

Photo of Christine Sherrill and Douglas Sills by Scott Suchman.



SHAKESPEARE
THEATRE COMPANY

First Folio

Teacher and Student
Resource Guide

FIRST FOLIO: TEACHER AND STUDENT RESOURCE GUIDE

Consistent with the Shakespeare Theatre Company's central mission to be the leading force in producing and preserving the highest quality classic theatre, the Education Department challenges learners of all ages to explore the ideas, emotions and principles contained in classic texts and to discover the connection between classic theatre and our modern perceptions. We hope that this *First Folio: Teacher and Student Resource Guide* will prove useful to you while preparing to attend *Kiss Me, Kate*.

First Folio provides information and activities to help students form a personal connection to the play before attending the production. *First Folio* contains material about the playwrights, their world and their works. Also included are approaches to explore the plays and productions in the classroom before and after the performance.

First Folio is designed as a resource both for teachers and students. All *Folio* activities meet the "Vocabulary Acquisition and Use" and "Knowledge of Language" requirements for the grades 8-12 Common Core English Language Arts Standards. We encourage you to photocopy these articles and activities and use them as supplemental material to the text.

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Enjoy the show!

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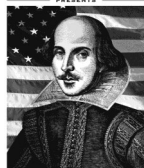
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Kiss Me, Kate Synopsis

A theatre company is producing William Shakespeare's play *The Taming of the Shrew*. Fred Graham is the director and starring in the lead role, Petruchio. His ex-wife, Lilli Vanessi, is his co-star playing Katherine the shrew. The cast also includes a beautiful young actress named Lois Lane, who Fred Graham clearly would like to date. *Kiss Me, Kate* begins with everyone arriving at the theatre and rehearsing *Shrew*. The tension between Fred Graham, Lilli Vanessi and Lois Lane is obvious.

Lois Lane is dating Bill Calhoun, another actor in the show. Backstage, Bill confesses to Lois that he is in trouble with gangsters, to whom he owes \$10,000 from a crap game. He also confesses that he signed Fred Graham, the director's name, to the IOU. This is not the first time Lois has heard about Bill's escapades, and she scolds him by singing "Why Can't You Behave?"

Backstage, Fred and Lilli fight. Lilli brags about her engagement to a political big shot, Harrison Howell. They start to reminisce about their past and the shows they've starred in together, including an old-fashioned Viennese operetta called "Wunderbar." They sing the love song from that show together.

Just before that evening's opening performance, Fred Graham sends flowers to the young actress Lois. By mistake they are delivered to Lilli's dressing room. Lilli believes he sent them to her and that it means Fred still loves her. She then reveals to the audience that she is still in love with him.

On stage, the company begins the performance of *The Taming of the Shrew*. *The Taming of the Shrew* takes place in Padua, Italy. Bianca (played by Lois) cannot get married until her older sister, Katherine (played by Lilli) has found a husband. Katherine is a notoriously angry woman that no one wants to marry. Petruchio (played by Fred) arrives looking for a rich wife and agrees to marry Katherine, despite her Shrewish nature. In a moment offstage, Lilli discovers that Fred's flowers were meant for Lois. Enraged, Lilli begins to beat Fred onstage in the middle of the performance. Everyone struggles to keep the play going. They perform the famous wooing scene from *Shrew*, in which Petruchio tries to win Katherine's heart while she fights and insults him.

Backstage, Lilli argues with Fred and announces she is quitting and leaving immediately. Just then, gangsters arrive looking to collect their \$10,000 from Fred Graham. Fred doesn't know anything about the debt--it's actually Bill Calhoun who owes them money. However, he pretends he does and convinces them to make Lilli finish the performance, claiming he will pay them with the money from the ticket sales. The gangsters force Lilli to finish the show.

Taming of the Shrew continues on stage, and Petruchio and Katherine are now married. Katherine's disobedience and violent temper tantrums frustrate Petruchio as he tries to "tame" her in a variety of ways. Backstage, Lilli's fiancé Harrison arrives to find her. Lilli tries to explain that the gangsters are holding her hostage, but he doesn't believe her. Fred points out how boring her life will be if she marries Harrison, but she still leaves with him.

Backstage, Bill and the gangsters find out that the gangsters' boss has been murdered. As a result, he no longer owes any money and the gangsters leave. On their way out, the gangsters accidentally end up on stage and have to improvise in the show with the famous song, "Brush Up Your Shakespeare."

The company attempts to finish the show without Lilli. Unexpectedly, Lilli comes back to play Katherine. *Taming of the Shrew* ends with Katherine and Petruchio finally learning to work as a team. Similarly, Fred and Lilli make amends and get back together.

Taming of the Shrew Synopsis

Lucentio, a young man from Mantua, arrives in Padua to study at the city's great university. Lucentio glimpses Bianca, the young daughter of a merchant, and immediately falls in love.

Bianca's father, Baptista, has two daughters. The older daughter, Katherine, is outspoken and has a violent temper. People call her "Katherine the Shrew." Her younger sister, Bianca, appears sweet and docile. In addition to Lucentio, two other men want to marry Bianca—Hortensio and Gremio. Baptista, orders that the younger daughter cannot wed before the older daughter. He asks the men to search for a husband for Katherine and to find tutors for both daughters.

Lucentio determines to use Baptista's request for tutors to gain access to Bianca. Lucentio changes clothes with his servant, Tranio, and presents himself as a Latin tutor. His servant, now dressed in his master's elegant clothes, goes to speak to Baptista. Dressed as Lucentio, he convinces the merchant that Lucentio is wealthier than Bianca's other suitors.

Another newcomer arrives in Padua: Petruchio, looking for a wealthy bride, is steered by Bianca's suitors to Baptista's house. Petruchio tells the merchant that everyone has sung the praises of his eldest daughter and asks for her hand. Baptista, thinking Petruchio not well informed about Katherine's true nature, promises to pay Petruchio 20,000 crowns if he will marry Katherine. Petruchio meets Katherine, whom he calls Kate. She hurls insults at him, but he turns everything she says into a term of endearment. Petruchio tells Kate that they will be married on Sunday. Baptista is thrilled. Kate, curiously, says nothing.

