

Goodman Theatre

Student Subscription Series
2006-2007 Season

Student Guide

King Lear

By William Shakespeare

Directed by
Robert Falls

Student Guide written and designed by
George Jasinski, Education and Community Programs Intern

Edited and published by Goodman Theatre
Stacey Ballis, Director of Education and Community Programs
Jessica Hutchinson, Education and Community Programs Assistant

KRAFT FOODS
is the Principle Sponsor of the 2006-2007 free Student Subscription Series

Goodman Theatre is grateful to the following donors for their generous support of Education and Community Programs:



Principal Sponsor of the Student Subscription Series

Christine and John Bakalar
Stephen and Elizabeth Ballis
Mary Jo and Doug Basler
Maria Bechily and Scott Hodes
Deborah A. Bricker
Maureen and Scott Byron
Carson Family Foundation
Chicago Public Schools
CNA Financial Corporation
Carol and Douglas Cohen
The Crown Family
Patrick and Anna M. Cudahy Fund
Mr. and Mrs. James W. DeYoung
The Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Family Foundation
Sidney and Sondra Berman Epstein
Elizabeth Guenzel
HSBC North American Holdings
Irving and Joan W. Harris
James Kyser and Jo Polich
Cole and Margaret Lundquist
Bob Mayo
Chauncey and Marion D. McCormick Family Foundation
Colonel Stanley Reed McNeil Foundation
The Elizabeth Morse Charitable Trust
Northern Trust
Peoples Energy
Polk Bros. Foundation
Alice Rapoport and Michael Sachs
Ronald McDonald House Charities
The Sheridan Foundation
Mr. and Mrs. Michael J. Silverstein
The Siragusa Foundation
Colleen H. Sullivan
Bruce Taylor
Carl and Marilyn Thoma
UBS

Table of Contents

Exploring the Production	5
About the Playwright	6
About the Director	7
London: Then & Now	8
Blood and Guts: Violence on Stage	9
Adaptation	10
Exploring the Text	11
King Lear: The Basics	12
Vocabulary	13
Verse & Prose	14
Shakespeare in Your Own Words	15
Relating Characters	16
Exploring the Context	17
The Context of This Production	18-19
Dictators of Eastern Europe	20
The Yugoslav Wars: 1980-2006	21
Notes	22
Exploring The Social Issues	23
Birth Order	24
Family Power	25
Heraldry	26-27
Mental Illness	28
Mental Illness: Treatments	29
Power and Territory	30
Responding to the Play	31
Text Questions	32-35
Study Guide Questions	36
Your Student Response Letter	37
NOTES	38
<i>Blank space for your thoughts, reflections, or class notes</i>	

EXPLORING THE PRODUCTION

about the playwright

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

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

It is assumed that Shakespeare was born on April 23, 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon, England. In 1582, at age eighteen, Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway. Four years later, Shakespeare left for London, where there was already an established theater community, to make his fortune. By 1595, Shakespeare was named as one of the senior members of the Lord Chamberlain's Men, an acting company that performed frequently before the king. This was no small honor; the prominent theater company later became, under James I, the King's Men, making Shakespeare an official playwright to the King.

By 1596, Shakespeare was so successful as a playwright that his family was granted a Coat of Arms, allowing Shakespeare to call himself a "gentleman." One year later, Shakespeare became a ten percent owner of the new Globe Theatre where so many of his plays would later be performed. By 1611, Shakespeare retired, returned to Stratford, and in 1616, died.

Thinking about being a playwright? Do you want to be the next Shakespeare? Here are five activities suggested by Dave Brandl, a playwright and author of books on playwriting. Try your hand at these activities and maybe you'll write the next *King Lear*!

- **Observing** - Watch the world around you. It's a drama in mid-act. Airports, shopping malls, and even sidewalks offer glimpses of private lives put on public display. Clothes, movements, habits, and conversation (discussed separately, below) all give us pictures of characters that we can remember and perhaps include into our scripts.
- **Listening** - Have you ever noticed that people on cell phones tend to talk louder than they would on a payphone? Why is that? One of my favorite crowd-infested pastimes is to listen only for snippets of conversation. Hearing a particular line out of context generates a multitude of possibilities for me.
- **Noting** - With today's technology, it is very easy to record thoughts, ideas, snippets of dialogue, and other observations. I also carry with me at all times a pen and small pad of paper. Sometimes there isn't time or convenience to put things into digital form. But I can capture the thought on paper and then build on it later when I'm at my PC.
- **Imagining** - This means observing or hearing a scene, and then running it through your mind as though on stage to determine whether it's worth pursuing any further.
- **Casting** - This can be the most fun, because here is where I study faces and body shapes. Every now and then a person comes along that has the perfect look for some character from something I'm writing. It's like magic. I study the facial features, the physical mannerisms, and watch how they move.*

Think About It! Portraits

On this guide, there are many very different portraits of Shakespeare. Unfortunately, we do not know which picture is the **actual** Shakespeare. What do you think? Go on the internet or look in encyclopedias to find other pictures of Shakespeare. Which do you think is the true playwright? Why? Is it alright for history to be inaccurate?

about the director

ROBERT FALLS

Robert Falls' successful career in theater can be attributed to both his extraordinary talent and his exceptional timing. Growing up in southern Illinois, Falls attended the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. When he was a junior in college, he directed a play called *Moonchildren*, which was moved to a professional Chicago theater the following year. During the late 1970s, the Chicago theater scene exploded with innovative young artists forming their own companies and producing exciting and experimental new work. With perfect timing, Falls arrived in Chicago and was appointed the Artistic Director at Wisdom Bridge Theater in 1977, soon after graduating from college. During his ten years at Wisdom Bridge, Falls helped the company make a number of professional advances, including the creation of a fundraising campaign and the addition of a Managing Director and a Board of Trustees. In 1986, he was named Artistic Director of the Goodman Theatre, where he introduced the concept of a director-driven theatre in which a core group of directors would work together season after season. He has directed many Jeff Award-winning productions, the Tony Award-winning revival of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* in 1999, and the Tony Award-winning revival of *A Long Days Journey Into Night* in 2003. In 2000, Falls directed Elton John's Broadway musical *Aida*, which is currently being performed worldwide. Falls recently directed the Tony Award Nominated world premier of *Shining City*. The 2006-2007 season marks Robert Falls' twentieth season at the Goodman Theatre.*

who? • what? • where? • when? • why?

THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Robert Falls is the Artistic Director of the Goodman Theatre. What is an Artistic Director and what does he or she do?

He or she has many responsibilities including:

- Selecting plays the theater will produce in a given season
- Inviting artists to join the theater company
- Conducting research and keeping up with artistic trends
- Providing creative guidance to marketing and outreach campaigns
- Acting as the public figure of the theater at formal events,
- Meeting with sponsors, donors, and patrons to help with fundraising efforts
- Directing plays throughout the season

Most importantly, the Artistic Director encourages the staff of the theater to focus on the company's stated goals, called a mission statement. There are over 200 theaters in Chicago, each with a particular purpose. Can you think of any specific reasons a group of artists may decide to form their own company? What might their goals include?

Talk About It! Who Works in a Theater

A great theater is like a well oiled machine—every person plays a special part. Below is a list of different jobs within a theater. Go to the library, the internet, or an encyclopedia and research these positions. What are the responsibilities of each? Which position would you like to have and why? What special skills are needed for each position? Present your findings to the class and discuss what you've learned.

- Artistic Director
- Director
- Set Designer
- Costume Designer
- Lighting Designer
- Sound Designer
- Dramaturg
- Stage Manager
- Casting Director

london:--- then & now

Elizabethan London: A Perspective

London: A crammed commercial huddle that smells of the river.

The Thames was everybody's highway. You crossed normally by boat and there was commerce on the river. Chained to the banks there were sometimes criminals. The streets were narrow, made of cobble stones, slippery with the slime of garbage. Houses were crammed together and there were many alleys. Chamber pots were emptied out of windows and there was no drainage. But, the City had its natural cleansers—the kites, graceful birds that made their nests of rags and refuse. Countering the bad, manmade odors, the smells of the countryside floated in. It was a city of loud noises—hooves and coach wheels on the stones, the tells of traders, the brawling of apprentices. Even normal conversation must have been loud since everybody was, by our standards, tipsy. Nobody drank water. Ale was the standard and it was strong. Ale for breakfast was a good means of starting the day. The better sort drank wine, which promoted friendship and sword fights. It was not what we would call a sober city...*

Write About It! London and You

Read the paragraph and look at the map describing London during Shakespeare's time. Using your 5 senses and the above paragraph as an example, write one paragraph describing your neighborhood. Then, write one paragraph comparing your neighborhood to the description of London. Discuss this with your class.

Modern London is a city that is very similar to Chicago. Both are cultural centers of the country, showcasing theatre, dance, music and art to the world. Both London and Chicago are major centers of influence, affecting the economies and politics of the United Kingdom, United States, and the world. While the Chicago River runs through Chicago, the Thames River runs through London. Like Chicago, London is also home to many beautiful examples of architecture, such as the House of Parliament and Buckingham Palace. A major similarity is the public transportation systems used by both cities. In Chicago, we ride the "L", which is an abbreviation of the phrase "Elevated Train." In London, however, the subway is called the "Underground."

Make It! Design a Logo for the "L"

One of the major differences between the "L" and London's "Underground" is their logo. People from all over the world recognize the "Underground's" logo, but in Chicago, there is no logo for the "L." Design a logo for the "L." Use which ever colors or symbols you want and create your own original design. Keep in mind the simple design of the "Underground's" logo. Make sure people from all over the world will be able to understand what the "L" is and will be able to recognize the logo.

blood and guts

The Goodman Theatre's adaptation of *King Lear* is going to be filled with violence and blood. But don't worry!! Everything you see on stage has been carefully planned and practiced.

-----> violence on stage

Each production of *King Lear* will use GALLONS of fake stage blood. It's expensive! One gallon of stage blood costs about \$75 dollars.

Stage blood is usually made of water, coloring, and a soapy substance. Normally, a peppermint flavoring is added to make it taste better. By adding or subtracting certain parts, the blood becomes more thick or more runny.

According to Alice McGuire, Props Supervisor at the Goodman Theatre, after the blood is bought, the costume designer will test it on some of the costumes the actors will wear. If the blood stains the fabrics, it can ruin a costume!

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

Make Your Own Stage Blood

Ingredients:

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

Directions:

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

It usually washes out of clothes and won't stain skin (except palms), so you won't have to utter the famous line by Lady MacBeth, "Out, damned spot! Out, I say!"

fact

In the Alfred Hitchcock movie, *Psycho*, chocolate syrup was used instead of blood because the movie was in black and white.



stage combat

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

Daniel Levinson, a stage combat instructor from Toronto, had this to say:

"I have a team of actors who keep their fighting skills up by practicing every week. For each minute of fight time on stage, we do a minimum of 20 hours of rehearsal. For actors who are not trained, we may find ourselves working 60 hours. The end result is not just a **safe** fight, but an **emotionally powerful** one that connects with the audience."

Think About It! Violence on the Screen

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

Adaptation.

con·text
or
'kän-"tekst

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

Staring Jessica Lang and Michelle Pfeiffer, *A Thousand Acres* is an adaptation of *King Lear* set on a Midwestern farm in the late 1970s. The movie is based on a best selling novel.

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

Staring Heath Ledger and Julia Stiles, *10 Things...* is an adaptation of the play *The Taming of the Shrew*. The majority of the characters names and locations are the same, as is the movie's plot.

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

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

Starring Natalie Wood, *West Side Story* is a musical adaptation of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. In the film, the feuding families are portrayed as fighting street gangs.

Write About It!
Your Own Adaptation
Directors adapt plays because they want to send a specific message to the audience. If you could adapt *King Lear*, how would you do it? What is the setting and the time period? What are the characters like? Why would you adapt it that way? Write a paragraph answering each of the questions or draw out examples of costumes and sets. Then, share your ideas with your class.

EXPLORING THE TEXT

king lear

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

the basics

Elements of Tragedy...

or

What makes a tragedy so tragic?*

TRAGIC HERO

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

A WARNING

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

TRAGIC FLAW

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

HIGH STATUS

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

Tragedy = Goat Song?

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

Talk About It!

Finding the Tragic Hero

There are many characters in *King Lear* that could be considered tragic heroes. Choose a character and go through the text to see if you can find the four characteristics of a tragic hero in relation to your character. Discuss your opinions with your classmates. Who did they choose? Are their choices tragic heroes? Why or why not?

