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• Based on baptismal records, most biographers agree that William Shakespeare was born on April 23, 1564, in the town of Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, England.

• William, the son of wealthy shop owner John Shakespeare, received a traditional education: up to ten hours a day studying grammar, logic, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music. Later in his schooling, Shakespeare also studied Greek and Latin on a daily basis. Although we have little proof of Shakespeare’s academic career, the plays are evidence enough that Shakespeare was well versed in the language passed down from the ancient classicists.

• In 1582, when he was eighteen, Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway. He had three children: Susanna and twins Judith and Hamnet. Although no conclusive documentation remains about his whereabouts between 1582 and 1594, we do know that by 1590 Shakespeare had left his family in Stratford and was living in London.

• Throughout history, theatre companies have seldom enjoyed a good reputation. In early 16th Century England, actors and their companies were thought of as lazy and dishonest:
  - lazy because plays were performed during the day, which meant that a percentage of those attending were “absent without leave” from work;
  - dishonest because an actor on stage was pretending to be someone he was not, which meant that he was lying.

• During the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, however, there was a growing interest in play-going, so actors were given the right to organize themselves into troupes under the protection of a royal patron or sponsor. Shakespeare’s troupe secured the patronage of the Lord Chamberlain, therefore they became known as The Lord Chamberlain’s Men.

• Patronage changed after the death of Elizabeth I in 1603, when King James VI of Scotland became King James I of England. During the reign of James I, and continuing to 1642 when the Puritans closed the theatres, The Lord Chamberlain’s Men were recognized favorites of the crown and known as The King’s Men.

• Shakespeare often visited Stratford and bought a house there for his family. His son Hamnet died in 1596 at the age of eleven, possibly of the plague. At the age of 47 in 1611, Shakespeare retired to Stratford, ending his tenure as a resident writer and actor with the company he helped form. William Shakespeare died on his birthday on April 23, 1616. His wife, Anne, lived until the age of sixty-seven. His two surviving children, Susanna and Judith, both married but left no family.

• Although Shakespeare’s family tree ended, his plays continue to carry his memory, and will do so well into the future. Shakespeare wrote 37-39 plays, 154 sonnets, and contributed over 2,000 words to the English language. Today his plays are performed in many languages including German, Russian, French, and Japanese. As Ben Jonson, a contemporary of Shakespeare once wrote, “…he was not for an age, but for all time!”
YOUR ROLE AS AN AUDIENCE MEMBER

1. **In Shakespeare’s day**, attending a play was an exciting community event. While waiting for the play to begin and during intermission, audiences would eat, drink, visit with friends, and enjoy specialty acts featuring jugglers, clowns, dancers, and musicians.

   **At the Blackfriars today**, we offer the same kind of experience during our pre-show and intermission entertainments. If you want to join in the pre-show fun, arrive up to a half hour early. During intermission there will be more entertainment, but this is also the time when you can stretch your legs, use the restroom, and purchase souvenirs and refreshments (no outside food or drink allowed). At most modern theatres you are asked not to bring food or drink back in the theatre with you, but this is permitted at the Blackfriars.

2. In Shakespeare’s day, plays were performed in the middle of the afternoon either outdoors under the afternoon sun or indoors under candlelight. This means that the actors could see the audience, the audience could see the actors, and the members of the audience could see each other.

   **At the Blackfriars today**, we perform with the lights on. As an audience member, you feel like you are in the same room with the actors—like you are actually part of the play. This is very different from seeing something at the cinema or in a theatre where the actors are lit and the audience sits in the dark. You get the feeling that at any moment the actors might start talking with you, and sometimes they will.

3. In Shakespeare’s day, there wasn’t such a pronounced division between the actors and the audience. The theatres were small, and audience members sat close to the stage. Sometimes, in theatres like the Globe, they stood around the stage in the pit. At other theatres they could sit on the stage itself.

   **At the Blackfriars today**, there are many different places to sit (for some performances this means different prices). Wherever you sit, let the action of the play draw you in. We have benches that can be occupied as is or, for comfort, can include cushions and seat backs. There are Lord’s Chairs and on-stage Gallant Stools very close to the action, and upper balcony seating which may require you to lean forward to look over the rail. Do be considerate, however, of others who are also trying to see.

4. In Shakespeare’s day, there were no electronic devices.

   **At the Blackfriars today**, no electronic devices should be used by the audience during the performance. Please don’t take pictures during the show. If you have cell phones, video games, CD players, walkmans, or MP3 players please turn them off so that they don’t distract the other audience members or the actors. No text messaging during the performance. Remember, this is a live event, so don’t be a distraction. Part of your role as an audience member is to make sure that seeing a play is an enjoyable community event for everyone in attendance.

5. In Shakespeare’s day, the audience often changed seats, mingled, and walked in and out of the theatre (much like a modern sporting event), but they always knew what was going on in the play—they knew the score. Who’d want to miss the best part? The swordfight, the kiss, the bawdy joke…a new word that Shakespeare invented.

   **At the Blackfriars today**, you may leave the theatre during intermissions and interlude entertainments. Return to your seat before the play resumes—you don’t want to miss the best part (or perhaps the part that might be on your exam). Unless it is an emergency, do not leave the theatre during the play itself.
6. In Shakespeare’s day, plays were meant to be seen and heard rather than read. In comparison to today, Elizabethans spent more time speaking and listening to language rather than reading and writing language. Figures of *speech*, for example, were more than a dramatic writing tool; they were meant to be spoken.

   **At the Blackfriars today,** actors create stories through speaking words and embodying actions. Attending a play is different than reading a play. We invite you to experience the play through listening, seeing, feeling, thinking and imagining. Even if you know you are going to have to write a paper or take a test about the play, don’t take notes and stay in your brain. If you do, you really haven’t experienced what it’s like to attend a play.

7. In Shakespeare’s day, audiences were asked to use their imagination. There certainly were theatrical events that used elaborate and expensive technical elements, but Shakespeare’s plays keep scenery, props, costumes, lighting and special effects to a minimum. Instead of a cast of thousands, Shakespeare’s actors played multiple roles—including young men playing all the female parts.

   **At the Blackfriars today,** you will also need to use your imagination. Shakespeare’s words are as powerful today as they were four hundred years ago. They tell stories that engage and challenge all of the senses. We limit technical elements so Shakespeare’s words can shine. Music and sound effects are always created live and in the moment of the action. Actors play multiple roles and often those roles are cross-gender cast.