On their wedding day, Petruchio arrives so late that Katherine feels at first humiliated and then relieved. But Petruchio finally arrives dressed like a clown. He tells Kate that she is marrying him, not his clothes. After the ceremony, he carries Kate off on an old horse before she can enjoy the wedding feast. Once home, Petruchio does not allow his new wife to eat, though she is hungry, or to sleep, though she is tired. His plan is to break her of her shrewishness through deprivation.


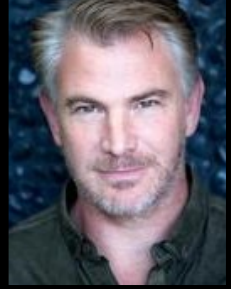



Back in Padua, Bianca is being wooed by her suitors—Hortensio pretends to be a music teacher while Gremio discovers a Latin "tutor" for her who is actually the disguised Lucentio. Bianca falls in love with him, and Hortensio and Gremio see them kissing. The men declare they will never marry a woman so fickle. Hortensio instead marries a wealthy widow. Lucentio and Tranio persuade an old man from Mantua to be Lucentio's father to negotiate the marriage of his "son" to Bianca. Baptista agrees to give Bianca's hand in marriage to Lucentio—or to Lucentio's servant, who is still disguised as his master.

Kate is excited to return home for her sister's wedding. Petruchio orders Kate a new hat and dress for the wedding. Though Kate is pleased with both, Petruchio rips them to pieces. He and his wife will go as they are to Padua. Worn down, Kate agrees to everything her husband says. If Petruchio says the sun is the moon, then it is so. On the journey to Padua, they see an old man. Petruchio greets the man as if he was a young woman, and Kate does, too. Then Petruchio says the traveler is actually an old man, and Kate agrees. The man, bewildered, joins them: he is Vincentio, the real father of Lucentio, traveling to Padua to see his son.




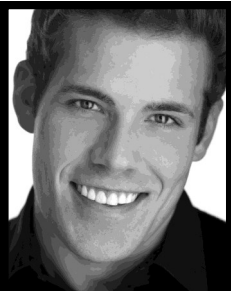

Vincentio is nearly arrested as an imposter when he is accused of deception by the man impersonating him. Bianca and Lucentio arrive, having been secretly married, and reveal all.

At the wedding feast, Petruchio is teased about his wife. Petruchio bets the other recently married men that his wife is the most obedient. First, Lucentio sends for Bianca. She refuses to come. Then Hortensio sends for his wife. She refuses as well. Finally, Petruchio sends for Kate who comes immediately. He tells her to fetch the two other women, which she does. Petruchio orders her to instruct women about their duties of obedience. Kate delivers a speech that amazes everyone. The play ends with Lucentio vowing to tame his wife, Bianca, if he can.

WHO'S WHO in *Kiss Me, Kate*

Actor	Character in <i>Kiss Me, Kate</i>	Character in <i>Taming of the Shrew</i>
	<p>Lilli Vanessi Star actress and ex-wife of Fred.</p> <p><i>Christine Sherrill</i></p>	<p>Katherine The independent and fiery older daughter of Baptista who does not want to marry.</p>
	<p>Fred Graham Director and lead actor, ex-husband of Lilli.</p> <p><i>Douglas Sills</i></p>	<p>Petruchio A suitor who wants to marry rich and decides to marry and “tame” Katherine.</p>
	<p>Lois Lane Actress, in a relationship with Bill.</p> <p><i>Robyn Hurder</i></p>	<p>Bianca The younger daughter of Baptista: mild, beautiful, and pursued by many suitors.</p>
	<p>Bill Calhoun An actor in the company and a habitual gambler.</p> <p><i>Clyde Alves</i></p>	<p>Lucentio Bianca’s main suitor.</p>
	<p>Harry Trevor An actor in the company.</p> <p><i>Harry A. Winter</i></p>	<p>Baptista A rich man of Padua with two daughters.</p>

WHO'S WHO in *Kiss Me, Kate*

Actor	Character in <i>Kiss Me, Kate</i>	Character in <i>Taming of the Shrew</i>
	<p>Harrison Howell Lilli Vanessi's fiancé, an army general and political big shot</p> <p><i>Patrick Ryan Sullivan</i></p>	<p>none</p>
	<p>First Man A gangster attempting to collect an IOU from Fred Graham</p> <p><i>Bob Ari</i></p>	<p>none</p>
	<p>Second Man A gangster attempting to collect an IOU from Fred Graham</p> <p><i>Raymond Jaramillo McLeod</i></p>	<p>none</p>
	<p>Ensemble</p> <p><i>Brandon Bieber</i></p>	<p>Hortensio A suitor to Bianca</p>
	<p>Ensemble</p> <p><i>Con O'Shea-Creal</i></p>	<p>Gremio A suitor to Bianca</p>

Shakespeare's Language



William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare was writing scripts for specific actors in his own acting company when he created his plays. He purposely wrote lines in two different ways to communicate information about the characters to his actors. Additionally, he wanted characters to sound

different from one another and to adapt their language to new situations, the way people do in real life. The two ways he writes are called **prose** and **verse**.

STUDENT REFLECTION

Ask your students to think about how they change their language in different situations: Do you speak differently and choose different words when you talk to your friends versus when talking to your parents or teachers? Would you speak differently at a job interview versus a family gathering?

How does our language change in these situations? Why does our language change in these situations?

Just like we change our language depending on our situation, so do the characters in Shakespeare's plays.

PROSE

The ordinary form of written or spoken language, without metrical structure. Prose can be very descriptive, but it follows the rules of grammar. Essays, news articles and novels are examples of written prose.

If a character's lines are written in **PROSE** we assume the following information:

- * The character is most likely from the lower class and not very wealthy
- * The character is most likely uneducated

How can I tell if it's prose? You can tell when lines are written in prose because they look like a regular paragraph.