Think About It! Imagery Exercise

Go through the text of *King Lear* and choose a passage filled with imagery (we suggest Scene 11, pg 54, 1st paragraph). Read it aloud once for everyone to hear how it is to be read. Then, lie on the floor, close your eyes, and have someone else read the speech to you—very slowly—without emphasis. When you hear a word that invokes an image, raise your hand and have the reader pause. Concentrate on the image and when you have it in detail, lower your hand and have the reader continue. Do this for all the images in the selection. Discuss the images you have in your head. How are they alike or different from your classmates' ideas?*

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

~ *Voltaire*

imagery

The images in Shakespeare's language are expressions of the character's state of mind at that moment. Thousands of books have been written about this subject. Shakespeare's characters speak what they are thinking, and they communicate much of the time through imagery. The imagery is often a very strong clue to who the character is.

Shakespeare's characters use imagery far more than do the characters in modern plays. They *need* to express themselves through images.

Can you think of more modern authors, artists, or songwriters who also use imagery in their works?

Vocabulary

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

Talk About It! Finding the Vocabulary

1. Break into groups of four. Assign each group member a column of words from the list below.
2. For each word assigned to you, look the word up in the dictionary and write its definition on a small slip of paper. Find it in the text to figure out the context in which the word is used—this will help you to define it.

GAME TIME! One person says their word aloud to the group, but NOT the definition. Everyone else in the group writes what they think is the correct definition of the word on a sheet of paper. Then, the correct definition of the word is read aloud. If you get it right, then you get a point. Once you have done this for all the words, add up the points and see who has the highest score.

abominable	conspiracy	glib	pricks
anon	corky	goatish	propinquity
asquint	coronet	importune	pudder
base	countenance	infirmities	recreant
bastardy	cowish	jot	saucily
belike	coxcomb	knapped	scanted
benison	derogate	knave	sinews
beseech	distaff	lag	slenderly
betwixt	dote	liege	sojourn
bewray	dower	machination	sot
brazed	durst	mar	speed
breeding	eyeless	mark	stocks
centaurs	fain	marry	trowest
champains	felicitate	meads	untented
chiding	fetches	moiety	upbraids
choler	foppery	motley	varlet
civet	forfend	nuncle	vassal
clotpoll	forks	pat	wanton
compeers	gad	plainness	wretch



Having trouble finding the definitions for the words?

Since many of Shakespeare's words are no longer used today, it is difficult to find definitions for them. Search the internet for "Shakespeare Glossary" or "Shakespeare Dictionary" or go to the library and look for the lexicons and chances are you'll find the definition!

fact

Shakespeare invented over 1700 words in the English language.

fact

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

VERSE & PROSE

Verse

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

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

Prose

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

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



Iambic Pentameter—Its all Greek (or Latin) to me!

What exactly do these words mean?

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

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

Still Confused?

- A typical line of verse has 5 units of meter, or feet.
- Each foot contains two syllables.
- When the first syllable is stressed and the second syllable is unstressed, it is called **iambic pentameter**.

When read correctly, the rhythm of iambic pentameter is similar to the human heartbeat. It also follows a natural speech pattern.*

who, what, & when

RHYMED VERSE is often used for ritualistic or choral effects or in highly lyrical passages that give advice or a moral. Rhyme is used for songs, in Prologues, Epilogues and Choruses, and in plays-within-plays, to distinguish the imaginary performances from the "real world" of the play. It is also used for the supernatural, but **not** for ghosts. **BLANK VERSE** is used mainly for passionate, lofty or momentous occasions and for introspection. Many of Shakespeare's famous speeches are written in blank verse.*

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

Talk About It! Verse and Prose

Look through the text of *King Lear* and find three examples of verse and prose. Which characters say which lines? Why do they speak the way they do? Identify and tap out the iambic pentameter with your hand. Are all the lines 10 syllables? Are some different?

Think About It! Showing Status

The upper class usually speaks in verse while commoners speak in prose. Why do you think that is? What does it mean when/if they switch? Look in the text of *King Lear* to find examples that prove or disprove this idea?

Shakespeare in YOUR Words

Sometimes, it can be scary to read Shakespeare because of the amount of unfamiliar words. However, if you take your time, you'll see that Shakespeare isn't THAT difficult. Read the passage and complete the **Think About It!** section at the bottom.

...some may call it "fair cruelty", but Shakespeare wrote in English!

Let it be so. Thy truth, then, be thy dower,
For by the sacred radiance of the sun,
The mysteries of Hecate and the night,
By all the operations of the orbs
From whom we do exist and cease to be,
Here I disclaim all my paternal care,
Propinquity, and property of blood,
And as a stranger to my heart and me
Hold thee from this forever. The barbarous
 Scythian,
Or he that makes his generation messes
To gorge his appetite, shall to my bosom
Be as well neighbored, pitied, and relieved
As thou my sometimes daughter.
~ (*King Lear* 1.1)



Write About It!

Rewrite this speech in your own words

Think About It! Take Apart the Text

Use your script to answer the following questions

1. Who said this speech? _____
2. To whom was this speech directed? _____

3. What is happening at the time this speech is spoken? _____

4. In the empty box to the right, line by line, write how you would put this speech in your own language.
5. What suggestions do you have for the actor who says this speech? _____

"Find enough clever things to say, and you're a Prime Minister; write them down and you're a Shakespeare"
~George Bernard Shaw

**If this is a helpful exercise for you, pick anything in *King Lear* to translate. Challenge yourself and rewrite a scene, an act, or even the entire play!