8. In Shakespeare’s day, people loved talking about where they’d been, what they’d seen, who they saw, and what they thought about the plays—they voiced their likes and dislikes about the story and the actors.

   **At the Blackfriars today,** you will have an opportunity to take a peek behind the scenes. After the show you can talk with the actors about the story of the play, the characters, the actor’s process, and anything else you might want to know about theatre, Shakespeare, or the American Shakespeare Center.

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“*The Laughing Audience*”
by William Hogarth, 1733.

Note the lighted sconces that permit socializing and a more communal response to the show. The man at the far right on the second row, for example, appears to be laughing at the laughter of his fellow audience members, while the gentleman in the row above is clearly annoyed with the shenanigans going on behind him.
STAUNTON’S BLACKFRIARS PLAYHOUSE

In 2001 the Blackfriars Playhouse in Staunton, Virginia, the world’s only re-creation of Shakespeare’s original indoor theatre, opened its doors to the public. To commemorate this historic occasion, Shenandoah Shakespeare (now the American Shakespeare Center) published Blackfriars Playhouse, a series of short essays by internationally renowned scholars about the history, construction, and function of the London and Staunton Blackfriars, as well as the companies that called them home. The following excerpt by Andrew Gurr, Professor of English at the University of Reading in England and former Director of Research at Shakespeare’s Globe in London, is from that collection:

LONDON’S BLACKFRIARS PLAYHOUSE

The story of the original Blackfriars is a chapter—or rather a book—of accidents, a large volume that tells us about the evolution of London’s first theatres. It is a story that runs alongside and ahead of Shakespeare’s Globe. The Blackfriars was built in 1596, three years earlier than the Globe, and if Shakespeare’s company had been allowed to use the Playhouse immediately, they would never have bothered to build the open-air theatre. Despite the depiction in Shakespeare In Love of Queen Elizabeth attending the Rose Theatre, it was the Blackfriars that received the first-ever visit by a reigning queen; Henrietta Maria, Charles I’s French spouse, went four times to see a play at the Blackfriars.

By the 1620s and 1630s the Blackfriars had become the place for England’s high and mighty to see the best plays, in the best society, complete with sea-coal braziers in the boxes alongside the stage to keep them warm. The Lord Chamberlain himself, the Privy Councillor responsible for plays and court entertainment, had a personal key to one of the boxes beside the Blackfriars stage.

After the long closure of theatres between 1642 and the restoration of a king in 1660, it was the idea of the indoor Blackfriars that lived on rather than Shakespeare’s Globe. The Blackfriars’s chief imitator, the Cockpit, even reopened briefly during the Restoration for use as a playhouse, but by then the need for the French type of theatre—with a proscenium arch and a picture-frame stage—made the new players close off the boxes and tiers above the stage, leaving the theatre’s capacity so small that it could not thrive. Only now, 405 years after it was first created, and 392 years since Shakespeare’s company first started to use it, can the original Blackfriars once again come into its own, as the best playhouse of Shakespeare’s time.

--Andrew Gurr

ACTOR TALKBACK SESSIONS AT THE BLACKFRIARS

At the end of each school matinee performance at the Blackfriars Theatre, the audience will have the opportunity to meet a few of the actors and ask questions. During this twenty minute session, actors will be glad to discuss a range of topics. They enjoy sharing their ideas about plot points and character relationships. You can also ask them about costumes, props, or other elements that might not be in the written script, yet are important to the performance. Perhaps you would like to know about the rehearsal process or how an individual actor made a specific choice about a character. You may ask behind-the-scenes questions and discover how a quick change of clothes was handled or a sound effect was made. Curious about the life of an actor? Go ahead and ask about how they got their start, where they studied, or what other roles they’ve played. This is your time to find out anything you want to know about the play, the actors, theatre, and the Blackfriars.
The ASC and “ORIGINAL PRACTICES”

By following the basic principles of Renaissance theatrical production, the American Shakespeare Center gives its audiences some of the pleasures that an Elizabethan playgoer would have enjoyed.

**Universal Lighting**

Shakespeare's actors could see their audience; ASC actors can see you. When an actor can see an audience, they can engage with an audience. And audience members can play the roles that Shakespeare wrote for them - Cleopatra's court, Henry V's army, or simply the butt of innumerable jokes. Leaving an audience in the dark can literally obscure a vital part of the drama as Shakespeare designed it.

**Doubling**

Shakespeare's Macbeth has more than forty parts; Shakespeare's traveling troupe may have had fewer than fifteen actors. Like the Renaissance acting companies, the ASC doubles parts, with one actor playing as many as seven roles in a single show. Watching actors play more than one role, an audience can experience another aspect of Elizabethan playgoing - the delight of watching a favorite actor assume multiple roles.

**Gender**

Because women didn't take to the English stage until after the Restoration (1660), all the women in Shakespeare's plays were originally played by young boys or men. Shakespeare had a great deal of fun with this convention. In a production of As You Like It in 1600, a boy would have played Rosalind, who disguises herself as a boy, then pretends to be a woman. Let's review: that's a boy playing a woman disguised as a boy pretending to be a woman. Because we are committed to the idea that Shakespeare is about everyone - male and female – the ASC is not an all-male company, but we try to re-create some of the fun of gender confusions by casting women as men and men as women.

**Length**

We cannot know the precise running time of a Shakespeare play in the Renaissance, but the Chorus in Romeo and Juliet promises "two hours' traffic of our stage." The ASC tries to fulfill this promise through brisk pacing and a continuous flow of dramatic action, often without an intermission.

**Sets**

Shakespeare's company performed on a large wooden platform unadorned by fixed sets or scenery. A few large pieces - thrones, tombs, tables - were occasionally used to ornament a scene. The ASC will sometimes use set pieces (and/or boxes) to indicate location and, like Shakespeare's company, we use these items to spark the audience's imagination to "piece out our imperfections with [their] minds."