Here's an example:

HORTENSIO. Come, since this bar in law makes us friends, it shall be so far forth friendly maintained till by helping Baptista's eldest daughter to a husband we set his youngest free for a husband, and then have to't afresh. Sweet Bianca! He that runs fastest gets the ring. How say you, Signor Gremio?

VERSE

Another word for poetry. It is writing that has a rhythmic structure. We refer to the rhythm as meter.

Meter: a recognizable rhythm in a line of verse consisting of a pattern of regularly recurring unstressed and stressed syllables.

If a character's lines are written in **VERSE** we assume the following information:

- * The character is most likely from the upper class and/or nobility and very wealthy
- * The character is most likely formally educated
- * The character may be experiencing a strong emotion like love or jealousy

How can I tell if it's verse? You can tell when lines are written in verse because every line begins with a capital letter and the lines are all different lengths on the page. This is because each line is written with a metrical structure.

Here's an example:

TRANIO.

I pray, awake, sir. If you love the maid,
Bend thoughts and wits to achieve her. Thus it stands:
Her elder sister is so curst and shrewd
That till the father rid his hands of her,
Master, your love must live a maid at home.

Shakespeare's Language

When and Why do Shakespeare's characters switch from verse to prose?

Public = Verse	Noble characters in public situations must present their most formal self and speak in verse as a means to do so. Prince Hal in <i>Henry IV, Part 1</i> speaks prose when he's hanging out with his fellow soldiers at the pub, but uses verse at court and when speaking to his father, the King.
Private = Prose	Upper-class characters use verse in public settings, but may use prose in private settings when they are talking to family or close friends.
Love = Verse	Shakespeare always uses verse when characters fall in love, regardless of their status. For example, in <i>As You Like It</i> , Silvius and Phoebe are both shepherds who live in the forest of Arden. However, even though they are lower class, both of these characters are in love and they express it through verse.
Respect = Verse	Upper-class characters use verse as a form of respect. To use prose with a King or Duke or parent would be disrespectful. For example, Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark, has very eloquent verse for his soliloquies. But because he is angry at his mother Gertrude and his uncle Claudius, the new king, Hamlet often speaks to them in prose.
Disguise = Prose	Upper-class characters use prose as part of their disguises, when pretending to be someone else. They are usually disguised as a lower-class character. King Henry V disguises himself as a common foot soldier the night before the battle of Agincourt to find out the true thoughts and feelings of his men. In disguise he speaks in prose, the language of the common men.
Madness = Prose	If a character descends into madness, then they have literally "lost their wits" and no longer have the capacity to speak in verse. Both Lady Macbeth and Ophelia speak in verse until they go mad. Once madness sets in, all their lines are in prose.

SUMMARY VS. PARAPHRASE

Paraphrasing is an important tool that actors use to understand what their lines mean and how their character feels. Using this passage, explore the difference between summarizing and paraphrasing:

KATHERINE: No shame but mine. I must forsooth be forc'd
To give my hand, oppos'd against my heart,
Unto a mad-brain rudesby, full of spleen,
Who woo'd in haste and means to wed at leisure.

Summarize: Concisely stating what a passage says. A summary should be shorter than the original text. It is usually written or stated in third person.

The **purpose** of summarizing is to demonstrate your understanding after reading.

Example Summary

Katherine is mad that she has to marry Petruchio against her will. She thinks he's rude for making her wait on her wedding day.

Paraphrase: Restating each line in your own words. A paraphrase should be about the same length as the original text. Paraphrasing should be written or stated in first person.

The **purpose** of paraphrasing is to help an actor understand exactly what they are saying when performing Shakespeare. It also helps them feel the emotions that the character is feeling.

Example Paraphrase

I am ashamed. I am forced to marry a man against my will who is crazy, rude, bad tempered. He was in a rush to get married and is now very, very late.

Shakespeare's Language

Iambic Pentameter

Iambic pentameter is the main rhythmic structure of Shakespeare's verse, meaning the majority of Shakespeare's verse is written in this rhythm. One line of iambic pentameter has 10 syllables, which we divide up into five units of meter called feet. Each foot of the verse contains two syllables. Illustrate this on the board:

A foot = 2 syllables

Pentameter = a line with 10 syllables which we divide into 5 feet

But soft! / What light / through yon / der win / dow breaks?

Iambic refers to the rhythm of the line. When the first syllable is unstressed and the second syllable is stressed, as in the word Hello, it is called an iamb. *Iambic* means push, persistency or determination. The prefix *penta* means five, as in pentagon, a five sided shape. Therefore, *iambic pentameter is one line of poetry consisting of five forward-moving feet.*

iambic = unstressed stressed rhythm

Identifying the rhythm of a line is called **scansion**. Actors **scan** their lines so we know how Shakespeare wanted us to say them. We mark unstressed syllables with this symbol \sim and stressed syllables with a slash /

\sim / \sim / \sim / \sim / \sim /
But soft! What light through yonder window breaks?

When learning iambic pentameter, many students make the mistake of unstressing & stressing every other word instead of every other syllable. To address this, you need to get the students saying all of the lines out loud, with energy and feeling the rhythm. You can explore having them say their names out loud and figure out what syllable is stressed. You can also explore saying the lines giving every syllable the same stress so they discover how slow & robotic it feels or have them say it with the opposite rhythm to see how unnatural it feels. Have students say this rhythm out loud several times. They should clap lightly on da and clap harder on DUM.

Clap the rhythm of iambic pentameter. Without specific words, the rhythm of iambic pentameter is:

da DUM da DUM da DUM da DUM da DUM

The rhythm of iambic pentameter is similar to the human heartbeat, a horse gallop, or the beat underneath a piece of music. Iambic pentameter drives and supports Shakespeare's verse, moving the language along in a forward flow that imitates natural speech patterns.

SCANSION

Actors scan the verse for a few different reasons. First, we want to see if it's a regular line of iambic pentameter. (Sometimes, Shakespeare writes in different rhythms.) Second, we want to make sure we are pronouncing the words correctly. Third, we want to determine which words Shakespeare wants us to put emphasis on. To **scan** a piece of text mark the unstressed syllables with a \sim symbol and the stressed syllables with a / symbol. Here are examples of regular iambic pentameter from *Taming of the Shrew* that you can do together as a class.

