



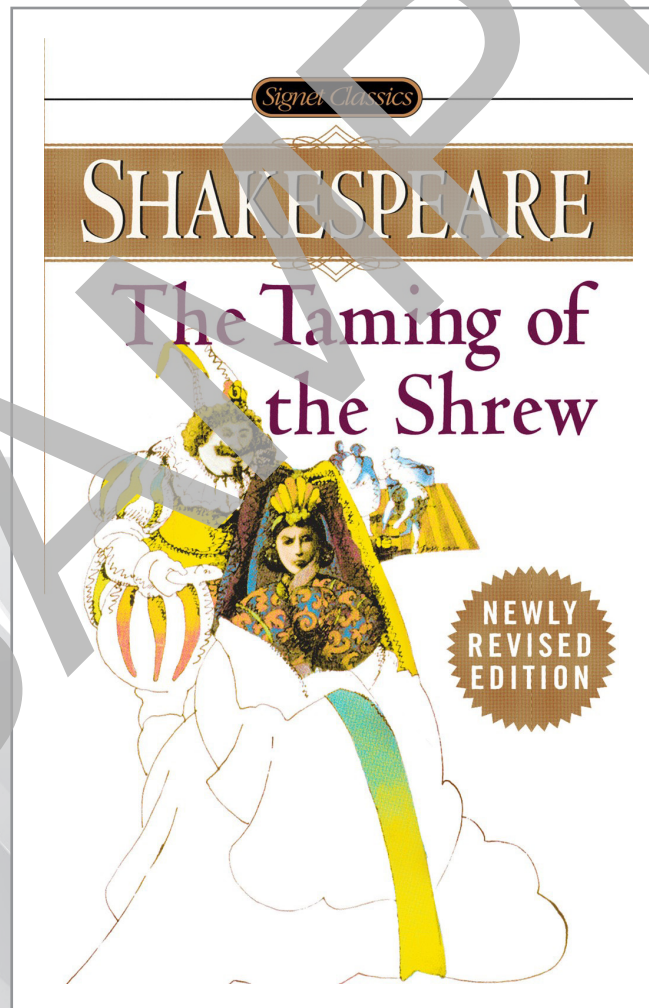
**TEACHER GUIDE**

**GRADES 9-12**

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

# The Taming of the Shrew

William Shakespeare



**READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT**

# The Taming of the Shrew

William Shakespeare

## TEACHER GUIDE

**NOTE:**

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

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# Plot Summary

## Induction

**Scene 1:** *Outside a rural alehouse.*

A Lord who has been hunting comes upon Christopher Sly, a drunken tinker, and decides to play a trick on him. Sly is clothed in finery and put to bed in the Lord's house. The Lord makes arrangements for some players to put on a show and instructs his page to dress as a woman and pretend to be Sly's wife.

**Scene 2:** *A bedroom in the Lord's house.*

At first Sly protests when the servants call him "lordship," but he is eventually convinced that he is a lord with a beautiful wife and has been "in a dream" for fifteen years.

## Act I

**Scene 1:** *Padua. A street.*

(The performance for Sly begins.) Newcomers Lucentio and his servant Tranio arrive in Padua from Pisa. Baptista comes by with his two daughters—sweet Bianca and shrewish Kate—and Lucentio falls in love with Bianca at first sight. Bianca's suitors (Hortensio and old Gremio) agree to work together on finding a husband for Kate so that Baptista will allow his younger daughter, Bianca, to wed. Lucentio decides to pose as a tutor for closer access to Bianca and instructs Tranio to pretend to be Lucentio.

**Scene 2:** *The street in front of Hortensio's house.*

After his father's death, Petruchio arrives in Padua from Verona with his servant Grumio and pays a call on his friend Hortensio. Hortensio mentions that he can help Petruchio find a wife—shrewish, but wealthy and beautiful. Hortensio's rival Gremio introduces him to "Cambio" the tutor (actually Lucentio). Hortensio, in turn, introduces Petruchio as the gentleman who will try to woo Kate. Tranio (as Lucentio) reveals that he, too, means to court Bianca and agrees to help pay Petruchio to win Kate.