**Costuming**

Costuming was important to the theatre companies of Shakespeare's day for three reasons. First, the frequently lavish costumes provided fresh color and designs for the theatres, which otherwise did not change from show to show. Second, costumes made it easy to use one actor in a variety of roles. Third, as they do now, costumes helped an audience "read" the play quickly by showing them at a glance who was rich or poor, royalty or peasantry, priest or cobbler, ready for bed or ready to party, "in" or "out." Costumes are important to the ASC in the same way. But costumes were NOT important to Shakespeare and his fellows as a way of showing what life used to be like in a particular historical period. They performed Julius Caesar, for example, in primarily Elizabethan (not ancient Roman) garb. For them, as for us, the play always spoke to the present. That's why we use costumes that speak to our audiences in the most familiar language possible while staying consistent with the words in the play.

**Music**

Shakespeare had a soundtrack. Above the stage, musicians played an assortment of string, wind, and percussion instruments before, during, and after the play. The plays are sprinkled with songs for which lyrics, but not much of the music, survive. The ASC sets many of these songs in contemporary style. The result is emblematic of our approach - a commitment to Shakespeare's text and to the mission of connecting that text to modern audiences.
STUDY GUIDE INDEX

This study guide packet has been created to accompany the productions in the current season at The American Shakespeare Center. Each play has its own separate guide with a number of resources, activities, and assignments created specifically for that play, offering a broad range of materials for you to choose from as you plan your classes. Please feel free to reproduce these pages as needed. Some activities and assignments can be completed after reading the text of the play while others are based on specific choices in the ASC productions. Most activities can be adapted to serve either individual or group assignments. Answer keys appear at the end of each guide. The following is a list of the materials you will find in the study guide for each play.

Stuff That Happens In the Play
This is a description of the major events in the play to help guide students through general plot points.

Who’s Who
This is a list of the characters in the play, along with a short description of who they are and what they do.

Director’s Notes
This is a short essay written by the director of each ASC production for the season program, in which they give their thoughts on the play.

Discovery Space Scavenger Hunt
These simple questions are to be used in conjunction with the ASC performance. Before attending the play, teachers should assign each student one of the twenty questions to help them become more active viewers at the performance.

Rhetoric and Figures of Speech
This section focuses on the use of language in the play. Examples of a particular rhetorical device or linguistic feature in the text are followed by an activity that relates to the particular rhetorical device or figure of speech.

Viewpoints
This section of the guide contains activities and information built around a particular aspect of each play. A short examination of a theme or topic is followed with a related assignment.

ShakesFEAR Activity
These classroom teaching ploys are excerpts from ASC Co-founder and Executive Director Ralph Alan Cohen’s book ShakesFEAR and How to Cure It. Cohen developed these activities to help overcome students’ feelings of intimidation toward Shakespeare’s plays.

ABC’s
This is a fill-in-the-blank assignment that tests students’ knowledge of the text. Answers can be drawn from a word bank containing twenty-six words related to the play, each starting with a different letter of the alphabet.

Crossword Puzzles
The study guide contains a crossword puzzle for each play with answers taken from the text.

Actors’ Choice
These thoughts and observations made by ASC actors about their performance choices can either be used as prompts for written responses or classroom discussion.

Staging Challenges
This section will help students to examine how technical aspects of the production tell the story of the play, and prompts them to consider what unique challenges they might face if they were to stage an original practices production of the play.

Crossing the Curriculum
These activities will help students examine various aspects of the play as they pertain to non-theatre and non-language standards.

Quizzes and Essay Questions
Each study guide contains one or more quizzes that teachers can use to test their students knowledge of the play, as well as prompts for essays in response to the production and the text.

Answer Keys are available to teachers through emailing sarah.henley@americanshakespearecenter.com
Ginna Hoben (front) as Kate and Josh Carpenter as Petruchio in the ASC 2007/2008 Piercing Eloquence Tour production of The Taming of the Shrew. Photo by Mike Bailey.
THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

CAST

IN THE INDUCTION
Christopher Sly, a drunken tinker  Scot Carson
Hostess  Alisa Ledyard
Lord  Evan Hoffmann
Page  Christopher Seiler
Huntsmen  Raffi Barsoumian, Daniel Kennedy
Servants  Paul Reisman, Chris Johnston,
          Alisa Ledyard, Ellen Adair

A COMPANY OF PLAYERS
Lucentio, suitor to Bianca  Raffi Barsoumian
Tranio, servant to Lucentio  Daniel Kennedy
Biondello, servant to Lucentio  Evan Hoffmann

Baptista Minola, rich citizen of Padua  Christopher Seiler
Katherina, the Shrew, older daughter of Baptist  Ginna Hoben
Bianca, younger daughter of Baptist  Ellen Adair

Gremio, rich, old suitor to Bianca  Scot Carson
Hortensio, suitor to Bianca,
friend to Petruchio  Chris Johnston

Petruchio, suitor to Kate  Josh Carpenter
Grumio, servant to Petruchio  Paul Reisman
Curtis, house servant to Petruchio  Alisa Ledyard
Haberdasher  Christopher Seiler
Tailor  Scot Carson

Pedant, pretends to be Vincentio  Alisa Ledyard
Vincentio, father of Lucentio  Paul Reisman
Widow, later the wife of Hortensio  Alisa Ledyard

DIRECTOR  JIM WARREN
Assistant Director  Aaron Hochhalter
Costume Designer  Erin M. West
Costumer  Jenny McNee
Fight Director  Colleen Kelly
THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

STUFF THAT HAPPENS...

Stuff that happens in the Induction...

- A Lord finds a drunken tinker, Christopher Sly, asleep on the ground.
- The Lord decides to play a trick on Sly by telling him that he has had amnesia for fifteen years and that he’s really a Lord.
- Sly eventually accepts his new role as a Lord and all of the amenities that come with it.
- Traveling players arrive to present a “pleasant comedy” set in Italy for the “Lord Christopher Sly.”

Stuff That Happens In The Pleasant Comedy...