LUCENTIO. O yes. I saw sweet beauty in her face

KATHERINE. If I be waspish, best beware my sting.

PETRUCHIO. I know she is an irksome brawling scold.

PETRUCHIO. For I am rough and woo not like a babe.

Shakespeare's Language

OPERATIVE WORDS

Operative words are the words the audience needs to hear to understand the story. They are the words that communicate images and emotions. Usually they are the classic who-what-where-when-why-how words—nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. Actors give extra emphasis to operative words when they perform.

TEXT ANALYSIS ACTIVITY

Step 1: Select one of the speeches below and read it out loud for meaning.

Step 2: Look up unknown words.

Step 3: Paraphrase each line of text. (*put it into your own words*)

Step 4: Underline the **operative words** in each line. (*nouns, verbs & adjectives/adverbs*)

Step 5: Perform the speech out loud.

KATHERINE.

No shame but mine. I must forsooth be forc'd
To give my hand, oppos'd against my heart,
Unto a mad-brain rudesby, full of spleen,
Who woo'd in haste and means to wed at leisure.
I told you, I, he was a frantic fool,
Hiding his bitter jests in blunt behavior.
And to be noted for a merry man
He'll woo a thousand, 'point the day of marriage,
Make feast, invite friends, and proclaim the banns,
Yet never means to wed where he hath woo'd.
Now must the world point at poor Katherine,
And say "Lo, there is mad Petruchio's wife,
If it would please him come and marry her."

PETRUCHIO.

Thus have I politicly begun my reign,
And 'tis my hope to end successfully.
Another way I have to man my haggard,
To make her come and know her keeper's call.
She ate no meat today, nor none shall eat;
Last night she slept not, nor tonight she shall not.
As with the meat, some undeserved fault
Ay, and amid this hurly I intend
That all is done in reverend care of her.
And in conclusion she shall watch all night,
And if she chance to nod I'll rail and brawl,
And with the clamor keep her still awake.
This is a way to kill a wife with kindness,
And thus I'll curb her mad and headstrong humor.
He that knows better how to tame a shrew,
Now let him speak: 'tis charity to show.

KATHERINE.

Fie, fie! Unknit that threatening unkind brow,
And dart not scornful glances from those eyes
To wound thy lord, thy king, thy governor.
Thy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper,
And for thy maintenance; commits his body
To painful labor both by sea and land,
Whilst thou liest warm at home, secure and safe;
And craves no other tribute at thy hands
But love, fair looks, and true obedience;
Too little payment for so great a debt.
I am asham'd that women are so simple
To offer war where they should kneel for peace,
Or seek for rule, supremacy, and sway,
When they are bound to serve, love, and obey.
Then vail your stomachs, for it is no boot,
And place your hands below your husband's foot.
In token of which duty, if he please,
My hand is ready, may it do him ease.

Shakespeare's Language

Theatrical Language

ANTITHESIS

Antithesis is a rhetorical device in which two opposite ideas or images are used to achieve a contrasting effect. This effect draws the attention of the listeners or readers. This device can be used to enhance drama and comedy. Here are a few examples:

"It was the *best* of times, it was the *worst* of times, it was the age of **wisdom**, it was the age of **foolishness**,
–Charles Dickens

"Good we must love, and must hate ill." –John Donne

"Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heav'n." –John Milton

STAGE DIRECTIONS

Shakespeare often directs actors through the dialogue he writes. When characters say things like, "Let me go!" or "On my knees I beg," the actors on stage know they have to hold onto someone or be on their knees for the line to make sense.

1) Have students work in pairs.

2) Give each pair an internal stage direction from the list below. One actor will say the line while the other actor physically portrays the stage direction.

3) Give everyone a chance to rehearse and perform for the class.

Internal Stage Direction Lines

I prithee, sister Kate, untie my hands. *(The Taming of the Shrew)*

Nay, then, 'tis time to stir him from his trance. *(The Taming of the Shrew)*

I pray, awake, sir.

Was ever man so beaten? Was ever man so weary? *(The Taming of the Shrew)*

Now, my very lips might freeze to my teeth,
ere I should come by a fire to thaw me. *(The Taming of the Shrew)*

Off with my boots, you rogues! *(The Taming of the Shrew)*

Why, there's a wench! Come on, and kiss me, Kate. *(The Taming of the Shrew)*

See, how she leans her cheek upon her hand! *(Romeo and Juliet)*

Why dost thou smile so and kiss thy hand so oft? *(Twelfth Night)*

Run, boy, run, run, and seek him out. *(Two Gentlemen of Verona)*

Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear *(Macbeth)*

Your face, my lord, is as a book where men may read
strange matters *(Macbeth)*

Why are you breathless? and why stare you so? *(Julius Caesar)*

See, how it stalks away. *(Hamlet)*

Classroom Activity

1. Work in pairs to read the famous wooing scene between Katherine and Petruchio.
(Act II, Scene 1, Line 177-316)
2. Circle all the words/phrases that are examples of antithesis.
3. Read the scene out loud emphasizing all the words/phrases you underlined.
4. Underline all the clues for physical action.
5. Stage the scene with as much physical action as possible.
6. Rehearse and perform in class.

