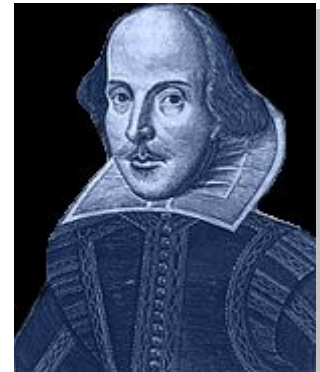


#9940
KING LEAR

CLEARVUE/EAV, 2002
Grade Level: 10-13+
19 mins.

DESCRIPTION

A contemporary interpretation of the relationships between King Lear and his daughters, Goneril, Regan, and Cordelia. Using today's TV news-magazine style of interview and commentary, the characters reveal their true motives and feelings about each other. A between-the-scenes summary of events clarifies the plot's development. Modern perspective on old themes of family, siblings, roles, and politics.



ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Subject Area: Language Arts–Reading

- Standard: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of literary texts
 - ◆ Benchmark: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand a variety of literary texts (e.g., fiction, nonfiction, myths, poems, biographies, autobiographies, science fiction, supernatural tales, satires, parodies, plays, American literature, British literature, world and ancient literature) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 1.)
 - ◆ Benchmark: Analyzes the simple and complex actions (e.g., internal/external conflicts) between main and subordinate characters in literary works containing complex character structures (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 4.)
 - ◆ Benchmark: Understands how themes are used across literary works and genres (e.g., universal themes in literature of different cultures, such as death and rebirth, initiation, love and duty; major themes in American literature; authors associated with major themes of specific eras) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 2.)
 - ◆ Benchmark: Makes connections between his or her own life and the characters, events, motives, and causes of conflict in texts (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 5.)
 - ◆ Benchmark: Uses language and perspectives of literary criticism to evaluate literary works (e.g., evaluates aesthetic qualities of style, such as diction, tone, theme, mood; identifies ambiguities, subtleties, and incongruities in the

C a p t i o n e d M e d i a P r o g r a m

text; compares reviews of literature, film, and performances with own response) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 3 and 6.)

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To increase the level of understanding of *King Lear*.
2. To examine the themes of the play.
3. To assist students to formulate dramatic and critical questions related to interpretation.
4. To reveal viewpoints about the motives and personalities of some of the main characters.
5. To establish a personal rapport with the play.
6. To develop a critical outlook in regards to the play and on the practice of interpretation.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The video represents a creative interpretation of *King Lear*. It is not intended to replace the reading of the text or the viewing of the play but seeks to provide a worthwhile supplement to such reading and viewing. As a creative interpretation, this video raises important, critical questions not only about how *King Lear* can be interpreted, but also about interpretation in general.

VOCABULARY

- | | | |
|--------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1. banish | 8. inheritance | 15. reign |
| 2. captive | 9. kingdom | 16. reunited |
| 3. dalliance | 10. liar | 17. royalty |
| 4. divest | 11. madness | 18. sibling |
| 5. elaborate | 12. obligation | 19. sterility |
| 6. heir | 13. politic | 20. torture |
| 7. hypocrite | 14. rebuff | |

BEFORE SHOWING

1. Read *King Lear* by William Shakespeare. In small groups answer the following questions:
 - a. What sort of people are Goneril, Regan, and Cordelia?
 - b. What sort of relationship does each daughter have with her father?
 - c. What sort of relationship do the daughters have with one another?
2. Discuss *King Lear*.
 - d. What are the historical, cultural, and dramatic contexts of the play?
 - e. What is its theme?
 - f. What is it about?
 - g. Describe the characters of the play. Which ones change over the course of the play and which ones do not?
 - h. What is the relationship between family and politics?

DURING SHOWING

1. View the video more than once, with one showing uninterrupted.
2. Stop the video before each next scene is acted out to discuss the previous section.