- Lucentio (along with his servants Tranio and Biondello) arrives in Padua to study.
- Baptista, a merchant from Padua, has two daughters eligible for marriage: Kate, “of devilish spirit,” and Bianca, “sacred and sweet.” Baptista decrees that no one can marry Bianca until Kate is wed.
- Lucentio falls in love with Bianca, who is also being wooed by Hortensio and old Gremio.
- To win Bianca, Lucentio disguises himself as a Latin teacher; Hortensio disguises himself as a music teacher.
- Lucentio’s servant, Tranio, disguises himself as Lucentio to woo Bianca openly for his master (who is now disguised as a Latin teacher).
- Petruchio arrives in Padua to find a rich wife. Hearing of the shrewish Kate and her generous dowry, Petruchio vows to marry her.
- Petruchio meets Kate; after a noisy exchange, Petruchio announces that they will be married on Sunday.
- Petruchio, dressed in ridiculous clothes, arrives late on the wedding day. After the ceremony he refuses to stay for the wedding feast. Instead, he whisks Kate off to his home in Verona.
- Tranio (disguised as Lucentio) outbids old Gremio for Bianca’s hand in marriage while the real Lucentio (disguised as a Latin teacher) wins Bianca’s love.
- Tranio finds someone to impersonate Lucentio’s father, Vincentio; this imposter meets with Baptista and consents to the marriage of Lucentio and Bianca.
- The real Vincentio then shows up.
- Chaos, weddings, and wagers ensue.
WHO’S WHO

Christopher Sly- A poor tinker. He is found in a drunken stupor and tricked into thinking he is a lord. The play proper is presented as a play performed for him by an acting troupe.

Hostess- Owner of an alehouse that Sly frequents.

Lord- A noble who, upon finding Sly in a drunken sleep, decides to play a joke on him. The Lord takes Sly to his house and has everyone tell him that he is a lord and has been mad for several years, thinking he was a tinker.

Servants- of the lord who carry out the jest with him.

Page- A young boy in the lord’s service who pretends to be Sly’s wife.

Players- The troupe of actors who perform the play proper.

Lucentio- Son of Vincentio, tutor of Bianca (disguised as Cambio), later husband to Bianca. Upon coming to Padua, Lucentio sees Bianca and falls in love with her. To gain access to her, he plans to pose as a stranger and to be her tutor.

Tranio- Lucentio’s servant, later disguised as Lucentio. To help his master win Bianca’s love, Tranio agrees to take his place and appear to Baptista as a suitor to Bianca. While Lucentio is obtaining her love, Tranio will obtain her father’s consent for “Lucentio” to wed his daughter.

Baptista Minola- A wealthy gentleman of Padua, father to Katherine and Bianca. Baptista decides that no one may wed Bianca until Katherine is married.

Katherine (Kate)- Baptista’s elder daughter, the “shrew.” She is beautiful and her father is rich, but nobody wants to marry her because she is unpleasant. When Petruchio woos her, Baptista quickly agrees to the marriage.

Bianca- younger daughter of Baptista, sister to Kate, later husband to Lucentio. She attracts the attention of many men.

Hortensio- Suitor to Bianca, and friend of Petruchio, later tutor to Bianca and Katherine (disguised as Licio) and, finally, husband to widow. He is eager to see Katherine married and suggests to Petruchio that she might be a match for him—if he can tame her. He, meanwhile, disguises himself as a musician in order to be close to Bianca. When he discovers Bianca is in love with Lucentio, he marries a widow whom he knows will have him.

Gremio- A long-time suitor to Bianca. Gremio meets Lucentio (disguised as Cambio) and brings him to Baptista as Bianca’s tutor, hoping this will gain him favor.

Petruchio- an old friend of Hortensio’s, suitor to and later husband of Katherine. Petruchio has come to Padua to seek his fortune after his father’s death and learns from Hortensio that a husband is desperately wanted for Katherine, who has a large dowry. Petruchio decides to woo her, thinking he can break her choleric temperament.

Grumio- Petruchio’s witty servingman. He aids his master in the taming of Katherine.

Biondello- A servant of Lucentio. He plays along with their plan by pretending that Tranio is his master and helps get a substitute Vincentio.

Pedant- A gentleman whom Tranio tricks into agreeing to masquerade as Vincentio.

Vincentio- Father of Lucentio. Vincentio comes to Padua to see his son.

Widow- Marries Hortensio.

Cutris- A high-ranking servant of Petruchio.

Nathaniel, Peter, Phillip, Nicholas, Joseph, and Bartholomew- servants of Petruchio.
**THE TAMING OF THE SHREW**

**DIRECTOR’S NOTES**

**Play the Game**

*The Taming of the Shrew* is an Elizabethan farce that addresses the issues of freedom, equality, and the primacy of marriage. Yet, many have criticized and condemned Shakespeare’s *Shrew* for being a sexist play that degrades women. Hundreds of productions have reinforced this false perception of chauvinism by having a macho Petruchio manhandle a neurotic Kate until she is beaten into an obedient and submissive servant. These productions, in my opinion, miss the mark in getting at the heart of Shakespeare’s funniest love story that ends with his happiest couple.

One of the key factors in believing that this play is truly a love story rests in believing that Kate and Petruchio fall in love by the end of their volatile first meeting. While some may balk at the credibility of “love at first sight,” many of us in today’s world have had similar experiences in which we somehow knew right away that we had met our soulmate. Certainly Rosalind and Orlando, Miranda and Ferdinand, as well as Juliet and Romeo (not to mention hundreds of couples from literature and film over the centuries) reflect this deeply strange, yet wonderful, human phenomenon.

Another important factor in recognizing the love story is hearing how Petruchio plays with words and how he invites Kate to share that game with him. As he waits to meet her for the first time, Petruchio clearly tells the audience that he will “woo her with some spirit” by telling her the opposite of the truth:

*Say that she rail, why then I’ll tell her plain*
*She sings as sweetly as a nightingale.*

He continues to play these word games in every scene and begins more overtly to solicit Kate’s joining him in the scene with the Haberdasher. Kate is so frustrated by Petruchio’s insistence that a fine looking hat is a “walnut-shell” that she delivers a beautiful, heartfelt, eight-line speech about how she will not be denied the right to speak her mind and that she will “be free, even to the uttermost, as I please, in words.” Petruchio gets more overt in his word games by responding with an affirmation:

*Why thou say’st true. It is a paltry cap,*
*A custard-coffin, a bauble, a silken pie.*
*I love thee well in that thou lik’st it not.*

But Kate still doesn’t understand this game of words, so Petruchio goes even further at the end of the scene and deliberately misspeaks about the time they will arrive at Kate’s father’s house…she still doesn’t get it. After playing with the hat and the time, Petruchio takes another step toward the obvious by calling the sun the moon. After she finally agrees with him and calls the sun the moon, Petruchio responds: “Nay then, you lie. It is the blessed sun.” This time, in her frustration, Kate hits an epiphany with her reply:

*Then God be blest, it is the blessed sun.*
*But sun it is not when you say it is not,*
*And the moon changes even as your mind.*
*What you will have it nam’d, even that it is,*
*And so it shall be so for Katherine.*

This moment is when Kate starts to play with Petruchio. I believe it’s a (if not the) pivotal moment of the play. Right after this moment, Petruchio calls an old man a woman and bids Kate to embrace “her.” Instead of merely embracing “her,” Kate goes further and calls this old man a “young, budding virgin.” Not only has Kate begun to play with Petruchio, she has started her journey to discover what it really means to be free in words and she does it better and plays even harder than Petruchio could have guessed. She out-Petruchio’s Petruchio.