Kiss Me, Kate and The Bard

By Geoffrey Block

*This piece contains excerpts from **Kiss Me, Kate** and “**The Bard of Stratford-on-Avon**”: **Shakespeare’s Play is Still the Thing**. The full article is available in the *Guide to the Season 2015-2016* and on asides.shakespearetheatre.org.*

The most successful and memorable Broadway adaptations of Shakespeare were created by talented musical theater practitioners who implicitly understood what critic Frank Kermode described as the “permanent value” of the Bard’s “perpetual modernity.” The first historic Broadway musical adaptation of a Shakespeare play was *The Boys from Syracuse* (1938), a clever reworking of *Comedy of Errors* boasting a hit-saturated score by Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart (“Falling in Love with Love,” “This Can’t Be Love”), a book by its director George Abbott, and a ballet by George Balanchine. *Boys* followed much of Shakespeare’s plot, but removed all but a few lines of Shakespeare’s actual words. With music composed by Leonard Bernstein, lyrics by a young Stephen Sondheim, a book by Arthur Laurents, and path-breaking choreography and direction by Jerome Robbins, *West Side Story* (1957) is probably the best known musical adaptation of *any* Shakespeare play. In contrast to *The Boys from Syracuse*, *West Side Story*, while closely paralleling Shakespeare’s story line and dramatic message, transforms the Capulets and the Montagues into contemporary rival gangs, the Sharks and the Jets, fighting for Upper West Side urban turf.

Chronologically midway between *Syracuse* and *West Side Story* lies *Kiss Me, Kate*, Samuel and Bella Spewack’s liberal adaptation of *The Taming of the Shrew* with lyrics and music by Cole Porter. Although the version that eventually appeared on opening night, December 30, 1948, offered considerable pilfering of Shakespeare’s lines (compared with *Syracuse* and *West Side*) as well as cutting indispensable Shakespearean plot developments, the original libretto draft contained still more of Shakespeare’s language and plot.

For Abbott’s *Boys from Syracuse*, the *plot*, not the play, was the thing. Indeed, the plot *was* the play. For Laurents’s *West Side Story*, Shakespeare’s plot relied too heavily on chance, depriving young adults of their active agency to determine their destinies. He also concluded that a dead Juliet (Maria) served no useful dramatic purpose. In setting *Shrew*, the Spewacks and Porter tinkered with and shortened, but did not fundamentally alter the essential Shakespearean component of the plot in their play within a play, an abbreviated musical version of *The Taming of the Shrew* put on by characters in then-contemporary Baltimore who bear uncanny personal characteristics and more than a family resemblance to Shakespeare’s characters.

Nevertheless much of the *Shrew* plot in *Kiss Me, Kate*, though significantly abbreviated, made relatively few “unkind cuts” and retained a fair amount of Shakespearean dialogue. Some of Shakespeare’s prose inspired song titles, including “I’ve Come to Wive it Wealthily in Padua,” “Were Thine That Special Face,” and “Where Is the Life That Late I Led?” In the case of “I Am Ashamed the Women Are So Simple” Porter pilfered so liberally from Shakespeare’s words that he inserted the attribution “Lyrics by W^m Shakespeare,” before playfully adding that the Bard’s words were “slightly altered by Cole Porter with apologies.” Petruchio’s memorable response that directly follows Katherine’s song, also quoted directly from Shakespeare’s play, provided the title for their show: “Why! There’s a wench! Come on and kiss me, Kate.”

COLE PORTER

Of all the giants of the American Songbook, there is perhaps no figure who united words and music better than Cole Porter. Porter’s songs are paradoxical delights: sophisticated yet accessible and wonderful, a world all their own.

Born on June 9, 1891, in Peru, Indiana, Porter had a privileged upbringing. His mother, Catherine “Kate” Cole, was the daughter of a tycoon and doted on her son, sparing no expense. By the age of 6, Porter could play the violin and piano; at 10, he wrote his first song.

In 1909, Cole matriculated into Yale University, where he sang a cappella with the Whiffenpoofs and Glee Club and wrote an estimated 300 songs, including the material for six musical comedy revues. After graduating in 1913 as the “most entertaining” member of his class, Porter made his Broadway debut with 1916’s *See America First*; it was a flop. Crushed, Porter spent much of the next two decades in Europe. In 1919, living in Paris, he married socialite Linda Lee Thomas.

The 1930s were Porter’s decade. He was prolific, writing 10 Broadway and two Hollywood musicals. The frothy books to these musicals, wildly popular in their day, are now largely forgotten. It is the songs that have survived, a glittering list including such standards as “Let’s Do It (Let’s Fall In Love)” (*Parade*, 1928), “What Is This Thing Called Love?” (*Wake Up and Dream*, 1929), and “Night and Day” (*Gay Divorce*, 1932). *Anything Goes* (1934) features a murderer’s row of the title song, “I Get a Kick Out of You,” “All Through the Night,” and “You’re the Top.” Other modern classics include “It’s De-Lovely” (*Red, Hot and Blue!*, 1936), and “I’ve Got You Under My Skin” (*Born to Dance*, 1936).

Porter suffered a severe horse-riding accident in 1937; he would never fully recover the use of his legs. Though he threw himself into his work, the hit songs began to dwindle. 1948’s *Kiss Me Kate* was a late-career triumph, a fully integrated musical in the new manner of Rodgers and Hammerstein. Porter won the Tony for best composer and lyricist, and *Kate* received the first-ever Tony for Best Musical. He died on October 15, 1964, having produced an inimitable body of work.

Questions for Discussion

- How is a musical different from a play? How is a musical similar to a play?
- Why do you think musicals still continue to be popular today?
- What is an adaptation? How is, *Kiss Me, Kate*, considered an adaptation?
- How is the language different in *Taming of the Shrew* and *Kiss Me, Kate*? Why is it different? Where do the changes happen and what do the differences tell us about the story?
- How do the music and choreography move the action forward in *Kiss Me, Kate*? What are some examples that you know of where music and dance support the telling of a story?
- How do characters show extreme emotion in Shakespeare? How is that different from showing extreme emotion in a musical?
- What role does Shakespeare play in *Kiss Me, Kate*? How does *The Taming of the Shrew* relate to the story in *Kiss Me, Kate*? Does *Kiss Me, Kate* help you understand Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew* better?
- What parallels can you draw between the characters of *Taming of the Shrew* and the characters of *Kiss Me, Kate*? For example, Katherine/Lilli, Petruchio/Fred, Bianca/Lois, Lucentio/Bill?
- *Kiss Me, Kate* is considered to be a “backstage” musical. What are specific aspects of its plot, characters, songs and settings that make this a backstage musical?
- *Kiss Me, Kate* is in some ways a traditional book musical—meaning that the songs are fully integrated into the story—and in other ways, the songs are more in the style of vaudeville and variety shows. Choose a song from *Kiss Me, Kate* and decide whether the song changes the story through developing a character's emotions or whether the song exists merely to entertain and delight the audience. If the song is focused on developing character, what change do we see in that character over the course of the song?
- What is the theme or idea that William Shakespeare is trying to convey in *The Taming of the Shrew*? Do you think Cole Porter, Sam and Bella Spewack (writers of *Kiss Me, Kate*) are trying to discuss the same theme and idea as William Shakespeare?
- What does the title “Taming of the Shrew” mean?
- How do the men treat the women in this musical? Do you agree or disagree with them? Why?
- How do Lois and Lilli represent different images of women? Do you agree with these characterizations? Do you think Lois and Lilli are realistic characters?
- Do you think this musical is a comedy? Why or why not?
- Why do you think Kate changes her behavior?
- Why do you think Lilli returns at the end? Did she make the right decision?
- Do you think the ideas of this musical will be accepted among students in your age group? Why or why not?