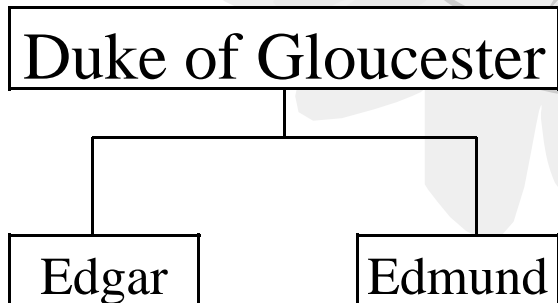
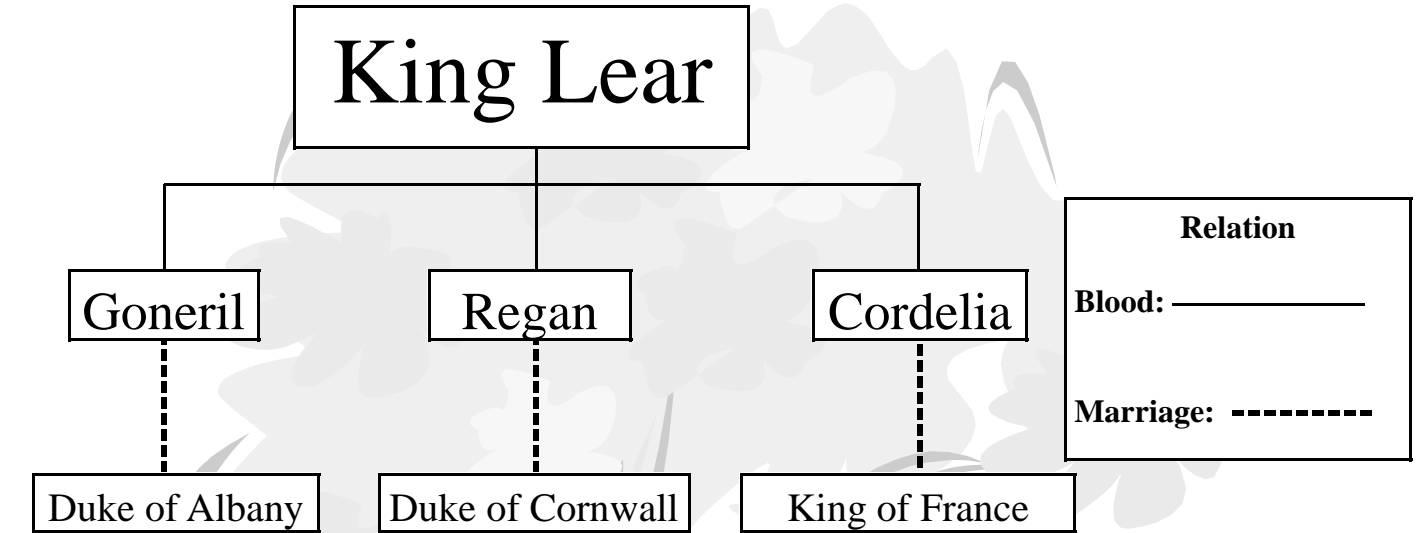
fact

The actors were all men in Shakespeare's day. The parts of women were played by boys who still had higher voices.

relating → characters

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

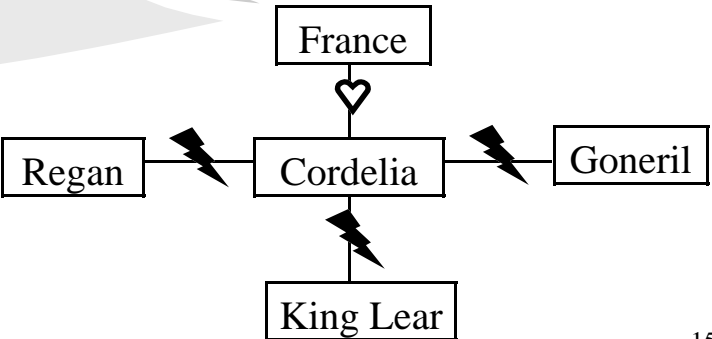
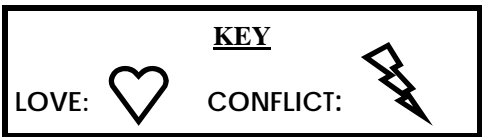
~ Friedrich Nietzsche



Write About It! Making Relationship Webs

1. On a sheet of paper, create a character web (see the example below) to explore the many character relationships in *King Lear*.
2. Use the family trees above as starting points and use the key to describe the relationships.
3. After you complete each web, write a paragraph justifying the relationship web you just constructed. Search for passages in the text to support your conclusions about relationships.

Think About It! Families
 The story of *King Lear* is about two different families. How are these families similar or different from yours? Using the activity at right as a model, create a relationship web about your own family and compare it to the relationships in *King Lear*.



EXPLORING THE CONTEXT

Monarchy—rule by a king or family until death and automatically passed on to children

Oligarchy—rule by a group of powerful individuals or by a small part of the population

Autocracy— rule by a single person, but not automatically passed on to the children

Democracy— rule by the majority or by the people

Despotism—rule by one powerful person with the people as slaves

Dictatorship—unrestricted rule by one person, usually by force

Aristocracy—rule by a small group of wealthy individuals

Tyranny—rule by one person who has absolute power in the people

Theocracy—rule of government where the head is a religious leader

the context of *this* production

Talk About It! Governments
Split up into groups and research the different styles of government in the table at left. Divide a sheet of paper in half, with one side labeled **Positive** (good things about the government) and **Negative** (bad things about the government). Write down characteristics you think are good or bad about each. Then, have a class discussion about the styles of government and their characteristics. Which would you like to live in? Which would you not? Discuss your research and your feelings about different governments with your class. How do you feel about living in a democracy?

the "unofficial" government

Sometimes governments are not really controlled by one person, such as a president or king. They are run by "unofficial" powers, such as the Mafia or a secret police force. Here is information about these "unofficial governments."

Securitate

Romanian for *Security*. It was the secret police in Communist Romania and the largest secret police force in the Eastern bloc. The Securitate began to kill opponents of the regime. Special prisons were set up for "enemies" to be sent to. In these camps, prisoners were either worked to death or shot. Romanians were forced to inform on friends and family. Forced entry into homes was another tactic used to get information from the population. The Securitate was abolished in late 1989, when Romania became a democracy.**

- During the Cold War, the term **Eastern Bloc** (or Soviet Bloc) was used to refer to the Soviet Union and its allies in Central and Eastern Europe. Romania and Yugoslavia were two of these allies.

Coup d'état

kü-(")dA-'tä

Coup d'etat is a French word, literally meaning "stroke of state": a sudden decisive exercise of force in politics; *especially*: the violent overthrow or alteration of an existing government by a small group. * A coup may or may not be violent in nature. It is different from a revolution, which is staged by a larger group and radically changes the political system. A coup usually involves control of some active portion of the military while stopping the remainder of a country's armed services.

