

DIGITAL THEATRE+

VIRTUAL LEARNING LESSON PLAN
DRAMA/THEATRE

Almeida Theatre © Keith Pattison



KING LEAR

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

LESSON PLAN LENGTH: 60 MINUTES

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the dynamic between key characters and articulate informed, personal and creative responses to the interplay between them
- Consider the different situations and perspectives of the central characters

To teach this lesson, you will need the following resources found in your toolkit:

- [King Lear | Digital Theatre](#)
- [King Lear Manga Shakespeare](#)
- [King Lear Study Guide](#)
- [On Acting: Phoebe Fox](#)
- [On Directing: Michael Attenborough](#)
- [Relationship Map](#)

Plus:

- For the entire lesson – a video conference link for your chosen platform*
- For all exercises – an email with video links and instructions for students to follow for each exercise
- Further activities to enhance your lessons can be found in your toolkit or in the [King Lear Practical Workshop Guide](#). You can find more resources to help you teach *King Lear* and other texts at www.digitaltheatreplus.com.

**Keeping students and teachers safe during remote education is essential. Please ensure any online platform you are using to communicate or coordinate with students is suitable for their age group and check privacy settings. For further information, see the [NSPCC guidance](#).*

For further resources to help you teach *King Lear*, including our [full-length production](#), and [Study Guide](#), visit www.digitaltheatreplus.com

EXERCISE 1

DAD'S BIG MISTAKE: READING, LISTENING AND RESPONDING

- Email pages 5-7 of the [King Lear Study Guide](#) to your students.
- Get your students to read this to themselves.
- On a video call assign consecutive numbers to each person in the group (this indicates the order in which the summary should be read).
- Going in numerical order, invite the group to read in the manner of a fairy tale – each person reading from punctuation point to punctuation point, exaggerating the feeling and mood.
- Once complete, invite students to reflect on if/how performing this collectively gave them a different perspective from reading it alone.



ESTIMATED TIME:
10 MINUTES

The aim of this exercise is to immerse the students in the epic and domestic aspect of the story, and to get them to relate to the characters, the family issues, and dynamics of the opening of the play.

Engaging with the text in this way assists students in considering style and genre, developing knowledge understanding of how drama and theatre is performed.

EXERCISE 2

ESSENCE AND KEY MOMENT: WATCH AND DISCUSS

- Direct your students to the [On Directing: Michael Attenborough](#) interview.
- Tell them to watch the first section called **The Essence of King Lear** (select 'chapter' beneath the player).
- Then ask them to watch the chapter called **The Key Moment**.
- Ask students to write a summary of the content of the clips so that they can refer back to them in a short written assignment.
- Ask them to write a response to one of the following questions: Which part of the play speaks to you personally and why? Can you identify another moment in the play that you think is 'key'?



ESTIMATED TIME:
10 MINUTES

The aim of this exercise is to recognise, through listening to a director talk, that the best way to understand the text is through a combination of critical analysis and practical exploration.

EXERCISE 3

UNRAVELLING CHARACTER: QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

- Now is a good moment to take a deeper look at character. Go back to the [King Lear Study Guide](#).
- Email copies of the [Relationship Map](#) to your students.
- In the same email, cast the parts of King Lear, Goneril, Regan, Cordelia, Gloucester, Edmund and Edgar.
- Get the cast students to read from the [Relationship Map](#) in the first person, as though they are the characters.
- After this, ask the group that were listening, to hot seat each of the characters that spoke, to find out more about them.



ESTIMATED TIME:
5 MINUTES

The aim of this exercise is to encourage the students to regard the differing points of view of the central characters and begin to empathise with their situations. This task allows evaluative and reflective responses as well as helping students develop connections and independent responses to a text.

EXERCISE 4

NOTHING COMES OF NOTHING

- Email a link for [King Lear Manga Shakespeare](#) to the group.
- Get your students to read it to themselves, and then cast King Lear and his daughters from the group (from students who weren't cast in Exercise 3) and read aloud.
- How does reading aloud change our experience of the words?



ESTIMATED TIME:
5 MINUTES

The aim of this exercise is for the students to see a visual version of the text and then speak a small but vital moment of that aloud and experience the impact that the language has on meaning.

EXERCISE 5

CORDELIA: WATCH AND DISCUSS

- Share a link to the [On Acting: Phoebe Fox](#) interview.
- Have students watch the chapter called **Key Moments** and then ask them to write down five key facts about Cordelia's character and motivation.
- Ask students to record a voice note a response to the following questions: Which key fact about Cordelia did they find most interesting and why? How does Phoebe Fox apply theatrical skills in her interpretation of a role?
- Ask students to share their voice notes on a group chat, and listen to some of their classmate's responses.



ESTIMATED TIME:
10 MINUTES

The aim of this exercise is to consider the range of interpretive choices available within the framework of each character arc and throughout the story.

EXERCISE 6

ACT ONE SCENE ONE OF KING LEAR: WATCH

- Instruct students to watch [Act One Scene One](#) of the Almeida Theatre's production of [King Lear](#).

Further activities to enhance your lessons can be found in your toolkit or in the *King Lear* [Practical Workshop Guide](#). You can find more resources to help you teach *King Lear* and other texts at www.digitaltheatreplus.com.



ESTIMATED TIME:
20 MINUTES

The aim of this exercise is to watch a moment of the opening of a production with an increased understanding of character and situation so that they can discuss a key moment and write about it fluently.

