (B) hope that the gentleman will deliver a very important note to Cordelia. Even though Kent ultimately asks the Gentleman to deliver a message to Cordelia and to the King of France, he does not express this request until later in the speech.
  - (C) revelation of Edmund’s secret letter to Goneril.
  - (D) fear of being overheard by Cornwall and Albany.
  - (E) revelation of Lear’s whereabouts.
12. In lines 5-6, Kent suggests that the division between Albany and Cornwall
- (A) has brought great fear to the King of France.
  - (B) has lead to deception between Regan and Goneril.
  - (C) **has been kept a secret by the Dukes.**
  - (D) is a symbol of their evil and deceiving natures.
  - (E) proves the dishonesty of Albany and Cornwall.

Kent suggests that the two Dukes have cunningly covered up the increasing division between them. Syntactically, this is the only possible answer.

13. Lines 6-7, “as who have not, that their great stars / throned and set high,” indicate that
- (A) **all rich men who have been favored with riches by fate have servants.**
  - (B) all men who have been favored by the gods are rich.
  - (C) all men who believe in the stars will receive a throne.
  - (D) all kings believe in fate and the stars.
  - (E) the throne will soon be taken over by another man.

Kent suggests that all powerful men have servants who work on their behalf (in this case as spies for the King of France).

14. According to Kent, the King of France receives intelligence about the British kingdom from
- (A) Cordelia.
  - (B) **servant spies.**
  - (C) Edgar disguised as a beggar.
  - (D) the Duke of Albany.
  - (E) his troops who have landed in Dover.

Kent suggests that all men in power use servants to function as spies for intelligence on other countries.

15. The “hard rein” Kent mentions in line 11 refers to the
- (A) strict leadership of the Dukes of Albany and Cornwall. The two Dukes obviously have not been effective leaders. Their kingdom is threatened.
  - (B) **treatment Lear has received at the hands of his daughters.** Kent suspects that the King of France and Cordelia have heard about the treatment Lear has received and are invading the kingdom.
  - (C) political crisis that threatens the peace in the kingdom. Even though the treatment Lear has received ultimately turns into a political crisis, the quotation indicates the way Lear has been treated.
  - (D) storm that has been raging in the country for days.
  - (E) firm and steady leadership of Lear before he divided his kingdom.
16. Line 12 contains an example of which literary device?
- (A) metaphor
  - (B) assonance
  - (C) personification
  - (D) allusion
  - (E) **alliteration**

The alliteration is present in the words “kind king.”

17. The word “some” in line 21 refers to
- (A) Goneril and the Duke of Albany.
  - (B) Regan and the Duke of Cornwall.
  - (C) Edgar, Lear, and the Fool.
  - (D) knights of Lear’s retinue.
  - (E) **the French army and Cordelia.**

Even though Kent does not specify by name which persons he is referring to, the context of his entire speech clarifies that he can only refer to the invading French army alongside Cordelia and the King of France.

18. What does Shakespeare’s word choice, especially his use of “wise” in line 16, “just” in line 21, and “unnatural” in line 22 reveal that Kent
- (A) is loyal to the Dukes of Albany and Cornwall.
  - (B) fears being captured for treason.
  - (C) **supports of the King of France.**
  - (D) is interested in keeping peace in the kingdom.
  - (E) desires to avoid a division between Albany and Cornwall.

The words “wise,” “just,” and “kind” reveal Kent’s support for the decisions made by the King of France in support of Lear. Kent reveals himself, again, as a loyal follower of Lear.

19. The “office” Kent mentions in line 26 refers to
- (A) **The gentleman’s secret assignment.**
  - (B) The secret meeting place of Albany and Cornwall.
  - (C) A royal title Kent promises to confer upon the gentleman.
  - (D) A bag of money.
  - (E) A position as Lear’s companion.

Kent asks the Gentleman to go to Dover and report to the King of France, Cordelia, and the French army that the former king has been viciously mistreated.

20. Kent wants the Gentleman to report that
- (A) the Duke of Albany and Cornwall are in disagreement. According to Kent, the King of France already knows about the division between Cornwall and Albany.
  - (B) Regan and Goneril are in disagreement. The King of France probably does not care about the relationship between Goneril and Regan.
  - (C) **Lear has been mistreated by his daughters and their husbands.** For Kent, the loyal servant, it is most important that the King of France and Cordelia learn every detail about the treatment Lear has received at the hands of Regan, Goneril, Albany, and Cornwall. Kent believes that this knowledge will support the French war initiative.
  - (D) Lear must go to Dover.
  - (E) Lear is losing his mind. Even though Lear is clearly losing his mind at this point in the play, the lines do not refer directly to the King’s condition.

21. The word “list” in line 2 means
- (A) tell.
  - (B) enumerate.
  - (C) count.
  - (D) **listen.**
  - (E) cunning.

This is the only logical solution. “List” functions as an abbreviation for “listen.”

22. The “bloody proclamation” Edgar mentions in line 4 refers to
- (A) the threat of a French invasion.
  - (B) the division between Albany and Cornwall.
  - (C) the blinding of Gloucester.
  - (D) Lear’s fateful division of his kingdom.
  - (E) **Edgar’s banishment and pursuit.**

Edgar is recalling his banishment following his false accusation of intended murder. Gloucester promised to chase Edgar until he could be found and punished. He threatened to punish anyone who would assist Edgar in his escape. Therefore, Edgar was forced to assume a disguise to avoid recognition.

23. Edgar’s exclamation “O, that my heart would burst!” in line 3 is an example of
- (A) understatement.
  - (B) allusion.
  - (C) epitaph.
  - (D) simile.
  - (E) **hyperbole.**

Edgar’s statement is an example of hyperbole or exaggeration. He does not really want to die or experience his “heart bursting.”

24. Lines 6-7 “O, our lives sweetness! / That we the pain of death would hourly die rather than die at once” mean that
- (A) **human beings prefer the constant threat of death to death itself.** Edgar refers to the strange tendency within human beings to fear death constantly, yet to endure this fear for a long time rather than to experience death itself.
  - (B) all human beings can die at any time without warning. Even though this is true in the context of the play, Edgar does not refer to this idea.
  - (C) the lives of human beings are under the control of fate. Edgar does not express his beliefs in the role of the stars or fate.
  - (D) death will be sweeter than life for Edgar.
  - (E) death will be sweeter than life for Gloucester.

25. After his banishment, Edgar decides to
- (A) leave the country.
  - (B) **assume the disguise of a madman.** Edgar is forced to assume the disguise of a madman in order to escape the troops who are chasing him. Their pursuit is ordered by Gloucester after Edmund has “revealed” Edgar’s “plot” to murder his father.
  - (C) help his father, Gloucester, to Dover. Even though Edgar does, indeed, help his father to Dover, the passage reveals his metamorphosis into a madman.
  - (D) revenge Edmund.
  - (E) find Lear.
26. the “bleeding rings” Edgar mentions in line 10 refer to
- (A) **Gloucester’s eyes.** Edgar meets his father and realizes that he has been blinded.
  - (B) Lear’s and Gloucester’s hearts.
  - (C) the hatred between Regan and Goneril.
  - (D) the battlefield.
  - (E) his disguise as a madman.
27. Edgar did **not** do the following for his father:
- (A) beg for him.
  - (B) guide him to Dover.
  - (C) reveal himself to him.
  - (D) alleviate his desperation.
  - (E) **promise him to avenge his loss of eyesight.**

Even though Edgar does eventually revenge his father’s fate and the terrible intrigue that has led to his blinding and death, Edgar does not talk about a concrete promise in these lines. He does, however, explain that he “became his guide, / led him, begg’d for him, sav’d him from despair; / Never – O fault! – reveal’d myself unto him, / Until some half-hour past.”

28. In line 13, Edgar confesses that he
- (A) **regrets not revealing his true identity to Gloucester earlier.**
  - (B) blames himself for Gloucester’s fate.
  - (C) blames Edmund for Gloucester’s and his own fate.
  - (D) made the mistake of revealing his true identity to his father.
  - (E) made the mistake of leading his father to Dover.

He laments not revealing his true identity to his father earlier. He states that he “never – O fault! – reveal’d myself unto him, / until some half-hour past, when I was arm’d.”

29. The “good success” Edgar mentions in line 15 refers to
- (A) **his defeat of Edmund.** This is the only logical answer in the context of the passage.
  - (B) his ability to save Gloucester from committing suicide.
  - (C) his success in connecting with Cordelia.
  - (D) his successful enlistment into the French army.
  - (E) his defeat of Albany and Cornwall.
30. The “conflict” and “two extremes of passion” that lead to Gloucester’s death are
- (A) the division between Albany and Cornwall.
  - (B) the difference between Edgar and Edmund.
  - (C) **his joy over recognizing Edgar and his fear for Edgar’s life.** Edgar reports that he revealed himself to his father only when he was ready to leave for battle and asked his blessing.
  - (D) his joy over recognizing Edgar and his grief over losing his eyesight.
  - (E) his joy over knowing that Lear is alive and his fear for Lear’s life.

# King Lear

## Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition Teaching Unit

### Study Guide Teacher's Copy

#### Act I, scene i

1. What is the question Lear asks his daughters before he makes the division of his kingdom final? What does he expect of his daughters?