Think About It! A Coup?
Even though King Lear gave his kingdom to his daughters, could the actions of Goneril, Regan, and their husbands be considered a coup? Why or why not? If not, what would it take to make the daughters' actions a coup? Compare and contrast the definition of a coup with the action in *King Lear*.

the ~~context~~ of *this* ~~production~~(cont.)

A **cult of personality** is a political institution in which a country's leader uses media to create a larger-than-life public image. Personality cults are usually found in totalitarian, authoritarian, or one-party states. The reputation of the leader, seen as the "liberator" or "savior" of the people, raises that leader to a god-like level. A personality cult is characterized with many images of a leader in public places, including statues, billboards, signs, and murals. In many cases the leader is portrayed in various ethnic or religious clothing and in heroic positions. This is meant to emphasize the greatness and wisdom of the leader. Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, and Joseph Stalin are obvious examples. However, even some US presidents have created a cult of personality.

cult of personality



Talk About It! Your Government and You

Did the information about the CIA surprise you? How much do you really know about your own government? Do research about different government agencies and how they interact with US citizens and those outside the US. Some examples include the FBI, Department of Homeland Security, Supreme Court, and the different branches of the military. What are their roles in your everyday life? How do you feel about the actions your government takes on your behalf? Do you wish they did anything differently?

the ~~CIA~~

Does this sound like something a secret police force would do?:

- Finding information about foreign governments, corporations, and individuals and reporting the information to various branches of the government
- Spreading propaganda
- Engaging in secret operations, including assassinations, the protection of certain people, and surveillance
- Influencing foreign governments
- Acting in plots to overthrow the governments of Chile, Nicaragua, and Cuba

In actuality, these actions have been taken by our own United States government. In the United States, we have our own version of a "secret" police. The CIA, or Central Intelligence Agency, is a type of policing force used by the US government.

R
u
s
s
i
a

M
a
f
i
a

The Russian Mafia, aka "Red Mafia", is a broad name given to groups of organized criminals of various ethnicity which appeared after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The Mafia controls 70-80% of all private business and 40% of Russia's wealth. Foreign companies pay up to 20% of their profits to the Mafia as the on-going price of doing business in Russia. Banking executives, reform-minded business leaders, even investigative journalists, have been systematically assassinated or kidnapped by the Mafia.**

fact

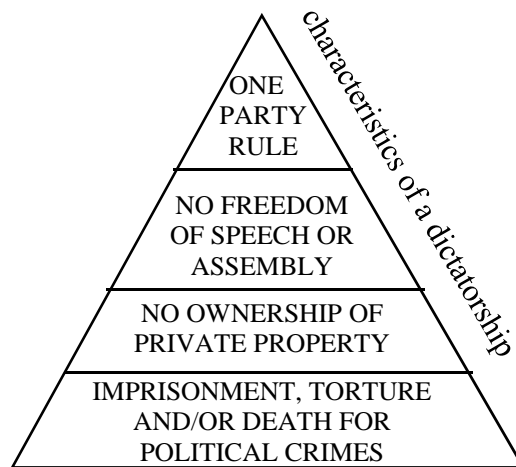
Goodman Theatre's production of *King Lear* incorporates aspects of Eastern Europe, the former USSR, and the recent war in Yugoslavia.

Slobodan Milosevic

President of Serbia and Yugoslavia. He studied law at Belgrade University before entering politics. He is the founder and president of the socialist party of Serbia. He became the focus of world attention during the Kosovo crisis and NATO confrontation in early 1999, but following a wave of popular unrest he lost power in October 2000. The new government arrested Milosevic and in June 2005 he was handed over to United Nations (UN) investigators to face a war crimes tribunal. On March 11, 2006, Milosevic was found dead in his cell at the United Nations detention center in The Hague. He appeared to have died of natural causes.*

Josip Broz a.k.a. Tito

Yugoslav president. In World War I, he served with the Austro-Hungarian army, was taken prisoner by the Russians, and became a Communist. In 1945, he became the country's first Communist prime minister and then president in 1953. He developed Yugoslavia's independent style of communism, called Titoism. His marriage to a Serb symbolized his attempts to unify the two conflicting national groups within Yugoslavia. Not long after his death, Yugoslavia erupted into a bloody civil war.*



Nicolae Ceausescu

Romanian president. He joined the Communist Party at 15 and held several junior political posts before becoming President of the State Council in 1967. He became the first president of the Republic in 1974, and established a strong personality cult based in his belief of invincibility within the nation. His policy of replacing traditional villages with groups of concrete apartments caused much controversy and distress in the late 1980s. A ruthless and unpopular leader, he was deposed in 1989. He and his wife, Elena, were shot and killed on Christmas Day 1989.*

Write About It! Now that you've read about a few of the dictators of Eastern Europe, explore this topic further. Go to your library or the internet and research other dictators, such as Francisco Franco, Kenneth Kaunda, or Pol Pot. Write a short biography about their lives, how they ruled, and the outcome. How do they compare to the dictators on this page?

Think About It! Would you consider King Lear to be a dictator? How is the character of Lear similar or different to the dictators you've read about?

Talk About It! What characteristics does a dictator have? What makes a dictator different from a President or a king? When can we really call a person in power a dictator? Have a class discussion about leadership qualities. Examine those that you have and those that the dictators had. What is similar? What's different?

THE YUGOSLAV WARS

1980-2006 *

1980 President Tito's harsh rule on Yugoslavia keeps ethnic tensions in check until his death. Without his influence, ethnic and nationalist differences begin to flare.

June 1991

Slovenia and Croatia declare independence. With 90% of its population ethnic Slovenians, Slovenia is able to break away with only a brief period of fighting. Croatia kicks out most of its Serbian population.

January 1992 Macedonia declares independence.

April 1992

Bosnia and Herzegovina declares independence. Tensions among Muslims, Serbs, and Croats strain and Bosnia erupts into war. Serbia and Montenegro form the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, with Slobodan Milosevic as its leader.

November 1995

Bosnia, Serbia, and Croatia sign the Dayton Peace Accord to end the war in Bosnia.

Milosevic sends troops to Kosovo to quash unrest in the province. A guerrilla war breaks out.

March 1998

March 1999

After peace talks fail, NATO begins attacks on Serbian targets.

October 2000

A popular uprising begins. One million people flood Belgrade. Mobs attack Parliament building, security forces join them. Milosevic support crumbles and he steps down.

April & June 2001

Milosevic is arrested and charged with corruption and abuse of power. He is turned over to the United Nations.