Brush Up Your Shakespeare!

An annotated excerpt from the play's most famous song

THE GIRLS TODAY IN SOCIETY
GO FOR CLASSICAL POETRY,
SO TO WIN THEIR HEARTS ONE MUST QUOTE
WITH EASE

AESCHYLUS AND EURIPIDES

ONE MUST KNOW **HOMER**, AND B' LIEVE ME, BO,

SOPHOCLES, ALSO **SAPPHO-HO**,

UNLESS YOU KNOW **SHELLEY**

AND **KEATS**

AND **POPE**,

DAINTY DEBBIES WILL CALL YOU A DOPE.

BUT THE POET OF THEM ALL

WHO WILL START 'EM SIMPLY RAVIN'

IS THE POET PEOPLE CALL

THE **BARD** OF **STRATFORD-ON-AVON**

▶ **AESCHYLUS AND EURIPIDES** Two of three of the ancient Greek dramatists from the 5th Century BCE whose plays we still have copies of today. Aeschylus wrote earlier and is considered the father of Greek drama. Euripides wrote later and revised the form to include more characters.

▶ **HOMER** An ancient Greek poet known for the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

▶ **SOPHOCLES** The other ancient Greek tragedian—he wrote after Aeschylus, but before Euripides.

▶ **SAPPHO-HO** Sappho was a famous female ancient Greek lyric poet.

▶ **SHELLEY** Percy Bysshe Shelley was a poet and playwright in the early 1800s who never had fame during his own lifetime but who became one of the most celebrated English Romantic poets.

▶ **KEATS** Same for English Romantic poet John Keats.

▶ **POPE** Alexander Pope was a poet from the early 1700s. He translated Homer and is the second-most frequently quoted writer, after Shakespeare.

▶ **BARD** Fancy English word for a professional poet.
▶ **STRATFORD-ON-AVON** Local district where Shakespeare was born.

BRUSH UP YOUR SHAKESPEARE,
START QUOTING HIM NOW.

BRUSH UP YOUR SHAKESPEARE
AND THE WOMEN YOU WILL WOW.

JUST DECLAIM A FEW LINES FROM **"OTHELLA"**

AND THEY'LL THINK YOU'RE A HELLUVA FELLA.
IF YOUR BLONDE WON'T RESPOND WHEN YOU

FLATTER'ER
TELL HER WHAT **TONY TOLD CLEOPATERER**,

IF SHE FIGHTS WHEN HER CLOTHES YOU ARE
MUSSING,

WHAT ARE CLOTHES? **"MUCH ADO ABOUT
NUSSING."**

NUSSING."

BRUSH UP YOUR SHAKESPEARE

AND THEY'LL ALL KOWTOW.

▶ **"OTHELLA"** *Othello* is a play by William Shakespeare that STC is producing in March.

▶ **TONY TOLD CLEOPATERER** Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* tells the story of Cleopatra, a real Egyptian queen, and her relationship with Marc Antony, a Roman politician.

▶ **"MUCH ADO ABOUT NUSSING"** Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* features bickering couple Beatrice and Benedick.

BRUSH UP YOUR SHAKESPEARE

START QUOTING HIM NOW.

BRUSH UP YOUR SHAKESPEARE

AND THE WOMEN YOU WILL WOW.

IF YOUR GOIL IS A **WASHINGTON HEIGHTS** DREAM

TREAT THE KID TO **"A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S**

DREAM."

IF SHE THEN WANTS AN ALL-BY-HERSELF NIGHT

LET HER REST EV'RY 'LEVENTH OR **"TWELFTH**

NIGHT."

IF BECAUSE OF YOUR HEAT SHE GETS HUFFY

SIMPLY PLAY ON AND "LAY ON, **MACDUFFY!**

BRUSH UP YOUR SHAKESPEARE

AND THEY'LL ALL KOWTOW.

▶ **WASHINGTON HEIGHTS** A neighborhood in New York City. It's also the birthplace of Lin-Manuel Miranda, creator of the new musical *Hamilton* on Broadway, which also references Shakespeare.

▶ **A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM** Shakespeare's most-produced play. STC produced *Midsummer* for our annual Free for All this year. Check out www.shakespearetheatre.org/about/ffa/ for more info!

