

# ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA – THE BIG QUESTION

A Key Stage 3 and 4 PSHE and Citizenship  
Resource



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## Curriculum Links

This KS3/KS4 Citizenship, English and Personal Wellbeing teaching sequence provides a scheme of work to help pupils learn about forming and talking through their opinions. It uses Shakespeare's plays to explore a range of topics including:

- *Personal growth and maturity*
- *Responsibility at different stages of life*
- *The importance of the rule of law*
- *Young people and mental health*
- *The power of political rhetoric*
- *Forgiveness and retribution*
- *Religious and other forms of extremism*
- *Cyberbullying and the pressures of social media*
- *The importance of diversity and of respecting difference*

## From the National Curriculum – Citizenship

### Purpose of study

A high-quality citizenship education helps to provide pupils with knowledge, skills and understanding to prepare them to play a full and active part in society. In particular, citizenship education should foster pupils' keen awareness and understanding of democracy, government and how laws are made and upheld. Teaching should equip pupils with the skills and knowledge to explore political and social issues critically, to weigh evidence, debate and make reasoned arguments. It should also prepare pupils to take their place in society as responsible citizens, manage their money well and make sound financial decisions.

### Aims

The national curriculum for citizenship aims to ensure that all pupils:

- Acquire a sound knowledge and understanding of how the United Kingdom is governed, its political system and how citizens participate actively in its democratic systems of government.
- Develop a sound knowledge and understanding of the role of law and the justice system in our society and how laws are shaped and enforced.

- Develop an interest in, and commitment to, participation in volunteering as well as other forms of responsible activity, that they will take with them into adulthood.
- Are equipped with the skills to think critically and debate political questions, to enable them to manage their money on a day-to-day basis, and plan for future financial needs.

## Subject content

### Key stage 3

Teaching should develop pupils' understanding of democracy, government and the rights and responsibilities of citizens. Pupils should use and apply their knowledge and understanding while developing skills to research and interrogate evidence, debate and evaluate viewpoints, present reasoned arguments and take informed action.

Pupils should be taught about:

- The development of the political system of democratic government in the United Kingdom, including the roles of citizens, Parliament and the monarch.
- The operation of Parliament, including voting and elections, and the role of political parties.
- The functions and uses of money, including the importance and practice of budgeting, and managing risk.

### Key stage 4

Pupils should be taught about:

- Parliamentary democracy and the key elements of the constitution of the United Kingdom, including the power of government, the role of citizens and Parliament in holding those in power to account, and the different roles of the executive, legislature and judiciary and a free press.
- The different electoral systems used in and beyond the United Kingdom and actions citizens can take in democratic and electoral processes to influence decisions locally, nationally and beyond.
- Other systems and forms of government, both democratic and non-democratic, beyond the United Kingdom.
- Local, regional and international governance and the United Kingdom's relations with the rest of Europe, the Commonwealth, the United Nations and the wider world.
- Human rights and international law.
- The legal system in the UK, different sources of law and how the law helps society deal with complex problems
- Diverse national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the United Kingdom and the need for mutual respect and understanding.

- The different ways in which a citizen can contribute to the improvement of their community, to include the opportunity to participate actively in community volunteering, as well as other forms of responsible activity
- Income and expenditure, credit and debt, insurance, savings and pensions, financial products and services, and how public money is raised and spent.

