

Excellence in Literature

Reading and Writing through the Classics

British Literature ***A Survey Course***

English 4

Janice Campbell

British Literature: A Survey Course

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Excellence in Literature: Reading and Writing through the Classics

Introduction to Literature (English I)

Literature and Composition (English II)

American Literature: A Survey Course (English III)

British Literature: A Survey Course (English IV)

World Literature: A Survey Course (English V)

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1. Literature—Explication. 2. Literature—History and Criticism. 3. Books and reading. I. Title.

The integrity of the upright shall guide them...

Proverbs 11:3a

Excellence in Literature: Reading and Writing through the Classics

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Introduction

Dear Student,

Do you know that very few people know how to read?

It's not that they can't decipher words on a page, but they simply don't know how to place what they read into its proper literary and historical context. They may understand WHAT happened in a story, but they don't know WHY. They may feel strongly about the story, yet they never stop to wonder WHY they feel as they do, or HOW the author made it happen.

If you're wondering why you should care about the HOW and WHY of literature, think about it like this: Reading without understanding is like walking onto a softball field and batting the ball, without any knowledge of what to do next. You may hit the ball out of the park, but if you don't run the bases and complete the play, you've missed the whole point of the activity.

It's the same with reading. In order to complete the process, it's necessary to think analytically about what you read. Reading is a conversation between a reader

and an author. The author creates a world, peoples it with characters, and presents a story. The reader enters the author's world, meets the characters, and follows the story line. When you write about literature, as you will this year, the conversation shifts. It becomes a dialogue between you, as an analytical reader and writer, and the reader of your essay.

In this literature series, I'll introduce you to what I will call "literary reading." As you work through each assigned story this year, you'll also learn about the context in which the story was written. I'll give you the opportunity and resources to discover more about the story, the author, and the various elements of the text, including plot, setting, characterization, and more. This will help you make sense of each great book and will make the story much more interesting to you.

You'll find that you like some books and authors better than others, just as I do. Each novel, poem, essay, or play in this literature series has been carefully chosen for its quality and its place in the panorama of literary history. Even if you find that you don't enjoy a particular work as much as others, it has been included because it has something important to convey. One thing you'll discover is that sometimes the stories you like least stick with you the longest and sometimes even teach you the most.

I love to read, and I'm happy to have the opportunity to share some of my favorite great books with you. Some will make you laugh, others may make you cry, but above all, I hope they make you think. When you finish your reading for the year, I know that your mind will be more richly furnished than when you began, and that is a very good thing.

Janice Campbell

<http://www.ExcellenceInLiterature.com>

P.S. As you read through this book, you will most likely encounter words you don't know. I'm sure you know what to do when this happens. Look it up and write down the word and its definition, and you'll be expanding your vocabulary without much effort at all!

Overview

Objectives for Excellence in Literature

Excellence in Literature (EIL) is a college-preparatory course of study. It is my goal to:

- Introduce students to great literature from the Western literary tradition.
- Teach students to read with discernment.
- Train independent, self-motivated learners.
- Provide tools that students can use to strengthen their writing skills.
- Introduce students to sources for high-quality online and offline research.
- Prepare students for college classes by expecting carefully researched, well-thought-out material to be presented in standard format, with preliminary proofreading completed.

In the five levels of this literature series, you will be reading some of the greatest works of literature ever written. They are great not just because they are technically well done, though that certainly is a factor, but they are great because they reveal truth through the power of story.

EIL uses great literature, studied in its historic and literary contexts, to help you learn to think and write analytically. This book is designed for you to use independently, so it contains specific instructions for each assignment, and a suggested schedule, as well as the references you need in order to do the background reading and research for each unit.

You may be surprised to find that I haven't provided a lengthy introduction and a lot of background material for each book and author. This is because you have reached the age when you need to begin assuming responsibility for learning. Rather than spoon-feeding you basic, easily researched information (and having you zone out in the middle of paragraph two), I have provided resources and links that will enable you to perform the context research you'll need to fully understand the novel, play, essay, or poem. This is the kind of research you'll find yourself doing for college courses, so if you learn how to do it now, you should be quite good at it by the time you graduate!