Much ado is made of Kate’s final speech. It’s long. It’s the longest speech in the play. It deals with the duty wives owe their husbands. When anybody does a production of *Shrew*, the first question asked is “What are you going to do with Kate’s final speech?” Our answer for this production: Kate is going to speak those words. Here’s what we know: Kate looked at the sun and called it the moon; Kate looked at an old man and called him a sweet budding virgin. Then Kate looks at two wives and tells them what wives owe their husbands. You decide what you think she means. One of Petruchio’s great lines is “If she and I be pleased, what’s that to you?” This married couple is now operating as a team and on a level that we can only hope to follow.

In all of his plays, Shakespeare creates strong, articulate, intelligent women who often dominate and instruct the men. Kate never loses her strength of character; Petruchio simply helps her to see how she can channel that strength to be free in words. Shakespeare’s *Shrew* gives us a picture of two extroverts born to be together and destined to thrive in the best possible marriage of equals.

Jim Warren, ASC Artistic Director and Director of *The Taming of the Shrew*
**THE TAMING OF THE SHREW**

**DISCOVERY SPACE SCAVENGER HUNT**

*Discovery Space* [di-skuhv-uh-ree speys], *n. 1.* The curtained area at the upstage center portion of an Elizabethan stage where something is revealed to or discovered by characters or audiences.

**Instructions to Teacher:** Shortly before attending the ASC performance of *The Taming of the Shrew* at the Blackfriars Playhouse, assign each student one question from the following list for which to discover the answer as they watch the production.

1. What electronic device does Biondello have with him throughout the play?
2. What animal print does the widow wear?
3. What object has Lucentio and Petruchio’s names painted on it?
4. Which interlude song do the actors reprise at the end of the play?
5. Who kicks Gremio’s walker out from under him?
6. What color are Kate’s wedding shoes?
7. What color is the wig worn by Christopher Sly’s “wife”?
8. What does Grumio wear to the wedding?
9. Which character wears striped socks with high heels?
10. Who spits gum at Petruchio?
11. What object does Petruchio use to create a sound effect and fool Kate into thinking he has hit one of his servants?
12. What instrument does Hortensio tune during Bianca’s lesson?
13. Which two characters are involved in a “frozen” embrace?
14. What character, besides Kate, wears the black hat Petruchio claims is unfit for his wife?
15. What cleaning utensil is carried by Petruchio’s servants?
16. When Christopher Sly is told his servants will play music for him, what song does the guitarist begin to play?
17. What color is the gown that the tailor brings to Petruchio’s home?
18. What piece of clothing does Tranio first trade with Lucentio?
19. Which two characters carry water guns?
20. What does Kate use to bind Bianca’s hands?
RHETORIC AND FIGURES OF SPEECH

Rhetoric [ret-er-ik], n. 1. The art or science of all specialized literary uses of language in prose or verse, including the figures of speech. 2. The study of the effective use of language. 3. The ability to use language effectively.

Through the use of rhetorical devices (or figures of speech), Shakespeare provides a map to help an actor figure out how to play a character and communicate the story of the play to the audience.

Throughout *The Taming of The Shrew*, Shakespeare uses *synonymia* (a figure of pathos and a figure of repetition), in Petruchio’s language as a means of amplifying a point or a situation.

**Synonymia** (si-no-NIH-mi-a) the repetition of synonyms in order to produce an emotional or intellectual reaction.

In the following passage, Petruchio does his best to be as disagreeable as possible. One of his major tactics is using near synonyms, mocking synonyms, and insulting synonyms to describe the Haberdasher’s hat. Petruchio calls the hat such things as a “custard coffin, a bauble, a silken pie” and several other ridiculous names that we usually don’t associate with hats.

**Example:**

Petruchio

- Why, this was moulded on a porringer;
- A velvet dish: fie, fie! 'tis lewd and filthy:
- Why, 'tis a cockle or a walnut-shell,
- A knack, a toy, a trick, a baby's cap:
- Away with it! come, let me have a bigger.
- ( . . . ) it is a paltry cap,
- A custard-coffin, a bauble, a silken pie.

**Activity 1**

- If the purpose of using synonymia is to “produce an emotional or intellectual response”, what response do you think Petruchio is hoping for from Kate?
- Does Petruchio get the reaction he hopes for? Cite examples from the text.
- In the last line before the Haberdasher leaves, Kate claims, “…I like the cap, and it I will have, or I will have none.” Do you think Kate wins this moment and keeps the cap or do you think Petruchio takes it from her?
- Review the names that Petruchio calls the hat. What does each name mean? What images come to mind? Draw or create a picture of the hat based on Petruchio’s description.
- How would Kate describe the hat? How would the Haberdasher describe the hat?
Activity 2

Imagine that someone is offering you a perfectly fine gift, but you choose to repeatedly mock the gift rather than accept it. Create three names that can describe each of the items listed below. It may be helpful to think of the negative aspects of the item (a car, for example, could be dangerous, so you could call it a “hurt-mobile”) or look at it from another point of view (to a suitor Bianca could be an angel and a dainty songbird, but to Kate she is a mischief-maker and a cry baby).

- IPOD
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  2. ________________________________
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- AQUARIUM
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  2. ________________________________
  3. ________________________________

- HANDFUL OF MONEY
  1. ________________________________
  2. ________________________________
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- CAR
  1. ________________________________
  2. ________________________________
  3. ________________________________

- THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SHAKESPEARE
  1. ________________________________
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Marriage, as we know it today in the United States, is foremost about love, but the history of marriage has been tied to politics, money, status, necessity, and convenience. It is a legal and personal bond between two people usually solidified through a public ceremony. The pursuit of marriage is a theme in The Taming of the Shrew that crosses all plotlines and, ultimately, has different meaning to different characters.