## Act II

**Scene 1:** *Padua. In Baptista's house.*

Petruchio meets Baptista and asks permission to court Kate. Baptista warns Petruchio about Kate's bad temper—and just then Hortensio (disguised as Licio, the music master) comes in to complain that his pupil, Kate, has bashed his head with her lute. Petruchio makes no bones about asking Baptista about Kate's dowry. Baptista agrees to the match and sends for Kate. Petruchio is unflinchingly complimentary and Kate is unremittingly antagonistic. Nevertheless, Petruchio tells Baptista that all has gone well and Kate has agreed to marry him the next Sunday. Kate vows she will see him hang first—but Petruchio explains that this is only because they have agreed privately that she "shall be curst in company." Gremio and Tranio (as Lucentio) argue over who

## Vocabulary • Discussion Questions Writing Ideas • Activities

### A Note About Vocabulary

Vocabulary words are grouped by scene, with line numbers given after each word. As you assign various portions of the play, have students *practice reading aloud* at home before each class. Discuss particular vocabulary words only after students have encountered the words in their Shakespearean context. *Focus on two types of words: those we rarely hear today and those that are common today—but whose meanings have changed.*) In addition to the entries at the bottom of each page in the text, if you have access to the Internet, you might look at various Shakespeare sites. Several have Shakespearean dictionaries.

### Induction, Scene i

#### Vocabulary (followed by line number):

|               |            |                 |             |
|---------------|------------|-----------------|-------------|
| pheeze 1      | slide 6    | thirdborough 12 | boy 14      |
| kindly 15     | tender 16  | broach 17       | embossed 17 |
| brach 18      | fault 20   | practice 36     | brave 40    |
| wanton 47     | balm 48    | dulcet 51       | diaper 57   |
| kindly 66     | as 70      | office 73       | sirrah 74   |
| an't 77       | duty 82    | happy 90        | cunning 92  |
| over-eying 95 | antic 101  | buttery 102     | want 104    |
| shift 126     | napkin 127 | anon 130        | usurp 131   |
| haply 136     | spleen 137 |                 |             |

**Suggested activity:** Have students group words into two groups—those that are used today and those that are from Shakespeare’s time. Then have them fill out a chart like the one at the right.

| Words That Look Familiar |               | Words That Look Shakespearean |                |
|--------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------|----------------|
| Today’s Meaning          | Shakespeare’s | Predicted Meaning             | Actual Meaning |
|                          |               |                               |                |

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## Discussion Questions

(It is recommended that you do a first read-through of each scene in class with frequent pauses to figure out meanings. Encourage students to check the numbered notes at the bottom of each page. The discussion questions below will help clarify what is happening in the plot. Then do another run-through, complete with sound effects and simple props.)

1. Who is Sly? (drunken tinker) What is he doing when the story begins? (arguing with hostess outside alehouse) What tone is set by his behavior at the beginning? (humorous, rowdy)
2. What trick does the Lord devise? (to convince Sly that he is a lord) What do you think is his motivation? Does this trick remind you of similar deceptions in other stories?
3. What warning does the Lord give the players? (not to make fun of the odd behavior of the lord in the audience) Why do you suppose he doesn't let them in on the trick he is planning for the "lord"?
4. Why does the Lord call for his page? (to instruct him to go to Sly and pretend to be his wife) What is a page's usual function? (attendant who carries messages, runs errands) Do you think he'll mind this assignment?

## Literary Analysis: Pun

A **pun** is a play on words based on the similarity of sound between two words with different meanings. Point out the pun on "suits" (line 106). Have students list other puns they found in the play.

## Writing Activity

Describe a trick you once played—or might play—on someone who is sleeping.

## Induction, Scene ii

### Vocabulary

|             |               |             |              |
|-------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| small 1     | sack 2        | doublets 9  | cardmaker 19 |
| tinker 21   | bestow 40     | trapped 41  | welkin 45    |
| course 47   | lively 56     | waning 63   | yet 67       |
| fay 81      | leet 87       | amends 97   | marry 101    |
| goodman 105 | abandoned 115 | gambold 138 |              |