Because you are preparing for adulthood, you are responsible for reading through this entire book, so that you can gain the greatest possible benefit from your literature study. In the first section, you'll find an explanation of how EIL works and suggestions for how to create a study routine and organize your study materials. Following this you'll find the syllabus section, with a study outline for each unit. In the final section you'll find instructions for writing various types of papers, fundamentals of essay composition, information on the evaluation rubric, and sample papers that demonstrate correct MLA format (if you don't know what that is, be patient—it's explained in the samples and the glossary). Be sure to read it all so that you can be successful as you work through the assignments!

Each level of EIL has nine units that are to be completed in four relatively brief, but intense, weeks. You may choose to group the units into a traditional school year sequence, or to take a break after each one and work through the year. I believe this intense, focused, college-style format is a much more efficient way to learn than the traditional drop-a-day-for-eighteen-weeks high-school format. In addition, when you do English with a college-style schedule, you will be better prepared for the challenges of college and the workplace. The beauty of being homeschooled is that you are free to do what works best rather than what is traditional!

The assignments have been carefully chosen and scheduled so that knowledge and skills can build sequentially. It's important that you learn the time management skills that will help you complete assignments with minimal stress. If you are working with a writing mentor such as your parent, a writing evaluator, a coach, or a co-op, be sure to agree in advance on a schedule, so that you can plan your work efficiently. Above all, don't spend three weeks procrastinating, then try to cram all the assigned reading and writing into one week. It doesn't work.

Course Format

Excellence in Literature courses are designed to focus in depth on selected great authors or literary movements, while exploring the context of their lives and works with additional reading and writing. This offers opportunity for writing practice in a number of different styles, as well as the opportunity to grow thoroughly familiar with some of the greatest writers and literary works of all time.

Audio Books

Although many students are visual learners and will do very well reading each novel, if you are an auditory or kinesthetic learner,* you may benefit from listening to unabridged versions of the longer books. It's important that you thoroughly understand the material we cover, so use the learning tools that work best for you.

*An auditory learner is one who learns best by hearing; a kinesthetic learner learns by doing.

Context Materials

For each unit there will be additional material to read, listen to, or watch. These resources are designed to provide context for the focus work. I will provide links to interesting and informative websites, and recommendations for additional readings. But don't feel limited by these citations; I encourage you to find and include other resources, such as videos, field trips, or other useful books. The more rich and varied the context materials, the more vivid and interesting the novel will seem. And if you find a book or author you particularly enjoy, feel free to broaden your research, to satisfy your desire to know more. You may want to do additional research or read more of the author's works. Please do so!

The Honors Track

In each unit, you will find additional reading suggestions under the “Honors” heading. If you would like to earn an honors-level grade (.5 weighted grade points), or take an AP or CLEP test at the end of the year, you need to read these extra books and do an approach paper on each. At the end of the school year, you will also write an additional research paper, which is assigned in the “Honors Unit.” This will complete the honors track. To earn advanced placement or college credit for the class, you will also need to take an AP or CLEP exam. You can find complete details on how to assign weighted grades and record advanced classes in my book, *Transcripts Made Easy* (www.TranscriptsMadeEasy.com), and more information about how and why to earn college credits in *Get a Jump Start on College!* (www.GetAJumpStartOnCollege.com).

Prerequisites For Success

Excellence in Literature is intended for use by students in grades 8–12. For each level of the English classes you are expected to have age-appropriate skills in grammar, spelling, and language mechanics. Students should grammar- and spell-check all papers before turning them in, as learning to self-edit is part of the writing process. If you are not sure of your skills in literary analysis or essay writing, there are two resources I strongly recommend. If you need to learn the basics of literary analysis, *Teaching the Classics* by Adam Andrews is a DVD-based course that teaches literary analysis using children’s books to illustrate the principles and methods. For essay writing, *The Elegant Essay Writing Lessons* by Lesha Myers is the best resource I’ve seen. Both are published by the Institute for Excellence in Writing, and both can be used concurrently with *Excellence in Literature*.

A Word About Resources

There is one major thing I’ve discovered about having books in the home: if they are present, they will be used. I don’t expect you to purchase all the resources I’ve recommended, but I hope you’ll consider having a few of the most important on hand. You can find them used at online retailers such as Amazon.com or Alibris.com, or you may even be able to get them free through PaperbackSwap.com (you may use my referral, “readbx”). I’ve purchased many books quite cheaply from library sales, thrift shops, and yard sales. I encourage you to especially consider purchasing nice, annotated editions of the classics we read, because those books will become part of

your student's mental furniture, and in many cases they'll be read and re-read many times.