▶ **TWELFTH NIGHT** A comedy by Shakespeare

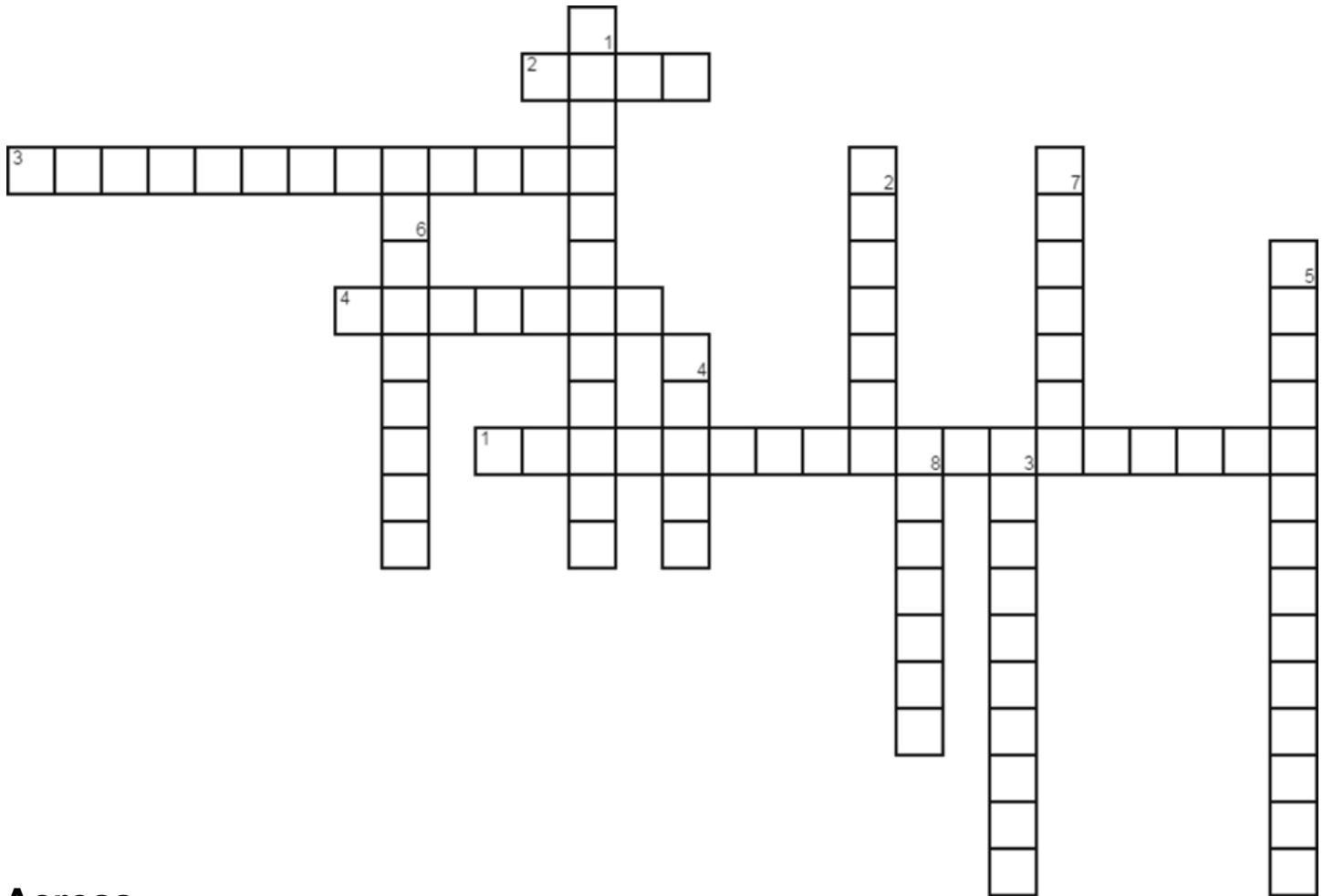
▶ **MACDUFFY** Macduff is the character from Shakespeare's *Macbeth* who murders Macbeth at the end of the play. It is superstitious to say "Macbeth" in a theatre, but there is no superstition about saying Macduff!

What other references do you hear in "Brush Up Your Shakespeare" that you can look up and define?

Classroom Activities for *Kiss Me, Kate*

Obvious Insults

Kiss Me, Kate brings together two of the wittiest dramatists to ever write in the English language. Throughout the musical, composer and lyricist Cole Porter creates his own witty insults to match those from Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*. See if you can match the insults in this crossword puzzle with the definitions below.



Across

1. a dear heavenly Satan
2. a stinging insect
3. break your skull
4. scoundrel

Down

1. the reprehensible Kathryn
2. a small stool
3. pleasing foolish person
4. pig
5. worthless gift
6. blunderer
7. phony
8. the evil character in a movie

Answers

Bastard
Bounder
Crack Your Pate
Darling Devil Divine
Flounder
Kate the Curst
Lovely Loon
Monstrous
Movable
Priceless Prize
Swine
Villain
Wasp

Classroom Activities for *Kiss Me, Kate*

Persuasive Writing: Tell Me Why

Historical Context: Women and Marriage in *Taming of the Shrew*

The status of women was quite low compared to men during Shakespeare's life. Women had to be educated by tutors, since only boys could go to school. Women were considered the property of their fathers until marriage, when a woman became the property of her husband. Love and affection, which are the foundation of most modern marriages, were secondary considerations in Elizabethan times. Marriages among the nobility were complicated financial affairs, much like business mergers today. Fathers arranged marriages and the marriages themselves involved combining entire family fortunes, lands, money and other property, such as farm animals. A good marriage by one child could benefit the entire family for generations, by raising status and increasing wealth. A bad marriage to an "inferior" person could bring a family down. If love came after marriage, that was all well and good. If not, each person was still expected to play his or her role in the marriage and thus preserve order in society.

Writing Project

Students should choose one of the following characters from *The Taming of the Shrew*:

Baptista, Katherine, Petruchio or Lucentio. Write a persuasive letter from the point of view of the chosen character. Choose one of the following topics or another from the play:

Katherine: Write a letter to your Father, Baptista, convincing him why you should not have to get married.

Baptista: Write a letter to Katherine explaining why you want her to marry Petruchio.

Lucentio: Write a love letter to Bianca convincing her to run away with you.

Petruchio: Write a love letter to Katherine convincing her to marry you.

Katherine: Write a letter to Petruchio convincing him to give up and go home.

Research Project

How has our understanding of gender and romantic relationships changed since *Kiss Me, Kate* was written in the 1940s? How were these conceptions about gender and romantic relationships different from when Shakespeare was writing in the late 16th century? Do some research about how men and women were treated differently in either or both the 16th century and the 1940s. Using your understanding of gender today, compare and contrast how men and women were perceived differently or similarly between these three time periods. What is the most shocking fact you have learned about how women were treated in each time period?