March 2006

Milosevic dies in custody.

Think About It! Comparing Periods

Although *King Lear* did not take place in modern times, there are many similarities between the Yugoslav Wars and when *King Lear* is set. After reading the script, compare and contrast the action of *King Lear* with that of the Yugoslav Wars.

EXPLORING THE PRODUCTION

King Lear is a story about two families and the power each person has over the others. Lear has three daughters, while Gloucester has two sons. Each of the children have different characteristics which set them apart from each other.

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

Here is a list of birth positions and the characteristics and family situations of each:

Think About It! Your Family Birth Order

Each person in a family has different characteristics. Some people are funny, loud, jealous, or playful. Others are cranky, witty, or quiet. Take a look at your own family. While at home, watch how each member of your family acts, talks, and thinks. Make a list of these characteristics. Then, see if the order in which they were born is consistent with characteristics with the information on the right. Are the people in your family the same or different from the descriptions? Why do you think they act the way they do? What about Lear's daughters? Do they fit the characteristics?

After looking at your own family, research a celebrity to find their birth order. Find out what movies they have been in and read newspaper/magazine articles about them. What characteristics do they have? Do they fit into the same categories on the right?

“I wish I had a twin, so I could know what I'd look like without plastic surgery.”
~ Joan Rivers

birth order

Only

Since parents have no prior experience with kids, an only child will have ALL the attention. He or she may become spoiled or can be over-protected. He or she likes being the center of attention and has difficulty sharing. Famous only children: **Alicia Keys**, Charlize Theron, and Robin Williams.

Oldest

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

Middle

This child may feel squeezed out of a position of significance or privilege. They could be even tempered or may have trouble finding their place. They could become a fighter of injustice. Famous middle children: **Cindy Crawford** and George Washington.

Youngest

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

Twin

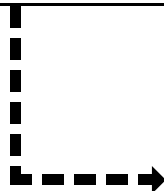
One of the two twins is usually stronger, either physically, emotionally, or through their characteristics. Sometimes, parents see one as being older. Twins can sometimes have identity problems and the stronger of the two may become the leader. Famous twins: **Mary Kate and Ashley Olsen**, Barbara and Jenna Bush, Ashton Kutcher.

puissance de famille
 familie macht
 οικογενειακή δύναμη
family power
 alimentazione della famiglia
 家族力
 poder familiar

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



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



Think About It! Your Family Power

Every family is completely different. There are different numbers of brothers and sisters, different numbers of grandparents and cousins, and different living situations. Sometimes, certain people are the head of the family. Why is this? Fill in the blanks below to figure out who holds the power in your family and why. Are your answers surprising? Share your answers with your class.

How many people do you live with? This includes siblings, grandparents, parents, and/ or guardians.

List the names and ages of your family members.

Who is the head of your family? Who makes the family decisions? _____

Why is the head of your family in that position? Is it because of age? Income? Education? List a few reasons below. _____

Some families are defined by a particular job or career in which many of the members participate, such as firefighting or working for the police. Does your family have a career which defines it? If so, write it below and explain why. _____

Talk About It! "Normal Families"

Take a look at the families in *King Lear*. Even in Shakespeare's time, these families were non-traditional. Otherwise, Shakespeare would not have written about them. What do you think? Are they traditional families? In *Lear's* family, the daughters have no mother. The same is true in Gloucester's family. Kent acts as a god parent to Cordelia. Are these families normal? Is there such a thing as a "normal family?" Discuss in class.



heraldry




Heraldry is the art of creating and designing a coat of arms. Its historic origins are unknown, but it may have begun during the Middle Ages. A coat of arms is passed through each family generation. Early coats of arms were simple—bars of different colors or shapes. Each coat has the family name at the bottom of a shield, which is filled with symbols of the family. Some may have a family motto at the top.



Make It! A Coat of Arms

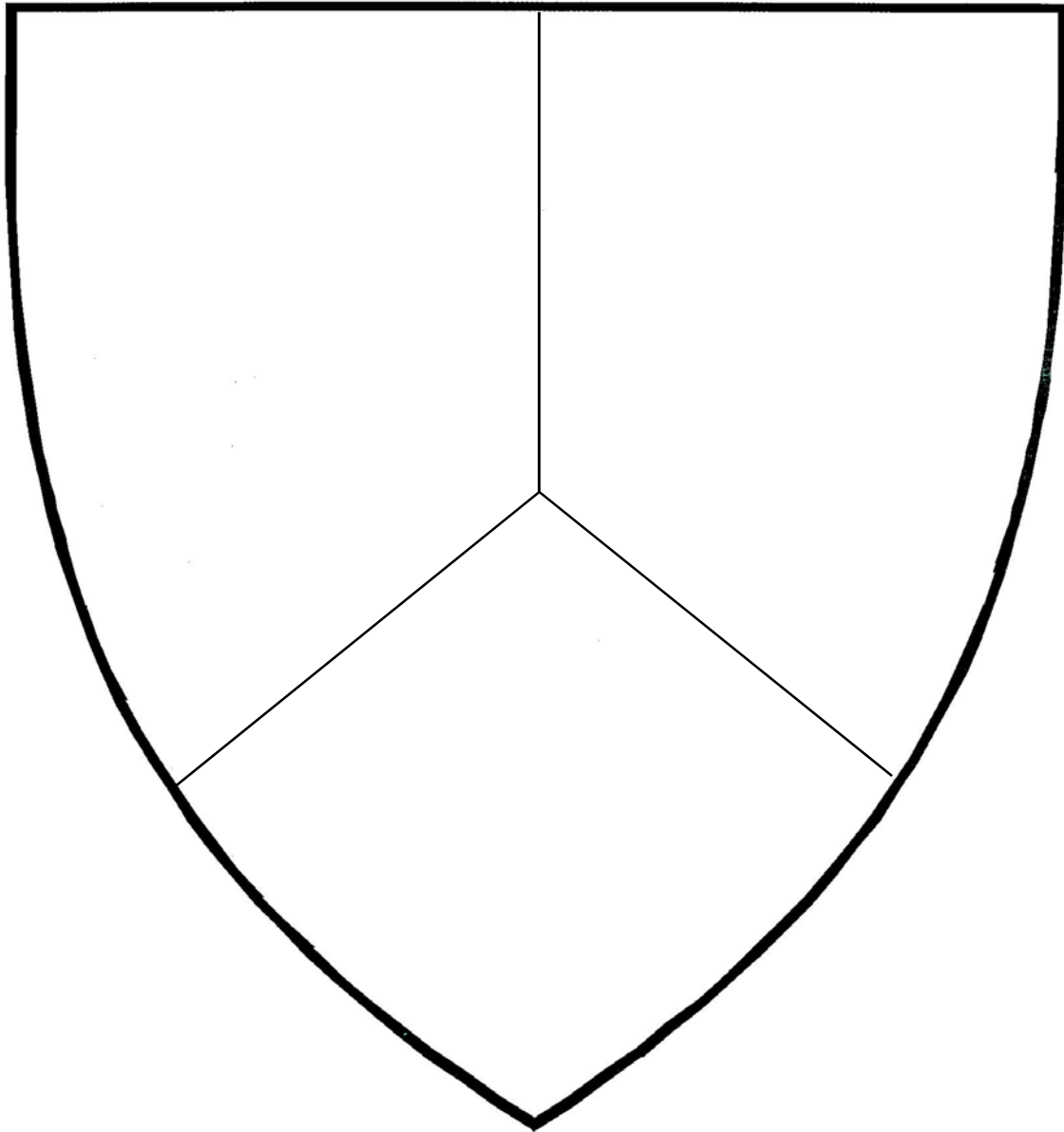
Just as Shakespeare's family had a coat of arms, so can your family! After reading about the symbols and colors listed below, create your own family coat of arms on the next page. Use traditional symbols from below to help. Create your own symbols which help express who your family is and what they stand for. Use one section to describe who YOU are, the 2nd section to describe who your FAMILY is, and the 3rd section to describe your HOME or NEIGHBORHOOD. Feel free to attach symbols onto the outside of the shield and make sure to write your last name in the rectangle at the bottom!