*Lear demands that his daughters affirm their love for him. He asks, “which of you shall we say doth love us most?” Lear expects his three daughters to offer him rivaling speeches and declarations of love and affection. However, Lear is looking for empty words and flatteries rather than an honest affirmation of love.*

2. What is Cordelia's answer to Lear's question, and why is Lear outraged by Cordelia's answer?

*Cordelia declares that she has “nothing” to say to her father in order to deserve her inheritance. She also explains that she only loves Lear “according to [her] bond; nor more nor less.” Lear is disappointed because Cordelia has always been his favorite daughter. He expected her to top her sisters' flattering speeches. However, Cordelia loves her father with the honest affections of a daughter and refuses to offer Lear the empty and meaningless flatteries he is looking for. Lear does not recognize Cordelia's sincerity. He is outraged and eventually banishes Cordelia and renounces her as his daughter.*

3. How does Kent's reaction to Lear's banishment of Cordelia introduce the theme of sight and insight?

*Kent understands that Cordelia's words have expressed true loyalty to her father. He subsequently warns Lear to “see better.” Kent wants Lear to understand that Cordelia's answer is a more honest declaration of love than the words her sisters have spoken. He realizes that Lear is “blind”; Lear does not “see” true honesty and love. Kent understands that Lear is very superficial, and he offers to help Lear look beneath the surface of appearances and vague flatteries.*



4. In this first scene of the play, how does Shakespeare establish the parallels between the stories of Lear and his daughters on the one hand and the story of Gloucester and his sons on the other hand?

*The parallel between the two plotlines established in this first scene is based on the relationship between natural and unnatural affections and the inability of Lear and Gloucester to recognize the true characters of their children. Lear misjudges his three daughters. He believes that Goneril and Regan love him, while he insists that Cordelia is an unthankful child who is not deserving of her inheritance. Lear comes to this conclusion based on the artificial and superficial speeches Regan and Goneril have offered him. Gloucester differentiates between his children in a similar manner. He favors Edgar, who is his legitimate son, while he makes fun of Edmund, his son born out of wedlock. Both Gloucester and Lear do not carefully evaluate their children's characters and actions and only look at the surface of things to form their opinions.*

5. Explain the ambiguous nature of Cordelia's farewell to her sisters: "The jewels of our father, with wash'd eyes / Cordelia leaves you," particularly as she reveals the theme of sight and insight?

*Cordelia's reference to her own "wash'd eyes" serves as an ambiguous statement that follows the sight and insight theme. Cordelia might refer to her own crying as she leaves her family, but, on another level, she might refer to her own clarity of vision, her insight and understanding into the true nature of her sisters' love for their father. Cordelia's eyes have been "washed" and she now sees clearly – she understands that her sisters have been insincere in their declarations of love to their father.*

*The expression "jewels of our father" also refers to the sight and insight theme. "Jewels" might serve as a synonym for eyes. Cordelia understands that her father falsely trusts her sisters. He "sees" things the way Regan and Goneril want him to see things. By looking at the world through the eyes of Regan and Goneril, Lear is misled and commits the mistake of banishing Cordelia and giving up his power.*

6. How does Lear's "love test" foreshadow the way the plot is going to play out and suggest the primary character motivation for the action of the play?

*By promising to divide his kingdom based on who loves him the most, Lear has essentially pitted daughter against daughter. This suggests that sibling rivalry is the predominant motivation.*

7. What emotional reasons are suggested for Goneril and Reagan's later treatment of their father and Cordelia?

*Lear clearly favors Cordelia. He says he will divide his kingdom based on each daughter's profession of love, yet he gives each daughter her share before the others have spoken, saving the best portion for Cordelia. Clearly the two older sisters would envy their obviously-favored youngest sister and resent their father for his obvious favoritism.*

8. What emotions are at the root of the Edmund/Edgar plot line?

*Again, sibling rivalry and the desire for parental affection is at the heart of Edmund's decision to become a villain.*

9. How has Lear himself upset the "natural order"?

*Royalty is born to its rank, authority, and privileges. A proper king has an obligation to reign, not merely a prerogative. By abdicating his authority, Lear is essentially abandoning his rightful place in the Universe.*

## Act I, scene ii

1. What information is contained in the letter that Edmund pretends to conceal from his father?

*Edmund holds a letter he forged in his brother Edgar's hand to himself. In the letter, Edgar presumably laments the fact that his father is still alive. He expresses his desire to possess his father's lands and possessions, and he vows to share these goods with his brother. The letter expresses the opinion that when parents reach old age, they should give up everything they own to their children.*

2. What does Edmund suggest his father should do to confirm the contents of the letter?

*Edmund conceives a situation in which his father can secretly overhear a conversation between his sons.*

3. What do Gloucester's and Edmund's comments about the constellations of the stars reveal about their individual beliefs in the power of the stars or fate?

*Gloucester expresses his belief that the constellations of the stars are responsible for the mischief that is happening in the world. He associates Edgar's presumed conspiracy and other recent events in the kingdom with "late eclipses in the sun and moon." Edmund, on the other hand, does not believe that the stars influence human existence. He recognizes that many people, including his father, look to the stars for answers instead of taking personal responsibility for their actions and for the events that occur around them.*

4. Where does Edmund send his brother Edgar as the scene draws to a close?

*Edmund invites Edgar to his house where he promises him shelter and protection from their father's wrath.*

### Act I, scene iii

1. What concerns about Lear's intentions does Goneril express during her conversation with Oswald?

*Goneril fears that even though Lear has divided his kingdom and given up his power, he will continue to demand control and authority. Goneril compares her father to an old man who acts like a child and must be treated accordingly. She uses this analogy to justify her disrespectful behavior and her subsequent decisions.*

2. Whom does Goneril decide to contact by letter at the end of the scene, and why?

*Goneril vows to write to her sister to ensure that both of them are on the same page when it comes to the treatment of their father. She wants to ensure that Regan, too, does not want their father to retain any degree of power and authority. In writing a letter, she takes the first step in developing the filial conspiracy against Lear.*

### Act I, scene iv

1. How does Kent's disguise support the theme of sight and insight?

*The banished Kent assumes a disguise and subsequently offers his services to Lear. He knows that Lear does not want to see "Kent" again, but he hopes that he can still be of service to the former King. Kent wants to prove his loyalty to Lear by serving him and offering him valuable advice, even if he does not receive credit as the former Kent. The disguise Kent assumes supports the theme of sight and insight by demonstrating that Lear must learn not to judge people according to their exterior appearances and superficial behaviors. Lear has banished Kent rashly based on a hasty decision, but he eagerly accepts the disguised Kent into his service, because Kent's loyalty and good character remain unchanged.*

2. Why does Kent trip Oswald?

*Kent wants to teach Oswald a lesson, because Oswald treats Lear with disrespect. Oswald does not listen to Lear's commands and treats him like his "lady's father" rather than the King or an authority figure. Kent also trips Oswald because he wants Lear to recognize his loyalty; he wants to gain Lear's trust and respect.*

3. What wisdom does the Fool express about possessions on the one hand and about “nothing” on the other hand?

*The Fool indicates that Lear was wrong to give up control over his kingdom. He believes that Lear falsely relied on the goodwill of his daughters. Now that Lear must realize that his daughters do not allow him to retain a certain degree of authority and power, he must recognize that he has lost all of his possessions and lands. All that is left is “nothing.”*

*The Fool also asks Lear “Can you make no use of nothing, nuncle?” This question likely refers to Act I, scene i, when Cordelia is banished because she offers “nothing” to her father. The Fool suggests that the “nothing” Cordelia had to offer is, in fact, more valuable than any material goods or lands. Cordelia’s “nothing” was her avowal of true affection and undying love.*

4. Why is Lear angry at Goneril?

*Goneril is criticizing the behavior of Lear’s followers. She claims that his knights are behaving in an unruly, loud, and disruptive manner. She has therefore decided to send away fifty of Lear’s followers and demands that only a few remain and behave in an orderly fashion. Goneril also criticizes the behavior of Lear’s Fool.*

5. What do Lear’s hundred knights come to represent in this scene? Why is Goneril’s threat to send fifty away such an important issue?

*Lear’s hundred knights represent Lear’s status and authority as king. To diminish his retinue is to diminish his authority. The irony is that Lear abdicated all of his authority when he gave his land and his power to his daughters.*

6. What is Lear’s curse on Goneril?

*Lear calls on the gods to make Goneril sterile so that she can never experience the joys of having a grateful child. He contends that, if Goneril must have a child, it should be deformed and a cause of pain, worry, and concern rather than pleasure and happiness.*

7. What does Goneril’s reaction to Lear’s curse reveal about her character?

*Goneril entirely disregards Lear’s severe curse. She shows virtually no emotional reaction upon hearing her father’s condemning words but remains cold and unmoved. Her behavior reveals her heartless and unfeeling character.*

8. What does Lear vow to do in the face of Goneril's behavior and how realistic are his threats?

*Lear vows to appeal to his other daughter Regan for help, shelter, support, and justice. He also threatens to re-assume his royal power and revenge Goneril by stripping her of the power and lands he had originally assigned to her. At this point, Lear still feels strong and does not realize that his decision to divide his kingdom was final and cannot be reversed.*

9. What does Goneril command Oswald to do at the close of the scene and why?

*Goneril asks Oswald to carry a letter to her sister Regan in which she explains everything that has occurred between her and her father. She wants to press Regan to deny their father the same privileges she has denied him. Goneril is concerned that Regan may allow Lear to retain all of his knights, and she fears that she may then be the "evil" daughter in the eyes of their father. Assuring that Regan is on the same page as her sister when it comes to the treatment of Lear is one of the recurring elements of the filial conspiracy plot.*

## Act I, scene v

1. Where does Lear send Kent?

*Lear sends Kent to Gloucester with letters that explain the treatment he has received from Goneril. Lear hopes to receive better treatment from Regan once he meets her at Gloucester's castle.*

2. What does the Fool criticize in his statement to Lear, "thou shouldst not have been old till thou hadst been wise"?

*The Fool knows that Lear gave up his kingdom and his power prematurely. He criticizes Lear for acting rashly. The Fool's comment also indicates his belief that old age and wisdom do not always go hand in hand. Although Lear was approaching old age, he did not yet possess wisdom and self-knowledge. Thus, he made the wrong decision in splitting up his kingdom.*

3. What is significant about Lear's "prayer" not to go mad?

*First, this foreshadow's Lear's later madness. Secondly, it establishes that Lear's madness will be the result of, and will mirror, the lack of order and "rightness" in the natural world, as evidenced by his daughters' treatment of their father.*

## Act II, scene i

1. What rumor of political upheaval reaches the castle of Gloucester?

*The rumor spreads that there is a growing division between the houses of Albany and Cornwall that might lead to war.*

2. Why does Edmund injure himself to draw blood?

*Edmund falsely convinces his brother Edgar that there exists a widespread suspicion that Edgar is planning to murder his father. Under pretence of offering him assistance, Edmund presses Edgar to flee the country. He pretends to be fighting with Edgar when Gloucester enters. Once Edgar flees the scene, Edmund injures himself in order to pretend to his father that Edgar attacked him violently, injured him, and threatened to kill their father.*

3. How does Gloucester react when he learns about Edgar's alleged intentions to attack and murder him?

*Gloucester vows to chase Edgar until the presumably unfaithful son is caught and brought to justice. He threatens to punish everyone who offers the fleeing Edgar refuge.*

4. How does the conversation between Gloucester and Edmund, following Edgar's escape, signal a reversal of the relationships that Edgar and Edmund have with their father?