How to Organize for Success

I suggest getting a three-ring binder to use as an English Notebook for this course. You may choose to use plastic page protectors, which hold two sheets back-to-back, or you may punch holes in each page to fit them in. It's nice to have tabbed dividers for each unit, but not absolutely necessary. For each unit, place in the binder your research notes; a copy of each draft of the papers you write, followed by a copy of your evaluation rubric; and the feedback letter or other comments you receive from your evaluator. This keeps all your work in one place, organized chronologically, and enables you to refer back to comments and instructions that will help you improve your writing skills.

Learning Philosophy

Learn (lûrn) v. 1 To acquire knowledge of or skill in by observation, study, instruction, etc. 2 To find out; ascertain: to learn the facts. 3 To memorize. 4 To acquire by or as by practice: to learn good habits.

Webster Illustrated Contemporary Dictionary: Encyclopedic Edition 1971

The foundation of the *Excellence in Literature* philosophy is the verb “learn.” I believe the acquisition of knowledge and skills is an active endeavor. The process of learning is focused within one person—the learner. Just as an infant makes the transition from being fed to feeding himself, a student who wants to be successful will begin to take an active role in absorbing and understanding information that will help him interpret his world. Although many students wait until college to make this transition, high school is actually an ideal time to learn how to learn.

As a writer, my goal is to impart not only knowledge, but also the tools and skills you need to take an active part in the learning process. I have always been a reader and an active learner, and I know from experience that the process is fascinating and invigorating. If you are an active learner you'll rarely be bored, and you can be confident in your ability to learn and do almost anything. There is great joy in learning, and this, above all, is what I want to communicate.

The Learning Process: the Roles of *Excellence in Literature*, the Student, and the Writing Mentor

This book will:

- Establish the scope and sequence for the class.
- Assign appropriate readings.
- Provide a suggested schedule for assignments.
- Provide time management and organization tips.
- Provide a rubric for objectively evaluating completed assignments.

The Student will:

- Study this book and understand the sequence and timing of assignments.
- Ask questions of the writing mentor when something is not clearly understood.
- Actively seek to learn from each assignment.
- Complete all assignments on time.
- Make no excuses.
- Enjoy fine literature!

The Writing Mentor (usually the parent) will:

- Help the student obtain required books and reference materials.
- Verify that assignments are completed on schedule.
- Use the rubric or select a qualified writing evaluator to provide feedback for the student.
- Provide an evaluation summary for the year, using the form found at the end of this book.

How to Read a Book

Some books are meant to be tasted, some swallowed, and some few digested...

Francis Bacon

No, you haven't picked up the wrong course by mistake—this is indeed high school English! I know you've been reading for years, but I want you to learn to read actively and analytically. I'll review the basics of reading fiction and poetry here, so that you'll have an idea of how to read and analyze throughout each of the *Excellence in Literature* courses.

If you're using any level of EIL and you haven't thoroughly studied literary analysis, I recommend going through Adam Andrew's excellent *Teaching the Classics* DVD course, including the *Worldview Supplement*. This brief course uses children's literature to teach the fundamentals of literary interpretation and analysis, and the Supplement teaches how to analyze literature from a worldview perspective. If you're studying English III, IV, or V, I also recommend reading the books by Sire and Veith or Adler and Van Doren (see details of these recommendations in the Resources chapter). Sire and Veith approach literary analysis from a Christian worldview perspective, while Adler and Van Doren wrote a comprehensive, classic guide to the art

of reading. Each is an excellent resource for learning how to explore and appreciate literature.

There is a general sequence that I've found helpful for reading a challenging piece of literature, and it's the sequence you'll find in many of the EIL units. Here is an overview:

- Read brief contextual information about the author and the historical time in which the book, poem, or play was written.
- If possible, listen to a bit of music that the author may have listened to, read at least one poem of the period, and look at an art history book or online to see what sort of art was being created at the time the book was written. This helps you gain an understanding of the author's artistic influences, and this can help you understand what you're reading.
- For the most challenging books, you may begin by reading a children's version or a brief synopsis of the work, such as those found in SparkNotes or CliffNotes. This is not necessary for most works, but I recommend it for those with archaic language, such as Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, and for epic poetry such as Dante's *Inferno*. Although many people associate study guides with cheating, these guides are simply intended to help the student understand a work, just as a parent or teacher would do. Using them is cheating only if you read the guide, rather than the novel or poem!
- Read the work all the way through, at a comfortable pace. Read fast enough to sustain interest, but slowly enough to understand what is happening. Focus on enjoying the story or poem.
- If the assignment is poetry or a play, listen to it (even if you have to read it aloud in order to do so) or watch it as suggested in the assignments. Poetry is meant to be heard, and plays are meant to be seen and heard, so you must do this in order to fully appreciate them.
- As you read, keep an index card or piece of paper tucked into the back of the book. Write down any words you encounter that you don't know, and look them up and write down the definition. If you understand the basic meaning from the context and you don't want to interrupt the flow of the story, you may look up the word later.
- On another index card make a list of the characters, with a brief note about their role in the plot or their distinguishing characteristics.
- In your English notebook write down interesting insights that occur to you, as well as quotes that seem significant. Feel free to mark important or interesting passages in the book (I use a pencil, rather than a highlighter)

so that you can easily find them to use as quotations while you are writing your essay.

- Once you've read the book, write an approach paper for it. The approach paper should include a brief summary, character analysis, discussion questions, key passage, and an explanation of the key passage. This will help you think through the book and prepare you for writing an essay.
- Write the essay, answering the assigned essay prompt.

Reading Fiction

If you are reading fiction, you'll need to notice how the five elements of **plot, theme, character, setting, and style** work together to create the alternate world of the story. However, while you're reading, it's also important to allow yourself to be immersed in the fictional world, to the point that when you stop reading you feel as if you've just returned from a long journey. This allows you to experience the author's creation as he or she intended, and helps as you analyze the elements of the text.

As you read and try to understand, not just the surface meaning of the text but also the underlying theme and worldview, there are a few questions to keep in mind to help yourself move deeper into the text. There are many more questions you can ask, but these will give you a start.

- Who is the narrator of the story, and is he or she reliable?
- What happens, and in what order does it happen?
- Can you identify the basic stages of the story structure—**exposition** (background information), **rising action** (complications), **climax**, **falling action**, **resolution**.
- How is the story told (for example, as a first-person narrative, a journal, or a series of letters), and how does this method affect your understanding of each of the story elements? Does the method of storytelling affect your enjoyment of the plot?
- Who are the major and minor characters, and what kinds of people are they?
- Do the challenges of the main character reflect common struggles of humanity? Is the character intended to portray an archetype?
- What role does each character play in revealing the story?
- What plot devices does the author use to move the story along? Possibilities include flashbacks, narrative frames, foreshadowing, genre-specific conventions, and so forth.

- What are the themes or great ideas (justice, friendship, good vs. evil, etc.) addressed in this work? What theme is primary?
- How do the characters bring the theme to life?
- What is the author's vision of the meaning of life? Does he or she believe in the existence of good and evil? Of God? What is his or her view of humanity?
- Why has the author used a specific word, rather than a synonym, in the way and in the place he has used it? Would a synonym work as well? Why or why not?

Reading Poetry

If you are reading poetry, there are a few other things to consider. Poetry uses structure, sound, and syntax to awaken the reader's imagination and to convey an image or message in a vivid and memorable way. A beautifully written poem can convey an idea in just a few unforgettable lines. If you haven't studied the analysis of poetry, it's especially important to review the process in one or more of the resources I've recommended above, such as *How to Read Slowly*.

To begin understanding a poem, read it through slowly and carefully at least once or twice. Read it aloud, and listen to the sound of the words and pacing of the lines and syllables. Once you have the sound of the poem in your head, try paraphrasing it in prose. Think about each element and how the structure of the lines and the sound of the words contributes to the poem's theme. Examine the images, the rhyme scheme, and the sound patterns of the poem to help you understand the poet's message. Above all, read it through in its entirety often enough so that you see and remember it as a whole, just as you would look at a great painting as a whole before beginning to study the brushstrokes.

Comedy and Tragedy

Although we sometimes think of comedy as something funny and tragedy as something sad, each word has a slightly different meaning in classic literature. Comedy is a story that begins with a conflict or suffering and ends in joy, such as *Jane Eyre* or *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Tragedy is a story that begins at a high point and ends in pain, such as *Romeo and Juliet* or *Oedipus Rex*. Aristotle further defined tragedy as the downfall of a noble human, in a disaster of his own making (*King Lear*). You'll find a very enlightening chapter on comedy and tragedy in the

Veith book, suggesting that in comedy can be seen an image of salvation, while in tragedy can be seen the shadow of damnation.

