

Reflections:

A Student Response Journal for...

The Taming of the Shrew

by William Shakespeare

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The Taming of the Shrew

Induction 1

1. The Lord is taking advantage of a drunken Sly, who has been dressed in “sweet clothes, rings put upon his fingers.” The idea is that Sly will think he is a rich lord because of the clothes he is wearing. Do you think that clothes make a person? Write an article for a fashion magazine about your opinion on the subject. Include a creative title and use persuasion to sway your readers.
2. Referring to Sly, it is said “It would seem strange unto him when he waked.” Do you think it would be a struggle for someone to become someone else just by changing his or her clothes and surroundings? Write a short story about a person’s struggle or ease at becoming something they are not.
3. The Lord is using Sly’s drunken state to have some fun. Write a journal or diary entry about a time when you were taken advantage of or you took advantage of someone else. Be sure to write about your feelings after the incident.
4. The Lord tells the players they need to play along with the joke in front of Sly. There can be no indication that anything funny is happening so Sly doesn’t catch on to the prank. Make a list of at least five occasions when your keeping a straight face is beneficial and another list of at least five other occasions when a person shouldn’t keep a straight face.
5. In order for the prank to be successful, the Lord knows that it needs to seem as close to reality as possible. Write a letter to a friend in which you create a very vivid, clear picture of something that happened in your life. Make the incident “As lively as the deed was done.”

Induction 2

6. Sly completely believes all that is going on around him. He is very gullible. Have you ever been gullible or teased someone else because of his or her gullibility? Write a journal entry about the incident and be sure to include your feelings about the incident. Then, write about what happened following the incident. What did you learn, if anything, from this experience?

7. Bartholomew, the page, pretends to be Sly's wife, "My husband and my lord, my lord and husband;/ I am your wife in all obedience." This statement illustrates how women were to be obedient to their husbands and how they submit to the will of their men. With the feminist movement in the 1960s and the prevailing idea that women are equal to men, society's opinion of marriage has changed. How are marriages viewed today? How have marital roles changed? Do you agree or disagree with society's current views? Imagine you are listening to a talk radio show about this topic. You've decided to call in to express your opinion. Write the dialogue between you and the radio host. Be sure to express your feelings clearly. Begin the conversation any way you want or you may choose to begin like this:

Radio Talk Host: Hi there! Thanks for calling the Number One Radio Talk Show! You're on the air! What are your feelings on our topic?

You: I'm calling because I believe marriage should...

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Act I, Scene I

8. Lucentio arrives in Padua to study, just as his father wants him to. Many times, students follow the dreams of their parents, instead of their own, for fear of being a disappointment. Do you agree that kids should follow their parents' dreams or risk upsetting them by following their own dreams? Write a letter to your parents about how you feel on the subject.
9. Tranio states: "No profit grows where is no pleasure ta'en:/In brief, sir, study what you most affect." Tranio is telling Lucentio to enjoy studying; otherwise, no benefit will come from the studies. Do you agree or disagree that you learn more when you enjoy what is being taught? Think of the subjects you enjoy the most. Think of five techniques that make learning more enjoyable. Then, expand on these techniques in an article for an educator's magazine. Be sure to include a heading.
10. Baptista is looking for a husband for his daughter, Katharina. How would you feel if your parents openly looked for a spouse for you? How do you think this makes Katharina feel? Imagine you are Katharina. Write a poem expressing her feelings.
11. Gremio and Hortensio repeatedly mention how mean and shrewish Katharina is. Has anyone ever told you that you are too mean? How did that make you feel? Have you ever confronted someone else about how they were being too mean? What was their reaction? Write a creative short story about this experience.
12. Bianca feels that Katharina takes joy in Bianca's unhappiness. Bianca says, "Sister, content you in my discontent." Is it right or wrong to be happy because of someone else's misfortune? Write an article for a teen magazine about the appropriate feelings at someone else's tribulation.

Response Journal

13. Although they are rivals for Bianca's love, Gremio and Hortensio agree to work together for the benefit of them both. Sometimes it is beneficial to work with someone you dislike to achieve the outcome that you both desire. Construct an email to someone you would rather not work with but are willing to because you have the same goal. Be tactful in what you say so as not to offend.
14. Lucentio says that he is in love with Bianca after only seeing her: "Tranio, I saw her coral lips to move,/And with her breath she did perfume the air./Sacred and sweet was all I saw in her." Does love at first sight really exist. Write a poem about your opinion on the subject.

Note to Teacher: This prompt may be modified for a more structured assignment. The students may attempt to write a sonnet for this prompt.

15. Tranio can't talk Lucentio out of being in love with Bianca because love comes from the heart, not the mind. Typically, family and friends have the tendency to try to talk those close to them out of loving another because of his or her background, color, financial status, etc. In many cases, though, the couple in question becomes closer. Write an article for a family magazine discussing this issue. Your article must include your opinion, along with suggestions and/or advice.
16. Tranio justifies his deceiving behavior by saying that it is Vincentio who told him to "Be serviceable to my son." Tranio knows that what he is doing is not what Vincentio meant. However, it makes Tranio feel better - knowing how to manipulate the situation. Have you ever twisted a situation to make yourself feel better? Is manipulation the right way to take control of a situation? Do you agree or disagree? Based on your opinion, create a list of all the reasons why manipulation is or is not the right way to make a situation more beneficial to you.

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Act I, Scene II

17. Grumio misunderstands what Petruchio is asking, which results in Grumio's beating: "Knock you here, sir? Why, sir, what am I, sir, that I should knock you here, sir? ... My master is grown quarrelsome. I should knock you first,/And then I know after who comes by the worst." Often times, misunderstandings lead to problems and confusion. Imagine a time when you've experienced a misunderstanding, of any kind, that resulted in chaos. Create a story of at least five paragraphs about this time. Make sure your story has specific characters and a developed plot. You may include some fictional elements.
18. Petruchio is only interested in marrying to increase his financial status; he is willing to give up love and happiness for his goal of more money. Write an email to Petruchio and explain why you agree or disagree with his actions.
19. In past times, people often married only to increase fortune, land, status, and/or allies. Do you believe that people still do that today? Create a brochure advertising honeymoon spots for newlyweds. Your brochure will be written based on your opinion. For example, if you believe most couples marry for money, include descriptions of lavish, expensive places. You are trying to attract a certain type of couple – either superficial or genuine. As an example if you want to attract rich couples, the brochure could begin:

ATTENTION ALL LAWYERS,
STOCKBROKERS, AND MILLIONAIRES!