**Love at First Sight**
Moments after arriving in Padua, Lucentio sees Bianca. Describe the circumstances that form his first impression of her (Act 1, sc.i). What is the first thing he hears her say? Although they both see Bianca, what lofty imagery does Lucentio use to describe her to Tranio that allows us to see her through his eyes? After Bianca goes inside, Lucentio and Tranio continue to listen to the conversation between the characters on stage. What do they learn that will help them plot a way for Lucentio to meet and woo Bianca?

**Sharing Secrets**
The men in The Taming of the Shrew are quiet vocal about their feelings and intentions toward wooing the object of their affection. We are not sure how Bianca feels toward her suitors. In other plays, Shakespeare allows women to reveal and share secrets through including a character who acts as a confidante (such as the nurse in Romeo and Juliet). How does Kate learn Bianca’s true feelings toward her suitors (2.1)? What does Bianca confess to Kate? Why do you think Kate cares and wants Bianca to tell her how she feels toward the suitors?

**Courting and the Language of Love**
Music, poetry, candy, flowers, and the Hallmark Card Company have all played a role in the courting ritual. Through disguise, both Lucentio and Hortensio are able to gain private time with Bianca (3.1). How do they each attempt to woo her? Describe the ways in which Bianca gives hope or discourages the advances?

Petruchio claims to have a much different style of wooing when he claims: “…I am rough and woo not like a babe.” After reading the complete passage (2.1), do you think this style of wooing is Petruchio’s way of pursuing a woman or is Petruchio choosing this manner because he is wooing Kate? Do you think Petruchio is capable of pursuing Bianca or another woman in a different manner?

Many couples profess love for each other with phrases such as “you are my all” and “you are my everything.” Even “my own” can be found imprinted on small candy valentine hearts. In what way is this different than what Petruchio declares about Kate at the wedding: “I will be master of what is mine own, She is my goods, my chattels; she is my house, My household-stuff, my field, my barn, My horse, my ox, my ass, my anything…”

**To Each His Own**
How couples choose to enter a relationship and express affection for each other varies as Petruchio demonstrates in 2.1: “Be patient gentlemen. I choose her for myself. If she and I be pleased, what’s that to you?” Citing the text whenever possible, what do you think marriage expectations are for: Kate, Bianca, Petruchio, Gremio, Hortensio, and Lucentio?

**The Wedding Planner**
Baptista is attempting to arrange marriages for his daughters and financial security is certainly a major factor (see activities in Crossing the Curriculum). After an agreement for Kate’s hand is reached, Petruchio asks Baptista to prepare the wedding feast and then leaves for Venice to “buy apparel ’gainst the wedding day” and then turns to Kate: “…We will have rings, and things, and fine array, And kiss me, Kate, we will be married o’Sunday.”

Marriage ceremonies have retained many historical, cultural, and familial traditions. Give a few examples from weddings you have attended or famous weddings described in the media. Can the same be said about the tradition of wooing and courting? What are some modern dating expectations? What traditions have survived? What special occasions (such as prom) have additional expectations involving tradition?
THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

DR. RALPH’S “SHAKESFEAR” ACTIVITY
(adapted from Ralph Alan Cohen’s book, ShakesFEAR and How to Cure It)

Stage Gremio’s Description of the “Wedding”

Shakespeare does not stage the wedding ceremony of Petruchio and Kate (3.3) but has Gremio, a nasty old man, give a 25-line description of it.

1. Discuss what the actor playing Gremio should do to make the speech interesting and in character. Does he just report facts or does he have an opinion of the behavior at the ceremony? Choose a few varying interpretations of how the speech can be played and try out those suggestions in class.

2. Stage the wedding based on Gremio’s account. While one student speaks Gremio’s lines, other students follow the stage directions provided by Gremio’s speech. You can use as few as three – Kate, Petruchio, and the Priest – but you can also add in all the other characters who would have been at the wedding. How does each of them react to Petruchio’s antics during the scene?

3. Note Gremio’s description of the wedding kiss. Now look at the end of Act Five, scene one, where Petruchio says, “kiss me, Kate” (135). In how many ways is this kiss different from the one Gremio describes? Why does Shakespeare stage this second kiss in “the street”? Why does he stage it at all? In what other two scenes does Petruchio invite a kiss from Kate?

In Case You Were Wondering
Whether a formal kiss of a hand or a friendly peck on the cheek, kissing is a sign of respect, friendship, and love. In almost all cultures the marriage ceremony ends with the bride and groom exchanging a kiss. Legally, a kiss (like a handshake) has served as a legal, public bond. Spiritually, the touching of lips and the exchange of breath can symbolize two lives becoming one.
1. On their way back to Kate’s house, Petruchio insists the sun is actually the ______.

2. Bianca is the ______ of Baptista’s two daughters.

3. This man wrote the music for Kiss Me, Kate, a musical based on The Taming of the Shrew. ______

4. Kate and Petruchio’s wedding takes place on this day of the week. ______

5. Another name for a hat maker. ______

6. Kate breaks this instrument over Hortensio’s head. ______

7. Petruchio’s deceased father. ______

8. Grumio refuses to let Kate eat the mustard, fearing it will be too hot, or ______.

9. On the day of the ______, Petruchio arrives late, and inappropriately dressed.

10. Tranio conveniences a gentleman of Mantua to pose as Vincentio, claiming a ______ between the dukes of Mantua and Padua has resulted in a ban against citizens of one city traveling to the other.

11. Petruchio’s dog. ______

12. Baptista ensures Petruchio that Kate’s ______ will include half his estate.

13. ______ hires the disguised Lucentio to help woo Bianca.

14. Petruchio names this woman in a list of famous shrews. ______

15. Lucentio disguises himself as a scholar to woo ______.

16. Biondello reports that Petruchio is traveling to his wedding in mismatched apparel: a new hat with an old leather vest called a ______.

17. Kate quickly informs Petruchio she prefers to be called ______.

18. Despite being the ______ suitor, Kate suspects Bianca favors Gremio for his money.

19. Having lost Bianca, Hortensio ultimately marries the ______.

20. Petruchio commands Kate to throw her cap ______ as a sign of her loyalty.

21. Petruchio denies Kate ______ and sleep in an attempt to tame her.

22. Petruchio claims that if Kate should ______, he’ll say she “sings as sweetly as a nightingale.”

23. To free Bianca, Hortensio enlists this gentleman’s help in wooing her sister Kate. ______

24. When Vincentio arrives in town, Biondello and Tranio fear they will be punished for hiring an ______ to replace their master.