Reading Challenging Literature

Great literature tends to mirror life, and as it does so, complex issues arise. For this course I have tried to choose literature that reflects the truth that “whatever one sows, that will he also reap” (Galatians 6:7). Veith cautions Christian readers not to “seize upon a detail or a subject dealt with by a book, take it completely out of context, and fail to do the necessary labor of thinking about the work and interpreting it thematically” (72) before they take a stand against the book. He points out that others worry about negativism and want only happy stories. Veith cautions that “Stories filled with ‘good people’ overcoming all odds, may create the dangerous impression that human beings are, in fact, ‘good’ and capable of saving themselves through their own moral actions” (76).

Reading great literature takes much more than just skimming over the words on a page. It is a process that involves absorbing, understanding, and making decisions about what the author is communicating. Reading is active and can be as richly rewarding as you want it to be. All the quick, fun reading you do can help you hone your basic reading skills, but you’ll need to add analysis in order to grow as a reader and writer. I hope you’ll enjoy the learning process!

Unit 4

***King Lear* by William Shakespeare (1564–1616)**

How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child!

Act I, Scene IV

Focus Text

King Lear by William Shakespeare

You will need the text, as well as a video, of this play. You can find it in a Shakespeare anthology, as a stand-alone book, or the *Norton Anthology of English Literature*.

You may also download the text as an e-file:

http://publicliterature.org/books/king_lear/xaa.php

Honors Text

Hamlet by William Shakespeare

Literary Period

Renaissance

Unit Focus

We will see the classic elements of tragedy at work and consider the significance of the Gloucester sub-plot to the unity of the play.

Introduction

Shakespeare's tragedies can be hard to read. It's not so much the fact that the plays are written in King James English; it's just not fun or easy to read how one man's lapse in judgement can start a chain of events that leads to disaster for many. However, Shakespeare shows a stark truth in this drama: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (From Galatians 6: 7–10 KJV) The truth that makes this play challenging is also what makes it not just a play you may not enjoy the first time around, but also a story that you'll never forget.

Something to think about...

The classic tragic hero is someone like Lear, who comes to a disastrous end through his own actions but also grows and changes in the process. As you read through *King Lear*, observe his character from beginning to end. Although the act of dividing his kingdom is unwise, it's clear from the loyalty of his friends and the love of his daughter, Cordelia, that Lear was much more than a fool; he was a great man, brought low. His change of circumstance is accompanied by new self-knowledge and a change of heart which allows him to humbly accept his fate.

Be sure to notice...

William Shakespeare, a playwright and poet of the late sixteenth century, remains one of the greatest writers of all time. During the fifty-two years of his life, he wrote thirty-nine plays and many poems. Many of his plays are still performed on stages around the world, and lines from his works are found throughout our language. In fact, if you do a Google search for common Shakespeare quotes, you'll find hundreds of commonly used phrases!

Context Resources

Readings

“Enjoying *King Lear*” is Dr. Ed Friedlander’s insightful introduction to the play.

Friedlander is a pathologist, not a professor, but his lifelong study and appreciation for Shakespeare’s masterpiece illuminates *Lear* better than any other introduction I’ve seen. Friedlander writes from a generally Christian worldview perspective, though the analysis is not specifically Christian. Don’t miss this!

<http://www.pathguy.com/kinglear.htm>

Read the story of King Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4. Keep it in mind as you’re reading *King Lear*, and consider the parallels between the two kings’ lives. Shakespeare was certainly very familiar with the Bible, as were most people of his time, and it’s interesting to see how his knowledge permeates his writing.

The introduction to *King Lear* in the *Norton Shakespeare* (by Stephen Greenblatt, et al.) is another excellent resource. If you have access to this anthology, read this introduction before reading the play.

This delightful introduction to Shakespeare’s Grammar will help you understand his writings much more easily.

<http://www.bardweb.net/grammar/grammar.html>

Charles and Mary Lamb rewrote all of Shakespeare’s plays, for children. You will probably find their *Tales from Shakespeare* at your local library, or you can read it online. If you read this short version before seeing the video or reading the full-length play, you will have a much better idea of what is happening. I recommend it. Here is the Lambs’ short version of *King Lear*:

[http://www.shakespeare-literature.com/Tales_From_Shakespeare_\(For_Children\)/9.html](http://www.shakespeare-literature.com/Tales_From_Shakespeare_(For_Children)/9.html)

Kent Richardson has created a well-done modern verse translation which may help you as you read the play.