Objects mentioned in the chart
are also pictured above!

Color	Meaning
Gold	Generosity and elevation of the mind
Silver or White	Peace and sincerity
Red	Warrior or martyr; Military strength
Blue	Truth and Loyalty
Green	Hope, joy, and loyalty in love
Black	Constancy or grief
Purple	Royal majesty, sovereignty, and justice
Orange	Worthy ambition
Maroon	Patient in battle, and yet victorious

Animal	Meaning
Ant	Great labor, wisdom, and providence
 Bear	Strength, cunning, ferocity in the protection of one's children
 Dove	Peace
Dragon	Valiant defender of treasure; valor and protection
Wolf	Reward from perseverance in a long battle
Fish	Generous mind; virtuous and spiritual unity
Pig	Fertility
Horse	Readiness for king and country
 Tiger	Fierceness and valor
Snail	Deliberation and perseverance

Symbol	Meaning
 Anchor	Hope; religious steadfastness
Arrow	Readiness for battle
 Column	Fortitude
Cross	Faith; Christianity
Knight on Horseback	The soul guiding the body; a journey
Tree	Life and connection to the earth
Star	Noble goodness
Scales	Justice
Skull	Mortality
Unicorn	Extreme Courage; virtue and strength



Write About It! Symbols and Meaning

Now that you've created your own coat of arms, write a paragraph explaining the colors and symbols you chose to use and what they mean to you. Assign your family a motto and write it either above your coat of arms or as a title to your paragraph. Why do families have coats of arms? What is the social/political significance? Why might it be important to families to have one?

mental illness

In the story of *King Lear*, Lear develops a mental illness and, by the end of the play, has gone completely mad.

Here are a few different types of mental illness and ways that doctors attempt to treat people with them.

Clinical Depression

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

Symptoms:

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

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

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

Bipolar Disorder

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

Symptoms:

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

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

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

Attention-Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

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

Symptoms:

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

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

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

Schizophrenia

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

Symptoms:

- Delusions and hallucinations
- Confused thinking and speech
- Lack of interest
- Repeated rhythmic gestures or slow movement

Causes: Unknown, but may be genetic.

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

mental illness

-----> treatments

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

Prolixin— helps treat disordered thoughts and other emotional, nervous, and mental problems. Take tablets by mouth with a drink of water. Take with food or milk if it upsets your stomach. **Side Effects:** Constipation, difficulty sleeping, drowsiness, dry mouth, headache, sexual difficulties, skin rash, and weight gain.

Adderall— increase attention and decrease restlessness in patients who are overactive, unable to concentrate for very long or are easily distracted, and have unstable emotions. **Side Effects:** Anxiety, dry mouth, irregular heartbeat, nervousness, changing moods, shaking, trouble sleeping.

Or----->

medication

Lithium—first approved in the United States in 1970 to treat bipolar disorder. Lithium is used to even out the highs (mania) and lows (depression) in mood associated with bipolar disorder. Lithium has also been used to treat people with schizophrenia. Lithium should be taken every day in regularly spaced doses. **Side Effects:** Nausea, loss of appetite, mild diarrhea, weight gain, acne, and skin rashes.

Therapy

- **Self-Help Groups** — groups of people suffering from the same illness get together to discuss issues and problems with one another. Great for families as well.
- **Psychotherapy** — meetings with a trained doctor to discuss and counsel a patient and help them adapt to a more normal life.
- **Family Therapy** — meetings with the patient, the family, and a doctor to discuss the progress of both the family and the patient.
- **Rehabilitation** — can help prepare a person to re-enter society in a functional capacity. These programs may include job training, money-management, social skills, basic living skills, supported housing, and even instruction on how to use public transportation.

Do It! Diagnose King Lear

Now its your turn to play the doctor. This activity is meant to be done in front of your class, so get ready! Pretend you are a psychiatrist (a doctor who diagnoses mental disorders). Choose a classmate to play a member of the Lear or Gloucester family. Then, ask them questions about themselves. Make sure he/she responds in character. Try to diagnose Lear. How would King Lear respond to the questions? What do you think Lear is suffering from? Use the illnesses on the previous page to figure it out. What treatments would you suggest?