*Once Gloucester has vowed to chase and capture Edgar, he renounces Edgar as his legitimate son. Gloucester claims, "I never got him," thus denying the legitimacy of the father-son relationship. At the same time, Gloucester elevates Edmund's status as a son by calling him "loyal and natural boy." The roles of Edgar and Edmund are reversed arbitrarily by the angry Gloucester. Edgar loses his rights and privileges as a rightful son, whereas Edmund gains Gloucester's respect and fatherly love.*

5. How does Gloucester's expression "my old heart is crack'd, is crack'd" illustrate the parallel between Gloucester and Lear when it comes to old age and their relationships with their children?

*Like Lear, Gloucester is beginning to feel his approaching old age. He has always counted on his children, and – brought on by Edmund's evil scheme – he now fears that he has never known the true character of his children. Both Lear and Gloucester lament that their hearts are being broken at this late stage in their lives. They feel abused and taken advantage of. They feel that they deserve the love and respect of their children, and their disappointed expectations break their hearts.*

## Act II, scene ii

1. What does Kent say about Oswald's character when he metaphorically claims "a tailor made thee"?

*Kent believes that Oswald is dimwitted and has no character. He uses the metaphor of being "tailor-made" to express his conviction that Oswald is Goneril's puppet and acts only according to her will.*

2. Why does Kent attempt to dissuade Cornwall and Regan from putting him in the stocks?

*As the messenger of King Lear, Kent expects to be treated with a certain degree of respect. He believes that his master, the King, will be outraged when he finds his servant in the stocks. Kent expresses his belief that putting him in the stocks is a direct offense against the King.*

3. How does Gloucester's response to Kent's being put in the stocks reflect the parallel between Gloucester's and Lear's relationships with their children?

*Gloucester defends Kent and pleads with Cornwall not to put Kent in the stocks. He is convinced that Lear will be angry once he finds that his messenger has been treated with disrespect by his own daughter and her husband. Gloucester can sympathize with Lear's potential reaction because he, too, is struggling with disrespect from his children. At this point, Gloucester believes that his son Edgar is a traitor who is trying to kill his father. Due to his own experiences, Gloucester is learning to become more sensitive when it comes to parent-child relationships.*

4. On what does Kent base his hopes for the future at the end of the scene, once he has been put in the stocks?

*Kent counts on Cordelia, who, he believes, has heard about the recent events in the kingdom, to avenge the treatment her father has received. He also calls on fortune and begs her to cast a friendly eye on his miserable situation.*

5. How does the Gloucester plot continue to parallel the main plot? What does Shakespeare achieve by keeping the two plots so carefully parallel?

*Gloucester puts his trust in the wrong son just as Lear trusted the wrong daughters. Gloucester's honest and loving son is run off just as Lear banished his one honest and loving daughter. Shakespeare uses the parallel plots to remind the audience that the issues underlying all of the plot events are family relationships, both between siblings and between parents and children.*

## Act II, scene iii

1. What decision does Edgar make that will help him hide from the authorities that are chasing him?

*Edgar disguises himself as a lunatic beggar who is roaming the countryside. He calls himself poor Tom.*

2. How does Edgar's statement "Edgar I nothing am" demonstrate the connection between the recurring "nothing" motif and the natural order of family relations?

*Edgar sheds his former identity as the legitimate son of Gloucester. He realizes that "nothing" is left of his former life; he is merely a persecuted and falsely accused man. By calling his former identity "nothing," Edgar demonstrates his recognition that his birthright, his legitimate birth, and the "natural" family order he has always believed in are, in fact, meaningless and amount to "nothing." The natural order of family relations ultimately does not or cannot determine or guarantee personal relationships between human beings. Human beings must instead consider one another's character as the foundation of a relationship.*

## Act II, scene iv

1. What answer does Lear receive upon his request for admittance into the presence of Regan and Cornwall?

*Regan and Cornwall refuse to see Lear when he arrives at Gloucester's castle. They claim to be tired from their long journey.*

2. How does Lear respond to Regan's welcome?

*Lear is angry and threatens to renounce Regan as his lawful daughter if she does not receive him properly. Once he realizes that Kent has been freed from his stocks, his disposition changes. He becomes friendly and kind and entrusts Regan with information about the terrible treatment he has received from Goneril. He hopes to be treated better by Regan. Lear's mood changes quickly, which could be an indication of his developing insanity.*

3. How does Regan respond to Lear's complaints about Goneril?

*Regan immediately reminds Lear of his old age and claims that the elderly should be guided by their children because they are unable to make reasonable decisions on their own. She urges Lear to return to Goneril and apologize for his unreasonable demands.*



4. Why does Lear believe that Regan will treat him with more respect than Goneril? What idea does Lear still cling to?

*Lear believes that Regan will treat him with respect because he hopes that she knows the “offices of nature, bond of childhood, effects of courtesy, dues of gratitude.” Lear still believes that Regan is bound to him based on the natural order of family relations. He insists that Regan must love him because she is his lawful child, and he expects her gratitude for the generous portion of the kingdom she has received from her father. Lear has not yet learned that natural family relations do not necessarily coincide with love and respect. He must learn to look beneath the superficial level of a person’s character to see who that person really is. Family relations are no guarantee of love.*

5. What question does Lear continue to ask that Regan will not answer?

*Lear demands to know who put his messenger in the stocks.*

6. What is Regan’s response when Lear says that he and his knights will have nothing to do with Goneril and that he plans to move to her house instead?

*Regan responds by explaining that her home is not equipped to lodge him and his followers. She claims that one hundred knights are too many to house. Regan suggests that Lear should cut the number of his followers to fifty. Then she reconsiders and tells Lear to reduce his retinue to twenty-five.*

7. What revenge does Lear swear on both of his daughters?

*Lear promises to avenge himself against both Regan and Goneril. However, he is unable to formulate a precise plan for his revenge. He vows to do “terrible things,” yet he is unsure what exactly he will do. Lear is beginning to realize that he has no more power and cannot reclaim his authority and possessions. Essentially, there is nothing he can do to revenge his daughters. Lear fears that he is losing his mind because of the horrible treatment he has received.*

8. What makes the sisters’ actions at the end of this act seem particularly cruel?

*A violent storm is approaching and Regan and Goneril retreat into the castle. However, they claim that the house is too small to house Lear and his followers. They instruct Gloucester to lock the gate and leave Lear outside, left to fend for himself in the ensuing storm. The daughters seem especially cruel in this scene because they display no emotion at the thought of their old father spending the night in the rain. They claim that Lear has brought the situation upon himself.*

9. What two events signal the end of Lear's status as king and father?

*First, Lear kneels to beg his daughter for protection. A king would never kneel in supplication to a subject and a father would never kneel in supplication to a daughter. Secondly, the daughters whittle away Lear's retinue until he is a man alone with no servant, no status, no authority, and apparently no loved ones.*

10. What does the storm represent in this scene and the scenes that follow?

*The storm represents both the turbulence in Lear's own mind and the fact that the natural order has been upset (remember the strange weather the night before Julius Caesar's assassination, and the reported weather the night of Duncan's murder in Macbeth). The king has abandoned his rightful post. Daughters have unnaturally betrayed their father and nearly stripped him of his humanity ("reason not the need..."). A son is likewise plotting against his father and brother, and a bastard son is being preferred to the legitimate son. There is much disorder in the universe, and this is reflected in the storm.*

### Act III, scene i

1. What news about Albany, Cornwall, and the King of France does Kent reveal to the Gentleman?

*Kent explains to the Gentleman that the division between Albany and Cornwall has intensified. He also reveals that the King of France plans to invade the country and has, in fact, already landed with his troops on the shores of Dover.*

2. What mission does Kent ask the Gentleman to complete?

*Kent sends the Gentleman to Dover where he must meet Cordelia and inform her of all the mischief that has happened. He gives a ring to the Gentleman that he can present to Cordelia so that she will recognize him as a messenger from Kent.*

### Act III, scene ii

1. In Lear's first speech in this scene, how does Shakespeare portray the great emotional upheaval going on within Lear's mind?

*Lear defies the storm, telling nature to destroy the earth and everything in it, himself included, but especially "ungrateful" children. The growing confusion in his mind is mirrored by the ferocity of the storm.*

2. What comment about women does Lear make in his speech?

*Lear remarks that “there was never yet fair woman but she made mouths in a glass.” Lear believes that all women are preoccupied with their physical appearance and rehearse their behavior and gestures in front of the mirror.*

3. What is Kent’s opinion of the storm’s ferocity?

*Kent considers the storm to be the worst he has ever experienced. He believes that it is impossible for humans to survive the storm without shelter.*

4. How does Lear’s remark “I am a man more sinn’d against than sinning” reflect his development as a human being within the play?