## **The Personal Wellbeing Programme of Study – non statutory**

### **The range and content includes:**

#### **Key Stage 3**

- Examples of diverse values encountered in society and the clarification of personal values.
- The knowledge and skills needed for setting realistic targets and personal goals.
- Physical and emotional change and puberty.
- Sexual activity, human reproduction, contraception, pregnancy, and sexually transmitted infections and HIV and how high-risk behaviours affect the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities.
- Facts and laws about drug, alcohol and tobacco use and misuse, and the personal and social consequences of misuse for themselves and others.
- How a balanced diet and making choices for being healthy contribute to personal wellbeing, and the importance of balance between work, leisure and exercise.
- Ways of recognising and reducing risk, minimising harm and getting help in emergency and risky situations.
- A knowledge of basic first aid.
- The features of positive and stable relationships, how to deal with a breakdown in a relationship and the effects of loss and bereavement.
- Different types of relationships, including those within families and between older and young people, boys and girls, and people of the same sex, including civil partnerships.
- The nature and importance of marriage and of stable relationships for family life and bringing up children.
- The roles and responsibilities of parents, carers and children in families.
- The similarities, differences and diversity among people of different race, culture, ability, disability, gender, age and sexual orientation and the impact of prejudice, bullying, discrimination and racism on individuals and communities.

## Key Stage 4

- a. The effect of diverse and conflicting values on individuals, families and communities and ways of responding to them.
- b. How the media portrays young people, body image and health issues.
- c. The characteristics of emotional and mental health, and the causes, symptoms and treatments of some mental and emotional health disorders.
- d. The benefits and risks of health and lifestyle choices, including choices relating to sexual activity and substance use and misuse, and the short and long-term consequences for the health and mental and emotional wellbeing of individuals, families and communities.
- e. Where and how to obtain health information, how to recognise and follow health and safety procedures, ways of reducing risk and minimising harm in risky situations, how to find sources of emergency help and how to use basic and emergency first aid.
- f. Characteristics of positive relationships, and awareness of exploitation in relationships and of statutory and voluntary organisations that support relationships in crisis.
- g. The roles and responsibilities of parents, carers, children and other family members.
- h. Parenting skills and qualities and their central importance to family life.
- i. The impact of separation, divorce and bereavement on families and the need to adapt to changing circumstances.
- j. The diversity of ethnic and cultural groups, the power of prejudice, bullying, discrimination and racism, and the need to take the initiative in challenging this and other offensive behaviours and in giving support to victims of abuse.

## The Big Question – Antony and Cleopatra

<p><b>Learning Objective</b></p> <p>Pupils use a range of balanced and persuasive argument techniques across a range of activities to formulate a viewpoint and argument related to the Big Question for this lesson.</p> <p>Pupils analyse the conflict of duty Vs. pleasure in the play, particularly experienced by Antony, and relate this to their own lives.</p> <p><b>Success Criteria (including differentiation)</b></p> <p><b>All</b> can express an initial opinion on the ‘Big Question’ and justify their viewpoint.</p> <p><b>Most</b> can develop their opinion over the course of the lesson sequence by listening and responding to others.</p> <p><b>Some</b> can articulate a clear balanced argument on the ‘Big Question’, using sophisticated argument techniques.</p>	<p><b>Big Question: Is it ever ok to prioritise myself?</b></p> <p><b>Vocabulary:</b> Society, consequences, commitment, participation, altruism</p>	
	<p><i>To begin: Discover the events of Antony and Cleopatra using the SSF 10 Events and the instructions for exploring the story in the Appendix.</i></p> <p><b>Lesson Plan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils list actions taken by Antony in the play and divide them into two categories: things he does to please himself and things he does for the good of Rome.</li> <li>• Pupils repeat the task for their own actions, focusing on the previous week of their lives.</li> <li>• Pupils list the consequences of Antony’s actions in Shakespeare’s play.</li> <li>• Pupils then list actual and hypothetical consequences of their own actions.</li> <li>• Using a Value Continuum, pupils judge whether they think Antony’s priorities were right and explain their position.</li> <li>• Students complete a Role on the Wall, using a range of Antony’s quotes to support their understanding of his feelings and the version of himself he presents to the world.</li> <li>• Pupils consider individually where their own priorities are.</li> <li>• Research opportunities to take action for the good of others in their local area.</li> <li>• Written outcome: Students write about the conflict that Antony faces of self over the greater good.</li> </ul> <p><b>See Teaching and Learning Activities for full details</b></p>	<p><b>Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Antony and Cleopatra – 10 events</b></li> <li>• <b>Instructions for exploring the story in the Appendix</b></li> <li>• <b>Antony quotes</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>National Curriculum Links</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The benefits and risks of lifestyle choices and the short and long-term consequences for the health and mental and emotional wellbeing of individuals, families and communities.</li> <li>• Develop an interest in, and commitment to, participation in volunteering as well as other forms of responsible activity, that they will take with them into adulthood.</li> <li>• Setting realistic targets and personal goals.</li> </ul>		