AFTER SHOWING

Discussion Items and Questions

1. What political and social issues does *King Lear* discuss?
2. How does the play portray the monarchy to its audience? Is the monarchy a good system of government? Why or why not?
3. Would you say that English monarchs exercised absolute power?
4. Is Lear a good father?
5. Would you say the play is more about family or political matters?
6. Do you think the play is politically conservative (celebrating the English monarchy) or is it politically radical (criticizing the institution of monarchy)?
7. In the video, Goneril, Regan, and Cordelia have a lot to say to the interviewer about themselves and about one another. From your study of the play, *King Lear*:
 - a. Do you agree with what Goneril, Regan, and Cordelia say about themselves and one another?
 - b. Do you agree with the interpretations offered by this video?

Applications and Activities

1. Take turns sitting in a chair at the front of the classroom. Adopt the persona of one of the daughters and respond to the question: "How do you feel about the way you have been presented in that documentary?"
2. Write a script for interviews with characters not covered in the video. Good candidates for interviews might be Lear, Kent, Gloucester, Edmund, Edgar, and the Fool.
3. Write a short play about conflicts within a family. The family might be a modern family or the setting might be otherwise.
 - a. Write the plays in scriptwriting teams as was done in Shakespeare's time.
 - b. Perform some of these plays.
 - c. At the end of the performances, the writers of the plays could answer questions from the audience or questions could be directed to the actors.
4. Draw family trees for the Lear and Gloucester families. Discuss what relevance these family trees might have for the motives of the characters listed in them.
5. Research and report on one of the following topics:
 - a. English history topics such as the War of the Roses, the Tudor Dynasty, the Stuart Dynasty, or the English Civil War.
 - b. The recent history of countries where the state has been involved in human rights abuses, such as torture.
 - c. The Globe Theatre.
 - d. The family in early modern England.
 - e. London in 1604-1605.

C a p t i o n e d M e d i a P r o g r a m

- f. The performance history of *King Lear*.
- g. The earlier play, *Gorboduc*.
- h. The political writings of King James I.
- i. Niccolo Machiavelli and the early modern reception of Machiavelli's writings.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this video is to provide students with an enhanced level of personal response to Shakespeare's *King Lear*. The program helps students understand the themes of the play and assists students in formulating and thinking of important questions related to interpretation (both dramatic and critical).

Important scenes from the original play are presented. These scenes are interspersed with documentary style interviews intended to offer intriguing perspectives about the motives and personalities of some of the main characters. In this way, the video employs the process of imaginative re-creation and invokes pertinent questions about some of the themes of the play, particularly themes pertaining to family relationships.

The program offers an effective springboard into similar processes that might be undertaken by students. The overall approach is designed to work with what the students already know from their own experiences, including concepts like family and government. This difficult, yet rewarding, play will therefore stimulate student interest and involvement.

CMP RELATED RESOURCES

- [Universal Themes in Literature #9467](#)
- [William Shakespeare #5770](#)
- [William Shakespeare: Background to His Works #2245](#)
- [William Shakespeare: A Life of Drama #8375](#)

World Wide Web



The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and "kid safe" sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

• ABSOLUTE SHAKESPEARE

<http://absoluteshakespeare.com/>

Study the famous playwright's sonnets and plays, take an online quiz, learn interesting facts, and tour the Globe Theatre with this fact-filled resource.

- **SHAKESPEARE'S GLOBE**

<http://www.shakespeares-globe.org>

Shakespeare's Globe is a unique international resource dedicated to the exploration of Shakespeare's work and the playhouse for which he wrote. Use the "Education" menu to access a variety of resources for teachers and different ages of students.



- **SHAKESPEARE RESOURCE CENTER**

<http://www.bardweb.net>

This educational site features a biography of Shakespeare, summaries of the four periods of his works, play synopses, information about Elizabethan England, history of the Globe, and more.

- **SHAKESPEARE NET**

<http://www.shakespearenet.net>

Locate character descriptions, play summaries, essay topics, historical facts, a personal biography, and more.

- **SHAKESPEARE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES**

<http://www.cdli.ca/~mcoady/litless.htm>

Gather useful teacher resources, including quizzes, glossaries, classroom projects, study questions, and more.

- **MR. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE AND THE INTERNET**

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

Research the works, life, and criticisms of Shakespeare with this helpful site. The educational link features lesson plans and other teacher resources.