*Lear recognizes that he has made many severe mistakes. He is beginning to realize that some of his long-held assumptions about human nature and relationships are invalid and meaningless. However, even though he recognizes his errors, he does not believe that he deserves to be in the wilderness exposed to a terrible storm. He believes that the sins his daughters Regan and Goneril have committed against him, the disrespect they have shown him, surpass any of the mistakes he has made in his life.*

5. How does the Fool evaluate the state of Britain in his closing “prophecy”?

*In this ironic speech, the Fool expresses his disillusionment with the state of Britain. He prophesies an imaginary time when all evil, cheating, etc., will cease to exist. According to the Fool, this time will never come; he believes that Britain is so absorbed by corruption and evil that it would be difficult or impossible for things to change.*

### **Act III, scene iii**

1. How do Regan, Goneril, and Cornwall react to Gloucester’s request to pity the King?

*They instantly deprive Gloucester of his privilege to use his own house. He has also been ordered not to mention the King’s name again.*

2. What information does Edmund share with the audience after his father tells him about the “dangerous” letter and subsequently exits the stage?

*Edmund reveals to the audience that he is going straight to the Duke with the information he has received about the approaching troops of the King of France. He hopes that everything his father loses will be given to him.*

## Act III, scene iv

1. How does Lear explain his approaching insanity?

*Lear compares his state of mind to the storm that is raging outside. He states, “the tempest in my mind doth from my senses take all feeling.” Lear feels overwhelmed by the many conflicting thoughts that occupy his mind and cloud his ability to think clearly and reasonably. He blames his sickly disposition on the “filial ingratitude” of his daughters.*

2. In which lines in this scene is Edgar’s speech filled with alliterations?

*Abundant alliteration occurs in the following lines: “The foul fiend follows me,” and “...the foul fiend hath led through fire and through flame, through ford...”*

3. Upon seeing Edgar emerge from the hovel disguised as poor Tom, what does Lear immediately assume has happened to Edgar?

*Lear immediately assumes that Edgar’s fate is the same as his own. He believes that Edgar has given up his possessions to his daughters and that he has been mistreated and sent out into the storm, just as he has.*

4. How does Edgar respond to Lear’s assumptions?

*Edgar begins to paraphrase a list of rules that resembles the Ten Commandments, among them “obey thy parents.”*

5. Why does Lear tear off his clothes?

*When he exclaims “thou art the thing itself,” Lear seems to recognize that Edgar represents the basic essence of a human being – a man who is without possessions, home, friends, or obligations and who is on the same level as animals. He also sees that he, the King, is in no better position than the beggar poor Tom. He tears off his clothes to demonstrate what he has in common with poor Tom: they both have nothing.*

6. How does Gloucester’s appearance at the hovel illustrate the parallel structure between the Lear-daughters plot and the Gloucester-sons subplot?

*When Gloucester arrives at the hovel, he explains that he felt obligated to assist the King, even though Goneril and Regan have forbidden him to look for Lear. He recognizes that the King is undergoing the same experience he is undergoing with his own children. He believes that his son set out to kill him, and he fears that Regan and Goneril plan a similar fate for their father. Gloucester has begun his journey toward insight – he identifies with the King, because he recognizes himself in the King’s suffering.*

7. What trait is Lear developing as a result of his daughter’s treatment? How does this trait affect Lear’s status as a tragic hero?

*Lear is developing a sense of human compassion. He recognizes that, when he was King, he did not think at all about the poor and homeless, who are also suffering in this storm. This compassion begins to make Lear a sympathetic character so that his final tragedy might evoke the necessary pity from the audience.*

### Act III, scene v

1. What is Edmund's reward upon reporting Gloucester's alleged sympathies for the King of France to the Duke?

*Edmund receives his father's title "Earl of Gloucester."*

2. How does Edmund misrepresent his family obligations to the Duke?

*Edmund leads the Duke to believe that it is difficult for him to go against his father because of the family ties that bind them together. He pretends to value and respect his father according to the natural order of family relations. Yet, he flatters the Duke by claiming that loyalty to the Duke is more important than his responsibilities as a son.*

3. What is Edmund's attitude toward the concept of loyalty and what does it reveal about his character?

*Edmund pretends to feel a strong sense of loyalty toward the Duke. He claims that his loyalty even exceeds his filial obligations to his father. In reality, however, Edmund is a character who is loyal only to himself. He answers to no one and plays everyone against one another. He is a manipulator who is only interested in personal gain.*

4. What does the Duke promise Edmund?

*The Duke promises to treat Edmund with the affections of a father if he is willing to go against his own father, Gloucester.*

### Act III, scene vi

1. What imaginary event does Lear stage once he has entered the farmhouse chamber?

*Lear stages a mock trial in which he prosecutes his two daughters Goneril and Regan.*

2. What does Lear accuse Goneril of during his imaginary trial?

*Lear claims that Goneril "kicked the poor king her father."*

3. Why does Edgar fear his true identity might be exposed and how does the audience learn about his concerns?

*Edgar can barely keep his tears back as he watches Lear proceed through the mock trial. He is overwhelmed with pity and fears that he is not able to continue speaking in the language of mad Tom. Edgar addresses the audience in a soliloquy and expresses his concerns.*

4. What news does Gloucester deliver upon his arrival?

*Gloucester has overheard the plot to kill Lear. He urges Kent and the Fool to convey Lear to Dover where Cordelia and the King of France have landed.*

5. How does Lear's suffering impact Edgar's disposition?

*After seeing Lear's suffering, Edgar feels that he is now able to carry his own load a little more easily. He claims that "when we our betters see bearing woes, we scarcely think our miseries our foes." Edgar also expresses his belief that shared suffering alleviates individual pain. He realizes that he is not the only person who has had to endure hardship, and he gains strength from the presence of others who have also suffered.*

### Act III, scene vii

1. Why does Cornwall order his servants to pursue Gloucester?

*He declares Gloucester a traitor because Gloucester is communicating with the King of France and Cordelia.*

2. How does Cornwall vow to treat Gloucester once he has been found?

*Cornwall vows to turn his anger on Gloucester and let him feel his wrath. However, he knows that, by law, he cannot simply kill Gloucester without a trial.*

3. Why does Gloucester consider Regan's and Cornwall's behavior toward him inappropriate?

*Gloucester reminds Regan and Cornwall that they are guests in his house and that, as their host, he should be treated with some respect.*

4. What information do Regan and Cornwall demand from Gloucester?

*They demand to know where Gloucester has sent King Lear.*

5. What image does Gloucester evoke in the following lines he speaks to Regan: "Because I would not see thy cruel nails pluck out his poor old eyes, nor thy fierce sister in his anointed flesh stick boarish fangs"?

*The lines evoke an image of cruelty and viciousness. Gloucester compares the actions of the two sisters to the brutal actions of a vulture or a predatory animal.*

6. How does this image of the two sisters compare to their words of affection they uttered in the opening scene of the play?

*In the first scene of the play, Goneril claims that she loves Lear more than words can say and that her father is “dearer than eye-sight” to her. Her recent actions reveal her deceptive nature; she is now displaying hatred and cruelty toward her father. The empty words Goneril offered in the opening scene of the play have, all along, been meaningless and self-serving. Goneril is revealed as a selfish and heartless woman who has lied to her father about her true feelings.*

7. Why does the servant interfere with the proceedings in Gloucester’s castle and what do his actions reveal about his character?

*The servant is trying to stop Cornwall from blinding Gloucester completely by putting out both of his eyes. He recognizes the injustice and cruelty of the actions that are unfolding in front of his eyes, and he addresses Cornwall with the words “I have served you ever since I was a child; But better service have I never done you than now to bid you hold.” The servant’s actions reveal his just character. He does not blindly follow the orders of his lord but evaluates the actions he sees according to the principles of humanity and fairness.*

8. What startling news about Edmund does Gloucester learn from Goneril?

*Gloucester learns that Edmund has betrayed him and falsely accused his brother Edgar.*

9. What theme is advanced by the gouging out of Gloucester’s eyes?

*It is in the process of becoming physically blind that Gloucester learns the truth about Edgar and Edmund and how “blind” he has been to the truth. This advances the theme of sight and insight.*

10. What is significant about the servant’s challenging Cornwall about his treatment of Gloucester?

*Two disruptions of the natural order are illustrated here. First, just as daughters and sons have turned against their parents, so also do servants challenge their masters. Secondly, the royal and noble classes were believed to be (and considered themselves to be) materially better than the lower classes. Yet, in this instance, we see the noble traits of mercy and justness displayed by the actions of the servant, while the master is cruel and unjust.*



## Act IV, scene i

1. What does Edgar mean when he says “the worst is not so long as we can say ‘this is the worst’”?

*Edgar expresses his belief that as long as a man can think that his fortunes are at their lowest point, the man can sink even further. Only when one is dead can he or she be at the “worst.”*

2. How does the following statement by Gloucester contribute to the theme of sight and insight: “I have no way and therefore want no eyes; I stumbled when I saw”?

*Gloucester has now fully realized how foolish and superficial he acted when he was still in control of his life. He knows that when he was healthy and still had eyes, he was “blind” on the inside and unable to distinguish between human goodness and evil. Thus, he “stumbled” and lost everything, because he banished his good son, Edgar, and believed the lies of his scheming son, Edmund. Gloucester regrets not having evaluated his sons’ characters more closely, according to their behavior. Gloucester feels lost not because he does not have any eyes, but because he has judged his sons wrongly and made a severe mistake when he banished Edgar.*

3. To what degree does Gloucester attribute influence and power to fate and the gods? Where in this scene does his belief become obvious?