# Antony and Cleopatra – The Big Question

## Teaching and Learning Activities

### Teaching and Learning Activity One – Self and society

- In groups, ask pupils to list things Antony does that fall into one of these two categories:
  - Things he does to please himself
  - Things he does for the good of Rome
- Depending on your pupils' knowledge of the play you may like to scaffold this discussion with the **Antony and Cleopatra – 10 events**.
- Groups feed back their findings to the whole class in order to compile a master list for all to see. Discuss as a group any patterns that emerge – does the table divide neatly or do any actions appear in both columns? Which column is more populated?
- Ask students to think individually about the previous week and categorise their actions in the same way:
  - Things they've done for themselves
  - Things they've done for other people
- Ask for volunteers to give a few examples from both columns. Ask the group – looking at the things you did for other people, were any of them for people you didn't know? Distinguish between helping a friend or family member and taking broader action for the good of strangers or the wider community.
- Return to Antony's actions.
  - *It would be important to note here the reasons for Antony's actions. (He has a duty and allegiance to Rome but being a General in the army is also his job so in one way, it could be posed that he is choosing love over **his job** and nothing bigger than that - which many would not blame him for.)*
- Ask each group to focus on one action, with an even spread across both categories, and draw up a chain or list of consequences for that action, using 'because of that...' repeatedly as a sentence starter. They can refer to the play if they wish or they might want to think imaginatively about the possible consequences for his actions.
- Hear back from each group and if no one has raised it, discuss the action Antony takes when he is losing the battle at sea. Antony follows Cleopatra out of it so how will this brave and fierce army General feel at this point? How will it affect him to follow a woman out of battle? It will be useful to name the **shame** that Antony may well feel here because of the expectation of gender roles within the historical context of this play. Would it be the same now?
- Ask individuals to return to their own actions, pick two from each category and write down a list of consequential outcomes in the same way as they did for Antony. In some cases they might extend these chains beyond what they **know** has happened or beyond the present
  - (E.g. I gave money to a homeless charity, therefore they were able to provide someone with a bed for the night, therefore that person was off the streets on a cold night, therefore they avoided serious risks to health or even life... etc)

- Volunteers can share an example back if they would like to. Highlight especially where an individual's actions impact on wider society.
- Return to Antony's actions and ask the class: Looking at what we've written, what are his priorities? This should be a nuanced discussion as the point is not to simply identify Antony as a tragic hero who died because he was selfish. It is more complex than that. You might like to ask what forces are working on Antony to persuade him one way or the other.

## Teaching and Learning Activity Two – Value Continuum

- Introduce the concept of a Value Continuum by asking pupils to imagine that the room is bisected diagonally, with one corner of the room representing 'Strongly Agree' and the other corner of the room representing 'Strongly Disagree'.
- Explain to the pupils that you will ask them a question, and that they must stand somewhere on the imaginary line. They don't have to stand in the corners. Demonstrate where they might stand if they agree quite strongly, or if they disagreed slightly more than they agreed with a question.
- Now give them an example question so they can see how it works. E.g. 'Is breakfast the most important meal of the day?' or 'Are cats better than dogs?' Take views from different places on the line, encouraging pupils to articulate their feelings.
- Give them the statement **'Antony's priorities were wrong.'** Spotlight people standing in different places and draw out their opinion on where and how Antony prioritises himself or his country and for the reasoning behind their thoughts. Again, the point to make is not a straightforwardly didactic one but to highlight the balance of opinions.
  - It is important to note here that this division in loyalty ultimately leads to Antony's suicide and this should be handled carefully when working with young people.