<http://www.fullmeasurepress.com/pages/kl.html>

Shakespeare's Food Poesies. Food shows up in many places in Shakespeare's dramas, and on this site there is an alphabetically organized encyclopedia of quotes. It's an interesting way to see what was in the Elizabethan diet!

<http://www.soupsong.com/ibard.html>

Penguin Classics *Teachers' Guide*. Read the Introduction, Overview, Elements of Tragedy, Historical Context, and Shakespeare's Language.

<http://us.penguinclassics.com/static/cs/us/10/teachersguides/kinglear.html>

The Author's Life

Shakespeare by Peter Chrisp: This Eyewitness book from Dorling Kindersley publishers is a superb guide to Shakespeare and his plays. Like most Eyewitness books, it's lavishly illustrated, and both entertaining and informative.

A professor at Palomar College in California has created "Mr. William Shakespeare and the Internet," a collection of excellent Shakespeare resources. The site includes Shakespeare's genealogy, interesting introductions to various editions of his works, and much more. It's well worth browsing!

<http://shakespeare.palomar.edu/>

Timeline Summary of Shakespeare's Life

<http://shakespeare.palomar.edu/timeline/summarychart.htm>

The Seven Ages of Shakespeare's Life

<http://ise.uvic.ca/Library/SLT/life/lifesubj.html>

Shakespeare Biography Quiz

<http://shakespeare.palomar.edu/quiz/bioquiz.htm>

Who Wrote Shakespeare's Works?

Now that you've read about Shakespeare, you should know that there is an ongoing controversy about who actually wrote all his works. The Shakespeare Oxford site offers a "Beginner's Guide to the Shakespeare Controversy." Don't miss this!

<http://www.shakespeare-oxford.com/guide.htm>

Poetry

Visit the Lear page on my website to read poetry from Shakespeare's contemporaries, including Queen Elizabeth, Sir Philip Sydney, and Sir Walter Raleigh.

<http://www.everyday-education.com/englishclasses/e4%20lear.shtml>

<http://www.everyday-education.com/englishclasses/e4learpoetry.shtml>

<http://www.william-shakespeare.info/william-shakespeare-poems.htm>

www.poetry-archive.com/s/shakespeare_william.html

Audio

Your library may have this play on CD, but you can also download it free at Librivox (this is an amateur production, so check your library first).

<http://librivox.org/king-lear-by-william-shakespeare/>

Music

Music of the Renaissance. This website by California State Polytechnic University, Pomona offers free MIDI files of Renaissance music organized by composer. You can listen to music of the sort Shakespeare might have heard! Just click and listen—it makes great background music for reading *King Lear*.

<http://www.csupomona.edu/~jcclark/emusic/renaissa.html>

King Lear Overture by Hector Berlioz. This beautiful piece, inspired by *King Lear*, is available both as sheet music and as a MIDI file. To access the MIDI file, you must register for a free membership at www.classicalarchives.com <<http://www.classicalarchives.com>>. You may be able to find the music at your local library if you would prefer. The audio file is located here:

<http://mm.classicalarchives.com/cgi-bin/n.cgi/Xs2UsO59xQcy1w2fIbhbXQ/OY-Qh7V/o11/kinglear.mid>

Musical score for the *King Lear Overture*

<http://www.hberlioz.com/Scores/skinglear.htm>

This printable score takes a while to load, but if you are musically inclined, you may enjoy following along while listening to the piece on CD.

Video

King Lear (a BBC production with Laurence Olivier as Lear). Because this is a play, you must watch it in order to fully understand it. You may want to watch it more than once, as Shakespearean English can be a bit hard to understand at first. You may find this at your local library or at www.documentary-video.com <<http://www.documentary-video.com>>.

Visual Arts

Photographs and artwork will help you visualize Shakespeare's life, as well as the setting and characters of *King Lear*.