Slippery Characters

It can be difficult to watch a show that has a "play within a play" structure because it's hard to keep up with who is who and when. The responsibility of character transformation is given to the actors; their job is to make the characters they are playing believable, and significantly different from each character they are playing. They do so by changing voice, body language/status, and costume.

Give students a short scene as Fred and Lilli and a short scene as Kate and Petruchio. Make sure the students understand that even though the characters have similar attitudes as the characters in *Taming of the Shrew*, Lilli and Fred still need to make the characters different through posture, voice, and text.

After the students perform, discuss:

1. How did the actors show a difference between their two characters?
2. What happens when one actor plays two characters? Does it add humor? Double-meaning?
3. Does one character reveal something about the other? For example, does Kate reveal anything about Lilli?

Resource List

On the American Musical

- Hirschak, Thomas S. *The Oxford Companion to the American Musical*. Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Kantor, Michael. *Broadway: The American Musical*. PBS Documentary Series. 2004.
- Naden, Corinne J. *The Golden Age of American Musical Theatre: 1943-1965*. Scarecrow Press, 2011.
- Sondheim, Stephen. *Finishing the Hat*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2000.

Books on Shakespeare

- Cahn, Victor L. *The Plays of Shakespeare: A Thematic Guide*. Greenwood Press, 2001.
- Epstein, Norrie. *The Friendly Shakespeare*. Penguin Books, 1993.
- Fallon, Robert Thomas. *A Theatregoer's Guide to Shakespeare*. Ivan M. Dee, 2001.
- Gibson, Janet and Rex Gibson. *Discovering Shakespeare's Language*. Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. *Will in the World*. W.W. Norton, 2004.
- Holmes, Martin. *Shakespeare and His Players*. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972.
- Kermode, Frank. *Shakespeare's Language*. Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 2000.
- Linklater, Kristin. *Freeing Shakespeare's Voice*. Theatre Communications Group, 1992.
- Onion, C.T. *A Shakespeare Glossary*. Oxford University Press, 1986.
- Pritchard, R. E. *Shakespeare's England*. Sutton Publishing Limited, 1999.
- Papp, Joseph and Elizabeth Kirkland. *Shakespeare Alive*. Bantam Books, 1988.

Books on Teaching Shakespeare

- Gibson, Rex. *Teaching Shakespeare*. Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Reynolds, P. *Teaching Shakespeare*. Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Rosenblum, Joseph. *A Reader's Guide to Shakespeare*. Salem Press, Inc., 1998.
- Toropov, Brandon. *Shakespeare for Beginners*. Writers and Readers Publishing Inc., 1997.

Websites

- **Shakespeare Theatre Company**—<http://www.shakespearetheatre.org/education>
ON SHAKESPEARE: Articles and information about Shakespeare's life and world
- **In Search of Shakespeare: Shakespeare in the Classroom**—<http://www.pbs.org/shakespeare/educators/>
The companion website to Michael Wood's four-part PBS series *In Search of Shakespeare*, this site includes extensive research about Shakespeare's life and works, as well as interactive features.
- **Folger Shakespeare Library**—<http://www.folger.edu>
Includes excellent resources for further reading about Shakespeare, as well as fun games and information designed specifically for students and teachers.
- **Shmoop Teacher Resources**—<http://www.shmoop.com>
Learning Guides, Homework Help, Study tools and Test Prep

Standards of Learning

The activities and question sequences found in the Folio supports grade 8-12 Common Core standards in English Language Arts. Primary content areas addressed include but are not limited to:

- Understanding of Classical Literature
- Vocabulary and Content Development
- Stagecraft
- Argument and Persuasive Writing
- Inference
- Performance
- Questioning and Listening
- Research
- Analysis and Evaluation

Theatre Etiquette

The phrase “**theatre etiquette**” refers to the special rules of behavior that are called for when attending a theatre performance.

Above all, it is important to remember that the actors on stage can see and hear you at the same time you can see and hear them. Be respectful of the actors and your fellow audience members by being attentive and observing the general guidelines below:

Before you go:

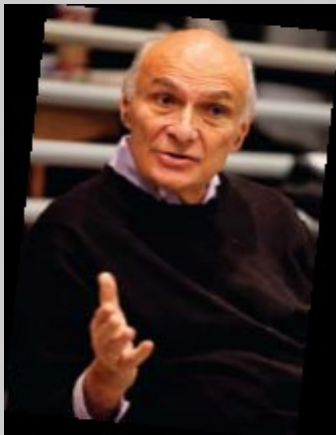
- *Kiss Me, Kate* takes place before cell phones and other fun technology existed. Please help us create the environment by turning off your cell phone and other electronic devices (iPods, games, etc.). Not only will it be historically inaccurate, but it can be very distracting, not to mention embarrassing, when a cell phone goes off during a performance. The lights from cell phones and other electronic devices are also a big distraction, so please no text messaging.
- We’re sure that you would never stick your gum underneath your chair or spill food and drinks, but because this theatre is so new and beautiful, we ask that you spit out your gum before entering the theatre and leave all food and drinks in the lobby or the coat check.
- We don’t want you to miss out on any of the action of the play, so please visit the restroom before the performance begins.



Students at a SHAKESPEARIENCE production of *Cymbeline*.
Photo by Nicole Geldart.

During the performance:

- Please feel free to have honest reactions to what is happening on stage. You can laugh, applaud and enjoy the performance. However, please don’t talk during the performance; it is extremely distracting to other audience members and the actors. Save discussions for intermission and after the performance.



Thoughts about the importance of being an audience member from Shakespeare Theatre Company Artistic Director Michael Kahn

“When you go to the theatre, you are engaging with other living, breathing human beings, having an immediate human response. In the theatre you sense that all of this may never happen again in this particular way.

As a member of the audience, you are actually part of how that’s developing—you have a hand in it ... You are part of a community where you are asked to be compassionate, perhaps to laugh with or grieve as well as to understand people, lives and cultures different from your own.”