*Gloucester claims, “As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods; they kill us for their sport.” He believes that the gods, or supernatural influences, determine the fates of human beings. According to Gloucester, the gods arbitrarily decide each human being’s fate. The gods are playing with human life as if they were little boys torturing flies. Playing with humans is merely a sport for the gods.*

4. What can be inferred from Gloucester’s last comments about his attitude toward fate?

*Gloucester wants Edgar to take him to a cliff near Dover so that he can commit suicide by jumping to his death. Gloucester is disillusioned and willing to take fate into his own hands; he is no longer willing to have the wheel of fortune turn any way it chooses. He will turn the wheel himself and end his life. He still believes that he is powerless in the face of the gods or fate and fortune, but he is willing to commit suicide to end his dependence on the arbitrary power of the gods.*

5. What climactic moment might Gloucester’s lament about the capriciousness of the gods signify?

*Gloucester has reached the point of utter hopelessness. There is no hope of help from fellow human beings, and there is no hope of help from the gods for whom we are mere playthings.*



## Act IV, scene ii

1. What does Albany's reaction to his wife's treatment of her father reveal about his character?

*Albany is appalled by Goneril's actions. He feels that Goneril and Regan have mistreated their father and shown him nothing but disrespect. He states, "What have you done? Tigers, not daughters, what have you perform'd? A father, and a gracious aged man . . . have you madded." Clearly, Albany is a good man. He did not know his wife was capable of such horrible behavior, and he feels that Lear deserves respect and dignity.*

2. What climax has occurred between the end of the previous scene and Albany's condemnation of his wife's actions?

*The fact that Albany has changed from being an ally of his wife and her sister, to opposing them. This is the first sense of redemption in the play, the first glimmer of hope after Gloucester's utter hopelessness in the previous scene. When Albany hears of Cornwall's death, he claims that the gods do provide justice, not the mere random suffering Gloucester lamented earlier.*

3. How are Goneril's feelings toward Edmund portrayed in this scene?

*Goneril appears to develop a lustful longing for Edmund. She gives him a token of her love and, with a kiss, makes him her confidante.*

4. What attitude toward her husband does Goneril display when she calls him a "milk-liver'd man"?

*Goneril does not have any respect for her husband. She believes that he is a weak human being who does not dare to assert his power over others.*

5. What is Albany's reason for not attacking Goneril?

*Albany is extremely angry with Goneril and outraged at her actions. However, he does not attack her because she is a woman, and he considers it unfit for a man to attack a woman physically. He states, "howe'er thou art a fiend, a woman's shape doth shield thee."*

6. What news about the Duke of Cornwall does the messenger reveal?

*The messenger reports that the Duke of Cornwall is dead. He was killed by the servant who attempted to keep him from blinding Gloucester completely.*

7. What does Albany learn about Edmund and what is his resolution?

*The messenger informs Albany that it was Edmund who brought about Gloucester's capture. He explains that Edmund not only allowed but encouraged Cornwall to pluck out Gloucester's eyes. Albany vows to avenge Gloucester's fate. Since the Cornwall, who blinded Gloucester, is already dead, he will likely pursue Edmund in order to avenge poor Gloucester.*

8. How does the relationship between Goneril and Regan change as the scene draws to a close?

*Regan and Goneril, who have previously schemed together against their father, now seem to turn on each other. Due to her growing infatuation with Edmund, Goneril becomes jealous of her sister, whom she suspects of wanting Edmund for herself. Now that her sister's husband is dead, Goneril fears that Regan will take advantage of her widowhood and lay claim to Edmund.*

## Act IV, scene iii

1. What effect does Shakespeare create by having the French king return to France and leaving Cordelia in Dover to command the French troops?

*The approaching battle will essentially be between the three sisters. What seems like a major political, international conflict still boils down to a family crisis.*

2. What information does Kent seek from the messenger?

*Kent wants to know why the King of France has returned to France, and who is left behind in his place to fight against Britain. He is particularly interested in finding out how the letters he sent to Cordelia were received. Kent is eager to hear that Cordelia was moved when she heard about her father. He is relieved to ascertain that Cordelia is not as evil as her sisters but, indeed, a loving and caring daughter to her father. This is what Kent believed all along, and he feels reassured by the reports he receives from the messenger.*

3. What is Shakespeare suggesting when he has the Gentleman describe Cordelia's crying as: "she shook / the holy water from her heavenly eyes"?

*Cordelia's honest love for her father—especially contrasted with her sisters' betrayal—has elevated Cordelia to the status of a revered saint.*

4. How does Kent reconcile the differences between Lear's daughters? How does he explain their different behaviors?

*Kent attributes the different behaviors of the three daughters to the influence of the stars. He claims, "It is the stars, the stars above us, govern our conditions; else one self mate and mate could not beget such different issues." Looking at the stars for answers is the only way for Kent to explain how three daughters, who are so different from one another, could have been born to the same parents.*

5. Why does Lear refuse to see Cordelia?

*Lear is ashamed of his past actions. He regrets the way he has treated Cordelia, and he feels unworthy to be in Cordelia's presence.*

## Act IV, scene iv

1. What does Cordelia promise for any help anyone can offer her father?

*Cordelia offers all of her material possessions to anyone who has a cure for her father's afflictions.*

2. According to Cordelia, what is the ultimate reason for the French army's attack?

*Cordelia states, "No blown ambition doth our armies incite, but love, dear love, and our aged father's right." Cordelia explains that Britain must be invaded in order for the King of France to defeat Regan and Goneril. It is Cordelia's sole purpose to avenge the treatment her father has received at the hand of her sisters. She cites love as the only ambition that drives her forward. Cordelia now makes good on her initial promise to love her father "according to her bond" that she uttered in the opening scene of the play. To her heart-felt words,, Cordelia now brings decisive actions. She will defend her father's honor with the help of the French army.*

3. Why does Shakespeare decide to have the King of France return home and leave Cordelia as the major force opposing her sisters?

*Dramatically, sister is pitted against sister; historically, the play was put on before English audiences. As much as they may have hated Regan and Goneril, it would have been difficult for this type of audience to watch a French king defeat an English monarch, even a bad one. In addition, the theme of revenge can be resolved with more force if Cordelia is intimately involved.*

## Act IV, scene v

1. Why does Regan consider it necessary to find Gloucester and kill him?

*Regan believes that the blind Gloucester will arouse sympathy for himself and hatred against the conspirators wherever he wanders.*

2. Why does Regan want to open the letter her sister has written to Edmund?

*Regan is jealous of her sister. She does not want Oswald to deliver the letters Goneril has written to Edmund. She knows that Goneril does not love her husband, and she is afraid that, if Edmund receives Goneril's letter, he will serve Goneril and become her lover. Regan, however, wants Edmund for herself. She claims that Edmund is better suited for her because she is a widow, whereas her sister's husband is still alive.*

3. How does the dialogue between Regan and Oswald in this scene reveal Oswald's character?

*Oswald is revealed as an extremely opportunistic and power-hungry character. He immediately sides with Regan once she promises him a reward for finding and killing Gloucester. Oswald is not interested in right or wrong. He only wants to gain material goods by siding with the most powerful party.*

## Act IV, scene vi

1. What is Gloucester's intention upon reaching Dover?

*Gloucester intends to jump off the cliff and kill himself.*

2. Gloucester, thinking he is throwing himself from the cliff, falls forward on the ground and faints. Edgar, now assuming the character of a man who happened to pass by the cliff as Gloucester was jumping, revives him and tells his father it is a miracle that he was not killed by falling off the cliff. What does Gloucester resolve?

*Gloucester believes Edgar's suggestion that he has been saved by the grace of the gods. He now vows to bear the affliction of blindness with strength and live out his life until its natural end. He concludes that it must have been the devil in disguise who led him to attempt suicide.*

3. How does Edgar influence Gloucester's decision to live, especially considering the theme of natural order of the stars?

*Edgar plays on his father's unshaken belief in fate and the power of the stars. He states, "Think that the clearest gods, who make them honours of men's impossibilities, have preserved thee." Edgar knows that it will motivate his superstitious father to believe that his life has been spared by the gods.*

4. Explain the irony that dominates the following lines uttered by Lear upon seeing Gloucester: "GLOUCESTER: Dost thou know me? LEAR: I remember thine eyes well enough. Dost thou squiny at me?"

*Lear clearly recognizes Gloucester, and he believes that he recognizes him by his eyes. The lines are ironic because Gloucester has been blinded. His eyes have been plucked out. Again, Shakespeare is playing on the theme of sight and insight. He hints to the audience that Lear cannot possibly remember Gloucester for his eyes. He must, therefore, judge and remember Gloucester according to the service he has shown to the King. Lear is beginning to learn to look beneath the surface of physical appearances to recognize loyalty.*

5. How does the following line spoken by Lear reinforce the ambiguous theme of natural family order: "Gloucester's bastard son was kinder to his father than my daughters"?

*These lines spoken by Lear demonstrate how the King continues to cling to the belief that the "natural order" within a family should have some significance and should influence the way family members treat one another. Hence, Lear expresses his disbelief that – as far as he knows at this point – Gloucester's bastard son has proven to be a better child than his own legitimate daughters have been to him. To the audience, the lines become ironic, because Lear does not yet know that Edmund is, in fact, a disloyal and evil character; the audience is already fully aware of Edmund's true character.*

6. How does Gloucester's remark "I see it feelingly" demonstrate his personal growth as a human being?

*Gloucester, who has been blinded, now "sees" the world more clearly than he did when he still had his complete eyesight. His development has come full circle: He has learned that he must "feel" the world in order to develop a true understanding of the people and events around him. Gloucester's judgments are now sound, because they are not based on superficialities and appearances any more.*

7. After they fight and Oswald is mortally wounded, what does he ask Edgar?

*Oswald wants Edgar to bury his body and take the letter he is carrying to Edmund. He does not recognize Edgar as Edmund's brother.*

8. Edgar reads the letter to Edmund that Oswald has been carrying. What information does he learn about his brother?

*Edgar learns that Edmund has developed a secret relationship with Goneril. In her letter, Goneril asks Edmund to kill her husband, the Duke of Albany, so the two of them can be together.*

## Act IV, scene vii

1. What does the following statement by Cordelia reveal about her attitude toward her father: “Cure this great breach in his abused nature! The untuned and jarring senses, O, wind up of this child-changed father!”?

*Cordelia recognizes that her father’s mind has become disturbed because of the treatment he has received at the hands of Goneril and Regan. Cordelia’s comments illustrate her love and care for her father. She clings to the hope that he can be cured.*

2. Where in this scene does Cordelia’s respect for Lear as a father and as a King become apparent?

*All of Cordelia’s comments in this scene display her true and honest affection for her father. Her respect for Lear as a father and as a King becomes apparent in the following lines: “How does my royal lord? How fares your majesty?”*

3. What does the following comment uttered by Lear reveal about his attitude toward the natural order of the stars: “I am bound upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears do scald like molten lead”?