Shakespeare Birthplace Photographs

<http://www.shakespeare.org.uk/content/view/419/426/>

Painting: *King Lear and the Fool in the Storm* by William Dyce

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/paintingtheweather/csv/large/king.shtml>

Painting: *King Lear and Cordelia* by Benjamin West

<http://www.folger.edu/imgcolldtl.cfm?imageid=568>

Ford Madox Brown's Drawings for *King Lear*. An amazing, graphic story!

http://www.english.emory.edu/classes/Shakespeare_Illustrated/Brown%27sLear.html

Copies of Engravings Illustrating Scenes from *King Lear*

http://absoluteshakespeare.com/pictures/king_lear.htm

Links to more artwork depicting scenes from *King Lear*

http://english.emory.edu/classes/Shakespeare_Illustrated/LearPaintings.html

Historical Context

The "Life in Elizabethan England" site, created by writer Maggie Pierce Secara, offers links so that you can explore interesting details of Elizabethan England, including fashion, household management, heraldry, education, occupations, and more.

<http://elizabethan.org/compendium/>

This page offers a brief, well-organized overview of the ideas and living conditions of Elizabethan England.

http://www.britainexpress.com/History/Elizabethan_life.htm

An excerpt from Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*: The sixteenth century was a time of religious conflict in England, and executions were common. Read about the execution of seventeen-year-old Lady Jane Grey at my website.

<http://www.everyday-education.com/englishclasses/e4%20lear.shtml>

The 16th-Century Zeitgeist: Read about the literary world of the sixteenth century and how it affected Shakespeare's writing.

<http://www.wwnorton.com/nael/16century/review/summary.htm>

Virtual Globe Theatre

Clemson University offers a virtual tour of the Globe Theatre. This is very interesting, but it works best with a high-speed internet connection. If you don't have high-speed at home, you can probably view this site on a computer at your local library.

<http://virtual.clemson.edu/caah/shakespr/VRGLOBE/index.php>

Assignment Schedule

Week 1

Begin reading the context resources and watch the *King Lear* video. Follow the model in the Formats and Models chapter to write an Author Profile.

Week 2

Read through *King Lear*, considering the questions below. As you read, you will come across words that are unfamiliar. Write them down, along with the act and scene number, so you can look them up later. Note that the following scenes are particularly important to the development of the plot, and mark them so that you may return to them as you are writing your essay.

- Scenes 1.1 and 1.2 establish the plot and begin to work the various themes and motifs, the plot and the parallel subplot together. Also pay particular attention to 1.4, 2.4, 3.2, 3.4, 3.6, 3.7, 4.1, 4.6, 4.7, and 5.3.

- What parallels do you see between Gloucester and Lear and their children?
- Think about the language of sight and blindness throughout the play. How does it contribute to the development of the story?
- Analyze the theme of fate versus choice in the play. Does Shakespeare seem to attribute the things that happen to his characters more to fate, or to choice? What do you think?
- Notice how irony and paradox are a part of tragedy.

As you read through the play, write a brief summary of each scene. Number each summary with the scene number so that you can use your summary to find examples you wish to quote in your essay.

Week 3

Begin drafting a 750-word essay on the following question:

Compare and contrast Gloucester and Lear, focusing on their choices, their adherence to kingly or noble ideals, their relationships with their children, their level of wisdom and humility (at the beginning and at the end of the story), and/or other parallels you find interesting. Be sure to integrate quotes from the text to support your comparisons.

Week 4

Edit your draft, making sure that your thesis is clear to the reader and that your essay is well-organized and free of mechanical errors. Use the evaluation rubric in the Formats and Models chapter to check your work.

About the Author



Janice Campbell is a lifelong learner, writer, and conference speaker who has enjoyed homeschooling since the late 1980s. She and her husband, Donald, have seen the benefits of home education in the lives of their four sons, each of whom has enjoyed (and benefitted from) getting a jump start on college. Janice takes joy in sharing with others what she has learned. Through her home-based business, Everyday Education, LLC, Janice offers workshops on teaching literature, evaluating writing, and on homeschooling (and recordkeeping) through high school and beyond.

Janice graduated *cum laude* from Mary Baldwin College with a B.A. in English. She is author of *Transcripts Made Easy: The Homeschooler's Guide to High School Paperwork*; *Get a Jump Start on College! A Practical Guide for Teens*; *Evaluate Writing the Easy Way!* and the five-year *Excellence in Literature* series ((www.ExcellenceInLiterature.com). She is also Director of the National Association of Independent Writers and Editors (www.NAIWE.com), and creator of the Beat-the-Clock Essay Workshop™. Janice blogs at www.Janice-Campbell.com, and her website, www.Everyday-Education.com, offers helpful information, resources, inspiration, and a free e-zine. Visit the website today to sign up for the e-zine!