For further resources to help you teach *King Lear*, including our [full-length production](#), and [Study Guide](#), visit www.digitaltheatreplus.com

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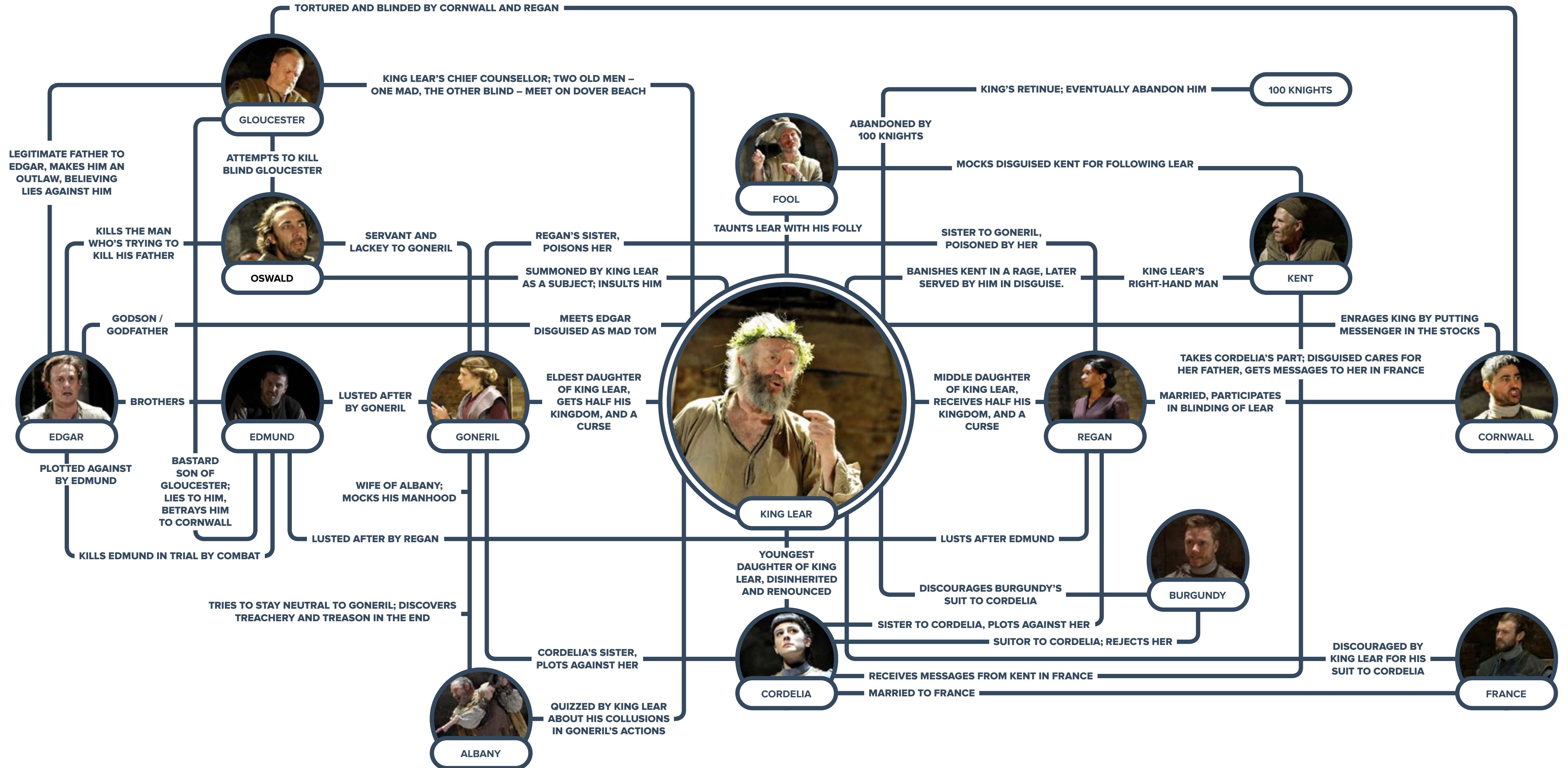
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QUESTIONS

1. Who says “So young my lord and true”?

2. Who says “So young and so untender”?

3. What is the balance and imbalance in King Lear between?

4. Can you give 4 examples of this?

5. Who says – “Thou nature art my goddess”?

6. What is this form of direct address called?

7. Who is ‘the Legitimate’?

8. Who blinds Gloucester and how?

9. How many knights does King Lear travel with?

10. How did the actors in the Globe create the storm scene in 1605?

ANSWERS

1. Who says “So young my lord and true”?
Answer: Cordelia
2. Who says “So young and so untender”?
Answer: King Lear
3. What is the balance and imbalance in King Lear between?
Answer: Natural Order and Chaos
4. Can you give 4 examples of this?
**Answer: Folly vs. Judgement
Sane vs. Mad
Words vs. Deeds
Sight vs. Blindness**
5. Who says “Thou nature art my goddess”?
Answer: Edmund
6. What is this form of direct address called?
Answer: Soliloquy
7. Who is ‘the Legitimate’?
Answer: Edmund
8. Who blinds Gloucester and how?
Answer: Regan
9. How many knights does Lear travel with?
Answer: 100
10. How did the actors in the Globe create the storm scene in 1605?
Answer: Rolling a cannonball in the wings

The following questions have been written to deepen and expand your students' understanding of the text. They can be used for homework or to prompt classroom discussions.

TRUTH

- Think about 'truth' in *King Lear*. Who are the people who are 'true' and do they have to play false to be true?
- Is integrity always an admirable quality?
- Shouldn't we sometimes be prepared to tell a lie to preserve social harmony – not least in our families?
- Is 'truth' an absolute, never to be compromised?

LOVE

- Can love be measured?
- Does asking to be told how much you're loved make the quality of love meaningless?

CURSING THE TRUTH

- What is a curse?
- Is a curse a threat, or an effective means to get something done?