*Lear expresses his belief in the great wheel of fortune that turns and determines the fate of human beings. He recognizes that the time of his death is near, and he is suffering to be released from the movements of Fortune’s wheel.*

4. What literary device can be found in the above lines spoken (in Question 3) by Lear?

*“Mine own tears do scald like molten lead” is an example of a simile.*

5. What does Lear ask of Cordelia before he exits the stage and what realization about his error in judgment do his words contain?

*Lear asks Cordelia’s forgiveness. He begs, “Pray you now, forget and forgive.” Lear asks Cordelia to forgive him because he has been “old and foolish.” Lear seems to recognize exactly what has led to his downfall: He is too old to handle the affairs of the kingdom, but he was foolish to give his power and lands to Regan and Goneril.*

6. Why don’t this reconciliation between Lear and Cordelia, Lear’s restoration to sanity, and his newfound awareness of his human condition mark the end of the play?

*In the structure of the tragedy, the hero is ultimately destroyed by forces he himself set in motion. Thus, even though Lear and his youngest, favorite daughter are reconciled, Lear still must face the forces of his other two daughters that he unleashed with his vain love game in Act I.*

## Act V, scene i

1. What great fear does Regan express to Edmund at the opening of the scene? What does she demand of Edmund?

*Regan is terrified of the possibility that Edmund and Goneril have been intimate with each other. Regan begs Edmund not to become involved with her sister.*

2. What shocking information does Goneril reveal to the audience in an aside and what does this information disclose about her character?

*Goneril reveals to the audience that her relationship with Edmund is more important to her than the fight against France. The revelation proves that Goneril has no sense of honor or loyalty. She readily sacrifices the victory of her own country and troops for her passions.*

3. Edmund asks an officer to determine whether the Duke of Albany is still on their side since “he’s full of alteration and self-reproving.” Why does Albany stay on the side of Edmund, Regan, and Goneril even though he despises their actions?

*Although Albany disapproves of the way Regan and Goneril have treated Lear and Gloucester, Albany is still loyal to England. The three represent the legitimate English throne going to battle with France, a foreign power. Albany demonstrates his belief that loyalty to his country is more important than feelings of resentment. His attitude obviously stands in stark contrast to Goneril’s.*

4. Why does Edgar, still in disguise, wish to speak to Albany?

*Edgar wants Albany to read the letter Goneril wrote to Edmund that he took from Oswald. He also promises that if Albany wishes to have him prove the contents of the letter after the battle, a trumpet should sound, and Edgar will send someone to reveal the truth.*

5. What is Edmund’s attitude toward the sisters Regan and Goneril, and what does his speech at the end of the scene reveal about his character?

*Edmund realizes that they are extremely jealous of each other. He understands that he cannot be with either of them while the other sister still lives. Edmund resolves to let Goneril rid herself of Albany, and he vows not to show any mercy to Lear and Cordelia if they are captured. His actions and resolutions demonstrate his opportunistic nature. Edmund is only interested in his personal gain. He does not truly care about Regan or Goneril, and he is willing to sacrifice anything for his personal advancement.*

## Act V, scene ii

1. After leaving his father in a safe place, Edgar leaves for the battlefield, but returns shortly. What information does he reveal upon his return?

*The French forces have lost, and Lear and Cordelia have been captured.*

## Act V, scene iii

1. What orders does Edmund give to the Captain?

*Edmund orders the Captain to follow Lear and Cordelia to prison. He instructs the Captain to murder them.*

2. As Albany enters, what does he demand of Edmund?

*Albany commands Edmund to give up his captured prisoners, Lear and Cordelia.*

3. After a brief exchange, Albany puts Edmund in his proper place. How does he do this and why?

*Albany tells Edmund that he (Albany) is the one in charge; Edmund is a subject and not of equal rank. Edmund has tried to put off letting Albany see Lear and Cordelia until the next day.*

4. How does Regan stand up for Edmund?

*Regan tells Albany that Edmund stood in her place and functioned as Albany's equal.*

5. How does Goneril react to Regan's defense of Edmund?

*Goneril is not going to let her sister link her (Regan's) name to Edmund's. She says Edmund achieved what he did in his own right.*

6. Following the argument between Regan and Goneril, what does Albany accuse Edmund of?

*Albany accuses Edmund of treason and challenges him to a duel with Albany's "champion." Albany explains that if, after sounding the trumpet, no one comes forth to prove Edmund's treason, he himself will prove it.*

7. Why does Regan feel increasingly sick as the scene progresses?

*Goneril has poisoned Regan.*



8. In fighting Edmund, Edgar wants to avenge his brother's "hell-hated lie." What is Edgar referring to?

*Edgar is referring to Edmund's betrayal of his father and of himself. He believes that Edmund must be punished for mistreating and telling on his father and for betraying his own brother through the lies he has been spreading.*

9. How does the following comment by Edmund reinforce the idea of human responsibility versus fate: "The wheel has come full circle; I am here."?

*Edmund recognizes that he is being punished by the gods or by fate for the terrible deeds he has committed. He uses the image of the wheel of fortune to demonstrate that he is, once again, at the bottom and has not accomplished anything. However, Edmund, who all along has dismissed the power of the stars, merely uses the fortune wheel imagery to demonstrate that he has finally received what he deserves. His comment clearly indicates that he takes responsibility for his actions. He does not believe that he is suffering from the arbitrary decisions of the stars or of the gods; rather, he knows that he has brought his suffering upon himself.*

10. What does Edgar mean when he says about his father, Gloucester, that "twixt two extremes of passion, joy and grief, [his heart] burst smilingly"?

*This beautiful image conveys the news of Gloucester's death. Edgar explains that he revealed his true identity to his father before coming to fight Edmund. Upon hearing that his son Edgar was alive, Gloucester was overwhelmed with happiness and joy. On the other hand, he was grieved because he saw Edgar armed and ready to fight. The two competing emotions were too overpowering for his already strained heart, and he died. However, Edgar leads his audience to believe that Gloucester ultimately died content, because his heart "burst smilingly." Although his heart gave in under the pressure of all the hardship it had to endure, Gloucester died in happiness, smiling with his heart, because he had learned to "see feelingly."*

11. What good deed does Edmund intend to do before he dies?

*Edmund reveals that he has ordered the Captain to kill Lear and Cordelia. He sends help to the prison in order to prevent the murder.*

12. Who, beside Edmund, has commissioned the murder of Lear and Cordelia?

*Edmund reveals that Goneril knew and supported his plans.*

13. How does Albany try to appease Lear, who is distraught over the death of Cordelia?

*Albany states that he will resign the throne to Lear, the “old majesty,” and give absolute power back to the old King. Once Lear dies, Albany gives the power jointly to Kent and Edgar. He says, “you twain rule in this realm and the gored state sustain.”*

14. How does Albany’s final speech allude to some of the play’s major recurring themes?

*Albany states that we must “speak what we feel, not what we ought to say,” concluding that appearances and superficialities are meaningless compared to personal relationships and human responsibility.*

# *King Lear*

## Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition Teaching Unit

### Study Guide Student Copy

#### Act I, scene i

1. What is the question Lear asks his daughters before he makes the division of his kingdom final? What does he expect of his daughters?
2. What is Cordelia's answer to Lear's question, and why is Lear outraged by Cordelia's answer?
3. How does Kent's reaction to Lear's banishment of Cordelia introduce the theme of sight and insight?
4. In this first scene of the play, how does Shakespeare establish the parallels between the stories of Lear and his daughters on the one hand and the story of Gloucester and his sons on the other hand?

5. Explain the ambiguous nature of Cordelia's farewell to her sisters: "The jewels of our father, with wash'd eyes / Cordelia leaves you," particularly as she reveals the theme of sight and insight?
6. How does Lear's "love test" foreshadow the way the plot is going to play out and suggest the primary character motivation for the action of the play?
7. What emotional reasons are suggested for Goneril and Reagan's later treatment of their father and Cordelia?
8. What emotions are at the root of the Edmund/Edgar plot line?
9. How has Lear himself upset the "natural order"?

### **Act I, scene ii**

1. What information is contained in the letter that Edmund pretends to conceal from his father?
2. What does Edmund suggest his father should do to confirm the contents of the letter?
3. What do Gloucester's and Edmund's comments about the constellations of the stars reveal about their individual beliefs in the power of the stars or fate?
4. Where does Edmund send his brother Edgar as the scene draws to a close?

### **Act I, scene iii**

1. What concerns about Lear's intentions does Goneril express during her conversation with Oswald?
2. Whom does Goneril decide to contact by letter at the end of the scene, and why?

## Act I, scene iv

1. How does Kent's disguise support the theme of sight and insight?
2. Why does Kent trip Oswald?
3. What wisdom does the Fool express about possessions on the one hand and about "nothing" on the other hand?
4. Why is Lear angry at Goneril?
5. What do Lear's hundred knights come to represent in this scene? Why is Goneril's threat to send fifty away such an important issue?

6. What is Lear's curse on Goneril?
7. What does Goneril's reaction to Lear's curse reveal about her character?
8. What does Lear vow to do in the face of Goneril's behavior and how realistic are his threats?
9. What does Goneril command Oswald to do at the close of the scene and why?

## Act I, scene v

1. Where does Lear send Kent?
2. What does the Fool criticize in his statement to Lear, “thou shouldst not have been old till thou hadst been wise”?
3. What is significant about Lear’s “prayer” not to go mad?



## Act II, scene i

1. What rumor of political upheaval reaches the castle of Gloucester?
2. Why does Edmund injure himself to draw blood?
3. How does Gloucester react when he learns about Edgar's alleged intentions to attack and murder him?
4. How does the conversation between Gloucester and Edmund, following Edgar's escape, signal a reversal of the relationships that Edgar and Edmund have with their father?
5. How does Gloucester's expression "my old heart is crack'd, is crack'd" illustrate the parallel between Gloucester and Lear when it comes to old age and their relationships with their children?