## Teaching and Learning Activity Three – Role on the Wall

- Demonstrate the role on the wall to the group – draw a big gingerbread person. Ask them in groups to think of adjectives describing Antony's character (throughout the play) and write these words on the inside of the gingerbread person.
  - E.g. brave, determined, loyal, guilt-ridden, thoughtless, reckless
- On the outside of the gingerbread person, write words to describe how he presents himself to the world – both to Cleopatra and to his fellow leaders in Rome.
- Discuss as a whole group where the qualities on the inside match the qualities on the outside, why might this be the case?
- Discuss where the qualities are very different or even in opposition and why this might be.
- Does Antony ever present a different version of himself to protect himself or others?



- Use some of the **Antony quotes** provided to support this interpretation of Antony's thoughts and feelings. Consider whether the words he speaks are a true and honest reflection of how he actually feels.
- Students should consider that these feelings would change dependent on who he is talking to.

### Teaching and Learning Activity Four – Taking action

- Ask pupils to look again at their own list of actions and consequences and reflect on where their own values and priorities lie at the moment. Did anything surprise them?
- It may feel appropriate to hear back people's different values and priorities at this stage. Either way, highlight clearly the importance of balance.
  - E.g Time spent on our own wellbeing is vital, as well as time spent on other people, and of course the two things are inter-related.
- Ask students to research opportunities to help others in their local area. This may be to extend actions they are taking already (
  - E.g. someone who gives money to the homeless could research volunteering for a homeless charity or it may involve starting something entirely fresh.) Encourage them to think about how the activities they do for themselves could broaden into something they do for others.
- Groups present their research and ideas back to the class.

### Written Activity

- Students write about the conflict that Antony faces when being torn between duty and love, between himself and the greater good, Cleopatra or Rome. They could write about this in a range of ways:
  - From Antony's perspective
  - As a letter to Cleopatra
  - From her perspective asking Antony to choose
  - As a balance argument for both sides with a connection to their own real life experiences.

## Plenary

- Ask each student to write down one thing they are going to do in the next two weeks to prioritise their own wellbeing, and one thing to prioritise society.

## Useful follow up

- V inspired: UK's leading volunteering charity for 14-25 year olds. <https://vinspired.com/about-vinspired>
- Self-care tips for teens: <https://www.teenvogue.com/gallery/free-self-care-gift-guide>

Appendix 1

# ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

**THE BIG QUESTION**

Resources Pack



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## Antony Quotes

Forbear me –  
There's a great spirit gone. Thus did I desire it:  
What our contempts doth often hurl from us  
We wish it ours again. She's good, being gone.  
I must from this enchanting queen break off.

I will to Egypt:  
And though I make this marriage for my peace,  
I'th' east my pleasure lies.

If I lose mine honour,  
I lose myself: better I were not yours  
Than yours so branchless

All is lost:  
This foul Egyptian hath betrayed me:  
My fleet hath yielded to the foe.  
Triple-turned whore!

The witch shall die.  
To the young Roman boy she hath sold me, and I fall  
Under this plot. She dies for't.

# Antony & Cleopatra

## 10 Events

1. The Roman Empire is ruled by a triumvirate of Antony, Octavius Caesar and Lepidus. Antony (a married man) is criticised for spending his time in Egypt with the beautiful queen, Cleopatra.
2. Despite Cleopatra's disapproval, Antony returns to Rome for his wife's funeral. While there, he is forced to marry Caesar's sister, Octavia, in order to restore harmony.
3. When Caesar threatens to renew hostilities against his co-rulers, Antony sends Octavia back to sue for peace, whilst he makes for Egypt.
4. Caesar, incensed, wages war on Antony. Antony ignores advice from his officer and friend Enobarbus not to fight the Romans at sea.
5. The battle of Actium is lost when Cleopatra leaves with her fleet, with Antony in hot pursuit.
6. Enobarbus deserts Antony for Caesar. But when Antony sends Enobarbus' treasure to him, Enobarbus is consumed with grief and dies.
7. Antony accuses Cleopatra of betrayal and she locks herself in her monument, sending word that she is dead.
8. Grief-stricken, Antony asks his servant Eros to kill him. Eros cannot and kills himself instead.
9. Antony wounds himself grievously before hearing that Cleopatra is alive. He is carried to her monument and dies in her arms.
10. Cleopatra is put under guard by Caesar. To avoid being led by him, she has venomous snakes (asps) smuggled in in a basket of figs. She and her maids all die from their bites.