25. If Kate refuses to speak, Petruchio plans to praise her “piercing ______.”

26. Petruchio travels to this city to buy clothes for the wedding. ______
Taming of the Shrew

Across

3. A gentleman plays an elaborate trick on this drunkard. (2 words) 21. Kate instructs women to "place you ____ below your husband's foot."
5. This gentleman weds a widow. 22. Kate and Bianca's father
9. Hortensio's name while disguised as a musician 13. Petruochio argues with this man over the quality of a gown.
10. This gentleman wins Bianca's heart. 16. Kate's younger sister
11. Petruochio she prefers to be called 19. "If I be waspish, best beware my _____."
12. Kate and Bianca's hometown 18. Kate and Bianca's hometown
14. Kate greets the old man in the woods as "young, budding, _____."
15. The gentlemen make a ____ to see whose wife will come when called.

Down

1. This servant announces Petruochio's arrival at his own wedding.
2. This gentleman intends "to wive it wealthy in Padua."
3. Lucentio's name while disguised as a tutor
4. Kate and Bianca's last name
7. The servant who adopts Lucentio's identity
8. "Why does the world report that Kate doth ____?"
11. Upon her father's death, Kate will receive half his land and 20,000
12. The eldest of Bianca's suitors
14. Kate greets the old man in the woods as "young, budding, _____."
15. The gentlemen make a ____ to see whose wife will come when called.
17. Kate tells Petruochio she prefers to be called _____.
18. Kate and Bianca's hometown
23. "O slow-wing'd ____! shall a buzzard take thee?"
**ACTORS’ CHOICE**

**Ginna Hoben – Kate**
in ASC’s *The Taming of the Shrew*  
*responds to the question, “Given the influence of women’s liberation, is it harder to play Kate than it is to play a more contemporary role?”*  

“Speaking from my personal experience thus far, yes contemporary notions of women's lib are part of what initially made this role challenging. But after spending time on the text I no longer see these notions as a challenge. I believe that our production presents a Kate who is not stifled, but finds liberation in her relationship with Petruchio. Performing the role under this concept allows for empowerment. Her journey with Petruchio is mostly a battle of words. Early in the play, Kate hurls words as insults and uses them in defense. By the end of the play Kate has learned from Petruchio to use words to suit her own desires. In our production, Kate's final speech sounds like one thing on the surface- that a woman's job is to serve her husband, but another message is communicated sub-textually: when there is true love, both partners serve each other.”

**Josh Carpenter—Petruchio**
in ASC’s *The Taming of the Shrew*  
*Comments on the question, “Do contemporary opinions about women and servants color your portrayal of Petruchio?”*  

“As an actor I try to be true to the role as it is written in the text and not let my own opinions get in the way of that. The more I can let his relationship with Kate be a real relationship between two unique individuals, the more truthfully we'll be telling the story, rather than looking at Kate and Petruchio as broad archetypes of a man and a woman. So what I focus on is Petruchio and Kate as unique individuals, what each of them brings to the relationship, and what they begin to love about the other person. I believe Petruchio has never met a woman like Kate before in his life. She is his match. The issue of servants is much more simple I think. The key is, again, to focus on what is in the text; you can't play the idea of having servants, you have to play that unique relationship. In the relationship between Petruchio and Grumio, it's very clear who is the master and who the servant, but I think there is plenty of evidence in their joking together and the responsibilities given to Grumio that there is genuine affection between them despite their different statuses.”

**ACTIVITY**  
Ginna Hoben describes Kate and Petruchio’s relationship as a “battle of words.” Carpenter states Petruchio has found his “match” in Kate. A scoreboard may reflect more points in Petruchio’s favor. Support Kate’s side by citing five examples where, in your opinion, Kate has won a match point in this battle.

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**In case you were wondering**  
To hear more about our shows from our actors, visit the American Shakespeare Center Podcast Central at [http://americanshakespearecenter.blogspot.com](http://americanshakespearecenter.blogspot.com)
Various cast members as Petruchio’s servants in ASC’s *The Taming of the Shrew*. Photo by Michael Bailey
The Taming of the Shrew

Getting Technical

Activity 1: The Induction Scene

The induction scene of The Taming of the Shrew is a unique structure within the canon of Shakespeare’s plays. It sets up a play-within-a-play: Christopher Sly, the victim of a joke-deception, is treated to a performance about Kate and Petruchio, or The Taming of the Shrew. This play-within-a-play serves as a formal entertainment for an on-stage audience (the characters on stage), as well as the paying playhouse audience.

While some other Shakespeare plays also include a play-within-a-play (the Mechanical’s performance in A Midsummer Night’s Dream, The Nine Worthies in Love’s Labour’s Lost and the “Murder of Gonzago”/“The Mousetrap” in Hamlet), an important difference must be noted: those plays-within-a-play served a purpose within the main plot line; the Kate and Petruchio play-within-a-play is the main plot. In fact, the induction scene characters only return once at the end of Act 1 scene 1, and then are seen no more. As the title suggests, The Taming of the Shrew is not about Christopher Sly, but about the Minola family, the suitors and the servants. And, it is clearly being presented as a theatrical entertainment.

“Metatheatrical”

When characters in a play acknowledge that they actually are characters in a play, being watched by an audience, we call that “metatheatrical”. One notable example of this is in Shakespeare’s Henry V where the Chorus asks the audience to imagine that different portions of the playhouse are battlefield images and locations. When playwrights employ this technique with a sense of irony or tongue-in-cheek humor, there is often a con or hoax involved and one or more observers (either within or outside the play) are ignorant of the deception.

1. How does the induction scene of The Taming of the Shrew give a metatheatrical structure to the play?
2. Why do you think Shakespeare included the induction scene and wrote The Taming of the Shrew as a play-within-a-play?
3. How does the story of Kate and Petruchio change if Christopher Sly watches the entire play? Should he watch the play from the stage or the audience (how might this make a difference)?
4. Describe how the following scenes in the play also have a hint of metatheatrics:
   - the courting of Bianca by Lucentio / Cambio and Hortensio / Litio
   - the arrival of Petruchio at the wedding
   - Kate, Petruchio, and the servants at Petruchio’s home
5. If Christopher Sly was present at the end of the play and had the last word, what would he say? Create the monologue or scene for this “end-duction”.