## Act II, scene ii

1. What does Kent say about Oswald's character when he metaphorically claims "a tailor made thee"?
2. Why does Kent attempt to dissuade Cornwall and Regan from putting him in the stocks?
3. How does Gloucester's response to Kent's being put in the stocks reflect the parallel between Gloucester's and Lear's relationships with their children?
4. On what does Kent base his hopes for the future at the end of the scene, once he has been put in the stocks?
5. How does the Gloucester plot continue to parallel the main plot? What does Shakespeare achieve by keeping the two plots so carefully parallel?

## Act II, scene iii

1. What decision does Edgar make that will help him hide from the authorities that are chasing him?
2. How does Edgar's statement "Edgar I nothing am" demonstrate the connection between the recurring "nothing" motif and the natural order of family relations?

## Act II, scene iv

1. What answer does Lear receive upon his request for admittance into the presence of Regan and Cornwall?
2. How does Lear respond to Regan's welcome?
3. How does Regan respond to Lear's complaints about Goneril?
4. Why does Lear believe that Regan will treat him with more respect than Goneril? What idea does Lear still cling to?
5. What question does Lear continue to ask that Regan will not answer?

6. What is Regan's response when Lear says that he and his knights will have nothing to do with Goneril and that he plans to move to her house instead?
7. What revenge does Lear swear on both of his daughters?
8. What makes the sisters' actions at the end of this act seem particularly cruel?
9. What two events signal the end of Lear's status as king and father?
10. What does the storm represent in this scene and the scenes that follow?

### Act III, scene i

1. What news about Albany, Cornwall, and the King of France does Kent reveal to the Gentleman?
2. What mission does Kent ask the Gentleman to complete?

### Act III, scene ii

1. In Lear's first speech in this scene, how does Shakespeare portray the great emotional upheaval going on within Lear's mind?
2. What comment about women does Lear make in his speech?
3. What is Kent's opinion of the storm's ferocity?
4. How does Lear's remark "I am a man more sinn'd against than sinning" reflect his development as a human being within the play?
5. How does the Fool evaluate the state of Britain in his closing "prophecy"?

### Act III, scene iii

1. How do Regan, Goneril, and Cornwall react to Gloucester's request to pity the King?
2. What information does Edmund share with the audience after his father tells him about the "dangerous" letter and subsequently exits the stage?

### Act III, scene iv

1. How does Lear explain his approaching insanity?
2. In which lines in this scene is Edgar's speech filled with alliterations?
3. Upon seeing Edgar emerge from the hovel disguised as poor Tom, what does Lear immediately assume has happened to Edgar?
4. How does Edgar respond to Lear's assumptions?
5. Why does Lear tear off his clothes?
6. How does Gloucester's appearance at the hovel illustrate the parallel structure between the Lear-daughters plot and the Gloucester-sons subplot?
7. What trait is Lear developing as a result of his daughter's treatment? How does this trait affect Lear's status as a tragic hero?

### Act III, scene v

1. What is Edmund's reward upon reporting Gloucester's alleged sympathies for the King of France to the Duke?
2. How does Edmund misrepresent his family obligations to the Duke?
3. What is Edmund's attitude toward the concept of loyalty and what does it reveal about his character?
4. What does the Duke promise Edmund?



### Act III, scene vi

1. What imaginary event does Lear stage once he has entered the farmhouse chamber?
2. What does Lear accuse Goneril of during his imaginary trial?
3. Why does Edgar fear his true identity might be exposed and how does the audience learn about his concerns?
4. What news does Gloucester deliver upon his arrival?
5. How does Lear's suffering impact Edgar's disposition?

### Act III, scene vii

1. Why does Cornwall order his servants to pursue Gloucester?
2. How does Cornwall vow to treat Gloucester once he has been found?
3. Why does Gloucester consider Regan's and Cornwall's behavior toward him inappropriate?
4. What information do Regan and Cornwall demand from Gloucester?
5. What image does Gloucester evoke in the following lines he speaks to Regan: "Because I would not see thy cruel nails pluck out his poor old eyes, nor thy fierce sister in his anointed flesh stick boarish fangs"?

6. How does this image of the two sisters compare to their words of affection they uttered in the opening scene of the play?
7. Why does the servant interfere with the proceedings in Gloucester's castle and what do his actions reveal about his character?
8. What startling news about Edmund does Gloucester learn from Goneril?
9. What theme is advanced by the gouging out of Gloucester's eyes?
10. What is significant about the servant's challenging Cornwall about his treatment of Gloucester?

## Act IV, scene i

1. What does Edgar mean when he says “the worst is not so long as we can say ‘this is the worst’”?
2. How does the following statement by Gloucester contribute to the theme of sight and insight: “I have no way and therefore want no eyes; I stumbled when I saw”?
3. To what degree does Gloucester attribute influence and power to fate and the gods? Where in this scene does his belief become obvious?
4. What can be inferred from Gloucester’s last comments about his attitude toward fate?
5. What climactic moment might Gloucester’s lament about the capriciousness of the gods signify?

## Act IV, scene ii

1. What does Albany's reaction to his wife's treatment of her father reveal about his character?
2. What climax has occurred between the end of the previous scene and Albany's condemnation of his wife's actions?
3. How are Goneril's feelings toward Edmund portrayed in this scene?
4. What attitude toward her husband does Goneril display when she calls him a "milk-liver'd man"?
5. What is Albany's reason for not attacking Goneril?
6. What news about the Duke of Cornwall does the messenger reveal?
7. What does Albany learn about Edmund and what is his resolution?
8. How does the relationship between Goneril and Regan change as the scene draws to a close?

### Act IV, scene iii

1. What effect does Shakespeare create by having the French king return to France and leaving Cordelia in Dover to command the French troops?
2. What information does Kent seek from the messenger?
3. What is Shakespeare suggesting when he has the Gentleman describe Cordelia's crying as: "she shook / the holy water from her heavenly eyes"?
4. How does Kent reconcile the differences between Lear's daughters? How does he explain their different behaviors?
5. Why does Lear refuse to see Cordelia?

### Act IV, scene iv

1. What does Cordelia promise for any help anyone can offer her father?
2. According to Cordelia, what is the ultimate reason for the French army's attack?
3. Why does Shakespeare decide to have the King of France return home and leave Cordelia as the major force opposing her sisters?

### Act IV, scene v

1. Why does Regan consider it necessary to find Gloucester and kill him?
2. Why does Regan want to open the letter her sister has written to Edmund?
3. How does the dialogue between Regan and Oswald in this scene reveal Oswald's character?

## Act IV, scene vi

1. What is Gloucester's intention upon reaching Dover?
2. Gloucester, thinking he is throwing himself from the cliff, falls forward on the ground and faints. Edgar, now assuming the character of a man who happened to pass by the cliff as Gloucester was jumping, revives him and tells his father it is a miracle that he was not killed by falling off the cliff. What does Gloucester resolve?
3. How does Edgar influence Gloucester's decision to live, especially considering the theme of natural order of the stars?
4. Explain the irony that dominates the following lines uttered by Lear upon seeing Gloucester: "GLOUCESTER: Dost thou know me? LEAR: I remember thine eyes well enough. Dost thou squiny at me?"



5. How does the following line spoken by Lear reinforce the ambiguous theme of natural family order: “Gloucester’s bastard son was kinder to his father than my daughters”?
6. How does Gloucester’s remark “I see it feelingly” demonstrate his personal growth as a human being?
7. After they fight and Oswald is mortally wounded, what does he ask Edgar?
8. Edgar reads the letter to Edmund that Oswald has been carrying. What information does he learn about his brother?

## Act IV, scene vii

1. What does the following statement by Cordelia reveal about her attitude toward her father: “Cure this great breach in his abused nature! The untuned and jarring senses, O, wind up of this child-changed father!”?
2. Where in this scene does Cordelia’s respect for Lear as a father and as a King become apparent?
3. What does the following comment uttered by Lear reveal about his attitude toward the natural order of the stars: “I am bound upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears do scald like molten lead”?
4. What literary device can be found in the above lines spoken (in Question 3) by Lear?
5. What does Lear ask of Cordelia before he exits the stage and what realization about his error in judgment do his words contain?
6. Why don’t this reconciliation between Lear and Cordelia, Lear’s restoration to sanity, and his newfound awareness of his human condition mark the end of the play?

### Act V, scene i

1. What great fear does Regan express to Edmund at the opening of the scene? What does she demand of Edmund?
2. What shocking information does Goneril reveal to the audience in an aside and what does this information disclose about her character?
3. Edmund asks an officer to determine whether the Duke of Albany is still on their side since “he’s full of alteration and self-reproving.” Why does Albany stay on the side of Edmund, Regan, and Goneril even though he despises their actions?
4. Why does Edgar, still in disguise, wish to speak to Albany?
5. What is Edmund’s attitude toward the sisters Regan and Goneril, and what does his speech at the end of the scene reveal about his character?

### Act V, scene ii

1. After leaving his father in a safe place, Edgar leaves for the battlefield, but returns shortly. What information does he reveal upon his return?

### Act V, scene iii

1. What orders does Edmund give to the Captain?
2. As Albany enters, what does he demand of Edmund?
3. After a brief exchange, Albany puts Edmund in his proper place. How does he do this and why?
4. How does Regan stand up for Edmund?
5. How does Goneril react to Regan's defense of Edmund?
6. Following the argument between Regan and Goneril, what does Albany accuse Edmund of?
7. Why does Regan feel increasingly sick as the scene progresses?
8. In fighting Edmund, Edgar wants to avenge his brother's "hell-hated lie." What is Edgar referring to?