## Exploring the story

**Before you start this lesson and delve into the Big Question in the play, you might want to familiarise yourself with the story first.**

- There are lots of different approaches you could take, including using the 10 point summary.
- If you and/or your students don't know the play, then the following process is a great way to introduce them to the story and some of the main characters.
- As with any lesson, do adapt this to suit the needs of your students.
- This is a great way to get the story on its feet quickly and help your students to understand the story arc.

**Firstly, divide your students into groups and give them copies of the 10 point summary to explore the story order.**

- Cut up and remove the numbers from the 10 point summary.
- Give each group a few minutes to rearrange them into the correct order.
  - You could print a large copy of the 10 point summary so that each one is on an A3 page and when you go through the order with the whole class you can stick them up in the correct order around the room.
  - Ensure that you correct misconceptions as you go through the points and ask your students to justify and clarify the decisions they made.
  - This will support with comprehension work across English as there are some key indicators of the story structure (E.g Romeo and Juliet can only get married once they have met, Macbeth can only become King once he has killed the King).

**Once the correct order has been established, give each group two consecutive story points and ask them to create freeze frames to show this moment. Provide them with two rules**

1. Everyone must be involved.
2. Someone/some people must read out the story point.
  - Give them a strict time limit to create the freeze frame, before moving onto their second one.
    - Ask them to consider what else they could be if there are only a small amount of named characters in the scene - could they create the architecture or double up on characters?
  - After the time limit is up, give them a further two minutes to consider how they would adjust their positions so that the rest of the class can see the whole image – ask them to consider their audience.
  - With the rest of the class watching, move from one group to another, seeing each freeze frame in order and hearing the story point. Then jump into the image to ‘Thought tap’ some (or all ideally) of the characters.
    - It is really encouraging for students if they get to share their ideas, whether they are Juliet or Juliet’s wardrobe, Macbeth or one of his soldiers.
  - Ask them open questions about who they are, what they are doing and how they feel about it. Facilitate this in a light-hearted way to avoid the students feeling under pressure.
  - If they struggle with an answer, throw the question out to the rest of the group and the audience.
    - This is a great opportunity to get some interpretations of characters’ thoughts and actions but do use it to clarify facts about the story and the characters too.
    - It is also a great time to show that you don’t have all of the answers either and that you will all find out more as you delve further into the play and rehearsals.
    - You could do this ‘Thought Tapping’ as a ‘Roving Reporter’, using a prop as a microphone to interview the characters as if live in that moment.

**Once you have done this for each of the 10 images, bring the class back together for a plenary.**

This is a good time to recap on what they have learnt about the characters and/or the story and you could do this in a number of ways. E.g.

1. **Tell the story in a circle.** Everyone sits in a circle and adds a bit more information on the previous person's ideas. This means that those that have a good grasp will be able to share their knowledge and those who are still working towards it, will be able to add whatever they can – such as a character name or a setting for the play.
2. **Provide them with Plenary cards.** Use the following examples and ask them to share their response with someone else.
  - Something they have learnt today; a new word or phrase that they have used today; something that they would like to know more about; something that they are looking forward to in the play; a question that they now have about the play.
3. **Learnt and enjoyed.** Simply ask for them to tell a partner something that they have learnt and something that they have enjoyed in this lesson.