Activity 2: Doubling

Acting companies today employ many actors. In Shakespeare’s day companies were small – only employing a dozen or so actors. This meant that most of the actors would have to play two or more roles. This practice is called “doubling”. Shakespeare, in fact, wrote his plays knowing that actors would be playing multiple roles. Doubling presents an interesting problem when considering the staging of the induction scene within the structure of the larger play. Perhaps Christopher Sly is missing from the end of the play because he was playing another role…

Imagine you are staging a production of The Taming of the Shrew with only 12 actors. In order to double roles without overlapping, many directors use a doubling chart to discover which characters need to be on stage and when they need to be on stage.

1. On the reverse of this page, you will find a doubling chart for The Taming of the Shrew. One character has already been completed for you. Go through the play tracking the rest of the characters and mark which scenes or partial scenes each character is involved in. (or you may visit www.opensourceshakespeare.com and click on Taming of the Shrew. You can click on each character and it will tell you each scene he/she appears in.)
2. Once you have completed this chart, find out which characters do not overlap.
3. On the lower portion of the page, fill in which character(s) you want to assign each actor.
4. Looking at your chart, do you have enough actors for one actor to play only the role of Christopher Sly and be present for the entire show? If you are able to keep Sly as a part of the entire show, where do you think he should view the remainder of the play from? The Stage? The Audience? The Balcony? Someplace else? Give a reason for your decision.
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Actor 12: ____________________________________________

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Birth order and birthright in the sixteenth century was incredibly relevant to everyday life. It affected everything from social status to inheritance. Plot points and character behavior in *The Taming of the Shrew* are both influenced by birth order and birthright.

**Status**

The play opens with Christopher Sly attempting to prove he is “somebody” by making-up a family lineage. The Sly-as-Lord promotion that follows a few pages later would have been an obvious joke to the Elizabethan audience. Even Tranio’s elevation to impersonating Lucentio is not a confusing *real* change of status to either the audience or the character-servant Biondello. Tranio, however, is in a better position to pull off a change of status in public because, as a servant, he has lived his life in the company of gentlemen.

All suitors for the Minola sisters were gentlemen—they were men who were born into status and means. Because a woman could not own property or goods, a father needed to find a man with wealth, as well as offer a dowry (money and goods) to secure a marriage. Baptista was unyielding about Kate marrying first: “Gentlemen,… I firmly am resolved you know; that is, not to bestow my youngest daughter, before I have a husband for the elder.”

There were ways of becoming a self-made gentleman, but this did not guarantee acceptance or respect. When Hortensio observes that Bianca is attracted to Cambio, a Latin teacher, he decides that she is not worthy of his love—she is choosing someone below her class and acting in a way not becoming of a gentlewoman (…and he was probably jealous and trying to save face).

When a gentleman met certain criteria, he could request a Coat-of-Arms from the College of Heralds. Included in this criteria was honorable behavior. When Petruchio tries to convince Kate that the Haberdasher’s hat does not suit her she argues: “I’ll have no bigger, this doth fit the time, and gentlewomen wear such caps as these.”

**The Order of Things**

Though no official school of psychology on birth order had been established during the sixteenth century, Shakespeare shows an understanding of the effects of birth order on children. In *The Taming of the Shrew* we see the sibling rivalry between Kate and Bianca to be much like the sibling rivalry in any modern family. An Austrian psychiatrist, Alfred Adler (1870-1937), suggested that birth order can influence a person’s personality. He claimed that birth order could impact a person’s every day life: how they deal with people, how they complete their tasks, and especially how they handle relationships. Here’s a brief description of some personality traits based on birth order. Notice how these stereotypes describe Kate and Bianca:

**Firstborn Child** - Firstborns are typically believed to be serious, directive, aggressive, responsible, jealous, fearful, competitive, high in self-esteem, and anxious. They learn the concept of power at a young age.

**Youngest Child** - The youngest child is often perceived as the baby of the family. The youngest of the family is an endearing, and delightful friend and generally the “entertainer” of the family. The youngest child is often babied or "pampered" more than the other siblings. Youngest children may become manipulative and control-seeking if their sibling(s), parents, or other peers are overbearing or bossy.
THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

QUIZ

Directions: Select the BEST multiple choice answer.

1. Who is NOT one of Bianca’s suitors?
   a. Lucentio
   b. Grumio
   c. Hortensio
   d. Gremio

2. Who is Christopher Sly?
   a. The father of Lucentio
   b. Vincentio’s impersonator
   c. One of Petruchio’s servants
   d. An old drunk man who is not a character in the “Shrew” storyline

3. Katherina hits or beats all of the following EXCEPT:
   a. Her sister
   b. Her teacher
   c. Petruchio
   d. Her father

4. Grumio’s master is
   a. Petruchio
   b. Lucentio
   c. Biondello
   d. Baptista

5. How does Lucentio declare his love to Bianca?
   a. Through song
   b. Between Latin phrases
   c. He sends her flowers
   d. He tells her sister to tell her

6. What is Vincentio mistaken for when he is first seen?
   a. A beautiful maiden
   b. A turtle
   c. A Paduan gentlemen
   d. A Catholic priest

7. Petruchio denies Katherina which of the following?
   a. meat
   b. sleep
   c. fancy clothing
   d. all of the above

8. Who does Hortensio marry?
   a. Bianca
   b. Biondello
   c. Kate
   d. A widow

9. Why is Vincentio so mad at Tranio?
   a. Tranio left his service
   b. Tranio snubs him
   c. He thinks Tranio killed his son
   d. He thinks Tranio married the girl he loved

10. At the end of the play Baptista doubles Kate’s dowery to Petruchio because
    a. he is glad to be rid of her
    b. he paid 20,000 crowns for his old daughter and now wants to pay for his new daughter
    c. she damaged Petruchio’s home
    d. he is embarrassed by her behavior

Essay

Beginning with the Induction, *The Taming of the Shrew* is a series of one deception after another.

- Name the numerous deceptions in the play.
- Choose two of these deceptions then, for each deception, examine the purpose of the deception and give your opinion if the outcome justifies the deception.