Interested in movies that discuss mental disorders? Here are a few to watch:

- Benny & June
- Rescue Me (TV Series)
- The Hours
- The Madness of King George
- As Good as it Gets
- Awakenings

Glossary

- **ANTIPSYCHOTIC** (an-tE-sI-'kă-tik)—a powerful tranquilizer used to treat psychosis and acts by blocking dopamine (brain chemical) nerve receptors.
- **CHEMICAL IMBALANCE**—when the chemicals which keep the brain working properly are used in the wrong amounts.
- **DELUSION** (di-'lŭ-zh&n)—something that is believed to be true or real but that is actually false or unreal.
- **HYPERACTIVITY**—the state of being excessively active.

fact

 * Mental illness is a disease that you cannot catch from others. It is not *
 * a punishment or a weakness and is not related to lifestyles. Treatment *
 * is expensive. If you feel that either yourself, a friend, or a family *
 * member is suffering from a mental illness and needs help, here are *
 * numbers you may call: *
 * • National Alliance on Mental Illness: (800) 950-NAMI *
 * • Samaritens Suicide Prevention: (877) 870-HOPE *
 * • Depression Hotline: 630-482-9696 *
 * • US Dept. of Health and Human Services: (800) 273-8255 *

power and territory

The play Two Rooms was written in response to the Beirut hostage crisis of the 1980s. The character Michael is being held hostage. This is a monologue he delivers to his wife, Lainie:

War isn't a tear in the fabric of things, it is the fabric. If earth is our mother, our father is war. The chief priority we have on earth is to vie with each other for a place to stand. Does any of this make sense, Lainie? I'm trying to explain why this has happened to us. Americans fight all the time—lots of wars. But always far away. We haven't had to fight for the soil we stand on in a century. We've forgotten that level of sacrifice. These people haven't. Everyone in this country—Christian, Sunni Moslem, Shi'ite, Palestinian, Israeli—everyone is fighting for the ground. The ground itself. They stand here or nowhere. So it's easy for them to give up their lives. Small sacrifice. It's easy for them to kill, too. Small sacrifice. You know how being here, being swallowed up by it, makes me feel? Like I'm finally part of the real world. For the first time. Lainie, something in me never felt... affected...until this happened. You know what it makes me think of? Shiloh. Vicksburg. The Wilderness. What those places must have been like: suffocating, endless, bleeding disaster. Stacking of bodies ten deep for a few feet of *our ground*. Don't you see? We're not different from these people, we've just forgotten. We think this urge doesn't exist anymore. We abstract everything, we objectify. We talk about global politics, how all this affects the balance of power. Do you know what a twenty-year-old Shi'ite thinks of the balance of power? (*Lights fade to black.*)

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

Street gangs fight over land as well. Gangs use symbols and signs to designate the territory they control. Many gang fights occur because someone has been selling drugs in the wrong territory or on territory that belongs to a rival gang.

Think about this: What would you do for a piece of land if it were very special to you? Imagine it is a favorite park, a favorite tree, or a favorite school. Take a look at the newspapers and TV programs dedicated to the Israel-Lebanon conflict. This is a conflict over, amongst other things, the very land which makes up Israel and other parts of the Middle East.

Think About It! A Monologue from *Two Rooms*

Read the monologue from the play *Two Rooms*. The main character, Michael, brings up an interesting point about our ideas of land and war and how they differ from the ideas of people in other countries. What do you think? Is Michael right in what he says? How does this monologue make you feel? When you're finished thinking, write a response letter to Michael. Tell him how you feel. Do you agree or disagree with his ideas?

Make It! Conflict Collage

In *Two Rooms* and *King Lear*, there are conflicts over land which develop into major crises. Cut out pictures and phrases from newspapers and magazines and paste them onto a blank sheet of paper to create a collage that shows different conflicts over land. You can take ideas from the Civil War, the Gulf War, the War in Iraq, World War II, the Israel-Lebanon conflict, gang fights in Chicago or other cities, or other sources. Use your own ideas to come up with your concept of conflict over land.

RESPONDING TO THE PLAY

text questions----->

The following are text questions designed to assess basic comprehension of the plot and character relationships. These questions are also found in the Student Guide. More in-depth questions are featured in the "Essay and Discussion Questions" section.

1. Is this play being presented exactly as Shakespeare wrote it? If not, what has changed?
2. What does Robert Falls say we have very little sense of in regards to Shakespeare's writing?
3. What has Falls eliminated most of in this version of the text?

SCENE 1

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

SCENE 2

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

SCENE 3

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

SCENE 4

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

text questions----->

10. What does Lear say is “sharper than a serpent’s tooth?” What does he mean by that?
11. What is Goneril’s plan? To whom does she write? About what?

SCENE 5

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

SCENE 6

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

SCENE 7

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

SCENE 8

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

SCENE 9

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

SCENE 10

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

SCENE 11

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

text questions----->

SCENE 12

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

SCENE 13

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

SCENE 14

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

SCENE 15

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

SCENE 16

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

SCENE 17

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

SCENE 18

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

SCENE 19

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

SCENE 20

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

text questions----->

SCENE 21a

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

SCENE 21b

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

SCENE 21c

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

SCENE 22

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

SCENE 23

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

SCENE 24


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

SCENE 25

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

study questions

guide



1. After reading about 5 activities to help you become a playwright, do you think there are any other activities that should be done? What activities would you add? Why?
2. Why is stage combat like ballet or dancing? What other activities are rehearsed to perfection?
3. What is an adaptation? How is the Goodman's production of *King Lear* an adaptation?
4. In classical literature, a tragic hero requires four characteristics. Do you agree with these characteristics? Can a hero be tragic with only three of them? What do you think?
5. How is rhymed verse different from prose? What is iambic pentameter and how does it work?
6. Relationships are important to the play. Which relationship is the most important? Why do you feel this way?
7. In your own words, define a cult of personality. What are its characteristics? Do you see these throughout *King Lear*? What about on TV or in the news?
8. List two character traits of an Oldest, Middle, and Youngest child. What makes each of the three so different? Do you agree with the characteristics? Why or why not?
9. What is the classic definition of a "normal" family? What is YOUR definition of a normal family?
10. Define heraldry and what it was used for. Can you find any modern examples of heraldry?
11. Of the mental illnesses mentioned, which one seems the most difficult to live with? Why do you feel this way?
12. Does the amount of land you have define how much power you control? Is the story of *King Lear* about power or land? Or both?
13. How does Robert Falls' job contribute to the Goodman Theatre's goal of creating art? What is an artistic director and what does he or she do?
14. If *King Lear* were set in Elizabethan London, what would it look like? How would the costumes and characters act? Do you feel it is better to set a play in modern times or the original period in which it was written?