9. How does the following comment by Edmund reinforce the idea of human responsibility versus fate: “The wheel has come full circle; I am here.”?
10. What does Edgar mean when he says about his father, Gloucester, that “twixt two extremes of passion, joy and grief, [his heart] burst smilingly”?
11. What good deed does Edmund intend to do before he dies?
12. Who, beside Edmund, has commissioned the murder of Lear and Cordelia?
13. How does Albany try to appease Lear, who is distraught over the death of Cordelia?
14. How does Albany’s final speech allude to some of the play’s major recurring themes?

# The Perfect Balance Between Cost and Quality for Classic Paperbacks

WITH ALL OF THE DIFFERENT EDITIONS of classics available, what makes *Prestwick House Literary Touchstone Classics™* better?

Our editions were designed by former teachers with the needs of teachers and students in mind. Because we've struggled to stretch tight budgets and had to deal with the deficiencies of cheaply made paperbacks, we've produced high-quality trade editions at remarkably low prices. As a result, our editions have it all.

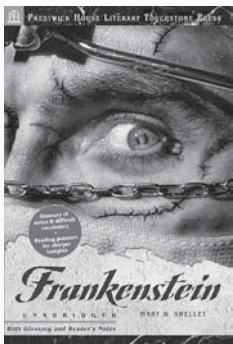
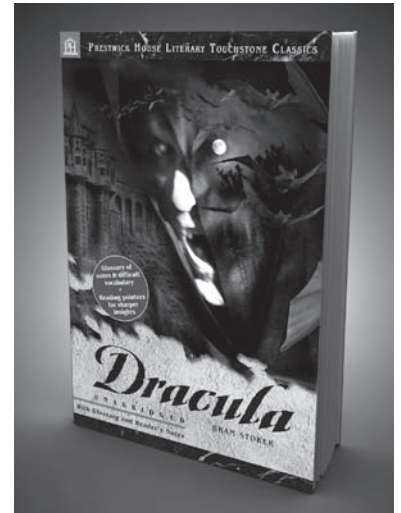
**Value Pricing** – With our extraordinary Educators' Discount, you get these books at **50% or more off the list price**.

**Reading Pointers for Sharper Insights** – Concise notes that encourage students to question and consider points of plot, theme, characterization, and style, etc.

**Glossary and Vocabulary** – An A-to-Z glossary makes sure that your students won't get lost in difficult allusions or archaic vocabulary and concepts.

**Sturdy Bindings and High-Quality Paper** – High-quality construction ensures these editions hold up to heavy, repeated use.

**Strategies for Understanding Shakespeare** – Each *Shakespeare Literary Touchstone Classic™* contains line numbers, margin notes, and a guide to understanding Shakespeare's language, as well as key strategies for getting the most from the plays.



## Special Introductory Discount for Educators only – At Least 50% Off!

New titles are constantly being added; call or visit our website for current listing.

	Retail Price	Intro.	Discount
200053..... <i>Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i> - Twain TU RJ AT AP	\$4.99		\$2.49
200473..... <i>Adventures of Tom Sawyer, The</i> - Twain TU RJ AT	\$4.99		\$2.49
202116..... <i>Alice's Adventure in Wonderland</i> - Carroll TU RJ	\$3.99		\$1.99
202118..... <i>Antigone</i> - Sophocles TU RJ AT	\$3.99		\$1.99
200141..... <i>Awakening, The</i> - Chopin TU RJ AT AP	\$3.99		\$1.99
202111..... <i>Beowulf</i> - Roberts (ed.) TU	\$3.99		\$1.99
204866..... <i>Best of Poe, The: The Tell-Tale Heart, The Raven, The Cask of Amontillado, and 30 Others</i> - Poe	\$4.99		\$2.49
200150..... <i>Call of the Wild, The</i> - London TU RJ AT	\$3.99		\$1.99
200348..... <i>Canterbury Tales</i> - Chaucer TU	\$3.99		\$1.99
200179..... <i>Christmas Carol, A</i> - Dickens TU RJ AT	\$3.99		\$1.99
201198..... <i>Crime and Punishment</i> - Dostoyevsky TU	\$6.99		\$3.49
200694..... <i>Doll's House, A</i> - Ibsen TU RJ AT	\$3.99		\$1.99
200190..... <i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i> - Stevenson TU RJ AT	\$3.99		\$1.99

202113..... <i>Dracula</i> - Stoker TU RJ	\$5.99	\$2.99
200166..... <i>Ethan Frome</i> - Wharton TU RJ AT	\$3.99	\$1.99
200054..... <i>Frankenstein</i> - Shelley TU RJ AT AP	\$4.99	\$1.99
202112..... <i>Great Expectations</i> - Dickens TU RJ AT AP	\$5.99	\$2.99
202108..... <i>Gulliver's Travels</i> - Swift TU	\$4.99	\$2.49
200091..... <i>Hamlet</i> - Shakespeare TU RJ AT AP	\$3.99	\$1.99
200074..... <i>Heart of Darkness</i> - Conrad TU RJ AT	\$3.99	\$1.99
202117..... <i>Hound of the Baskervilles, The</i> - Doyle TU RJ AT	\$3.99	\$1.99
200147..... <i>Importance of Being Earnest, The</i> - Wilde TU RJ AT	\$3.99	\$1.99
301414..... <i>Invisible Man, The</i> - Wells TU RJ	\$3.99	\$1.99
202115..... <i>Jane Eyre</i> - Brontë TU RJ	\$6.99	\$3.49
200146..... <i>Julius Caesar</i> - Shakespeare TU RJ AT	\$3.99	\$1.99
201817..... <i>Jungle, The</i> - Sinclair TU RJ AT	\$5.99	\$2.99
200125..... <i>Macbeth</i> - Shakespeare TU RJ AT AP	\$3.99	\$1.99
204864..... <i>Medea</i> - Euripides TU	\$3.99	\$1.99
200133..... <i>Metamorphosis, The</i> - Kafka TU RJ	\$3.99	\$1.99
200081..... <i>Midsummer Night's Dream, A</i> - Shakespeare TU RJ AT	\$3.99	\$1.99
202123..... <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> - Shakespeare TU RJ AT	\$3.99	\$1.99
301391..... <i>My Antonia</i> - Cather TU RJ	\$3.99	\$1.99
200079..... <i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass</i> - Douglass TU RJ AT	\$3.99	\$1.99
301269..... <i>Odyssey, The</i> - Butler (trans.) TU RJ AT	\$4.99	\$2.49
200564..... <i>Oedipus Rex</i> - Sophocles TU	\$3.99	\$1.99
200095..... <i>Othello</i> - Shakespeare TU RJ AT AP	\$3.99	\$1.99
202121..... <i>Picture of Dorian Gray, The</i> - Wilde TU RJ	\$4.99	\$2.49
200368..... <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> - Austen TU RJ AT	\$4.99	\$2.49
202114..... <i>Prince, The</i> - Machiavelli TU	\$3.99	\$1.99
200791..... <i>Pygmalion</i> - Shaw TU	\$3.99	\$1.99
200102..... <i>Red Badge of Courage, The</i> - Crane TU RJ AT	\$3.99	\$1.99
200193..... <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> - Shakespeare TU RJ AT	\$3.99	\$0.99
200132..... <i>Scarlet Letter, The</i> - Hawthorne TU AT AP	\$4.99	\$2.49
202119..... <i>Siddhartha</i> - Hesse TU RJ AT	\$3.99	\$1.99
204863..... <i>Silas Marner</i> - Eliot TU RJ AT	\$3.99	\$1.99
200251..... <i>Tale of Two Cities, A</i> - Dickens AT AP	\$5.99	\$2.99
200231..... <i>Taming of the Shrew, The</i> - Shakespeare TU RJ AT	\$3.99	\$1.99
204865..... <i>Time Machine, The</i> - Wells TU RJ AT	\$3.99	\$1.99
202120..... <i>Treasure Island</i> - Stevenson TU RJ	\$4.99	\$2.49
301420..... <i>War of the Worlds</i> - Wells TU RJ	\$3.99	\$1.99
202122..... <i>Wuthering Heights</i> - Brontë TU AT	\$5.99	\$2.99

TU Teaching Units RJ Response Journals AT Activity Pack AP AP Teaching Units



PRESTWICK HOUSE, INC.

"Everything for the English Classroom!"

P.O. Box 658 • Clayton, DE 19938 • (800) 932-4593 • (888) 718-9333 • [www.prestwickhouse.com](http://www.prestwickhouse.com)



P R E S T W I C K   H O U S E ,   I N C .

## Order Form

Call 1-800-932-4593 Fax 1-888-718-9333

Prestwick House, Inc.  
P.O. Box 658  
Clayton, DE 19938

Bill To: ☐ Home ☐ School

School:
Name:
Address:
City, State, Zip:
Phone: _____ Email: _____

Ship To: ☐ Home ☐ School

School:
Name:
Address:
City, State, Zip:
Phone: _____ Email: _____

ITEM NO	TITLE	QUANTITY	X	PRICE	=	TOTAL

### Method of Payment (Choose one)

☐ Check or Money Order Enclosed

☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover Card ☐ American Express

☐ Purchase Order Enclosed

We accept purchase orders and authorized orders charged to institutions. Personal orders not on a credit card must be accompanied by a check.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card #

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------

Because charges for air delivery are based on weight and distance, heavy packages can be expensive to ship air freight. Typographic and photographic errors are subject to revision. Prestwick House is the sole source of all proprietary materials listed in this catalogue. Please be sure to include a street address. FedEx ground/UPS will not deliver to a P.O. Box.

Subtotal \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Shipping 12% S&H (\$6.00 minimum) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Shipping & Handling

For orders of \$50.00 or less, please add \$6.00 for shipping and handling charges. For orders from \$50.01 to \$799.99 add 12%. For orders of \$800.00 and more, add 10%.

### Delivery Service

Most orders are shipped FedEx and you can expect delivery within 7-10 working days. Items in stock are usually shipped within one working day of receiving your order.

### Expedited Delivery

for expedited delivery ask about the following options:

- Overnight Air
- 2nd day air
- 3 Day Select