

KING LEAR

– 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, 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.

- m. 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 – King Lear

<p>Learning Objective</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 themes of intergenerational relationships in King Lear and relate this to the modern world.</p> <p>Success Criteria (including differentiation)</p> <p>All can express an initial opinion on the 'Big Question' and justify their viewpoint.</p> <p>Most can develop their opinion over the course of the lesson sequence by listening and responding to others.</p> <p>Some can articulate a clear balanced argument on the 'Big Question', using sophisticated argument techniques.</p>	<p>Big Question: How does age divide us as a society?</p> <p>Vocabulary: intergenerational, patriarchal, generations, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials and Gen Z, dementia</p> <p><i>To begin: Discover the events of King Lear using the SSF 10 Events and the instructions for exploring the story in the Appendix.</i></p> <p>Lesson Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show the extract of first speech delivered by Lear in the SSF abridged version and analyse the language used. What themes start to appear? • Using scene 5 from the SSF abridged script, students work in pairs to identify any references to age or to family. What can they find out about the familial relationships within this play from these references? • Using this information, start to draw a family tree of the various patriarchal relationships in this play. • Students then build a family tree physically by placing King Lear in the centre of a space and asking for representatives of each character to place themselves in the space to signify their relationship with the King. • Students build their own list of people in their lives who are at least one generation above them and consider what unites and divides them. • In groups pupils research different aspects of the following generations: Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials and Gen Z. • Written outcome – what advice could they give to King Lear/his daughters to help them listen to one another? • Plenary- How can they help to foster positive intergenerational relationships? Do they know of any organisations that might be able to support this? <p>See Teaching and Learning Activities for full details</p>	<p>Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scene 1 King Lear speech extract • Scene 5 from the SSF abridged script • King Lear – 10 events • Instructions for exploring the story in the Appendix <p>National Curriculum Links</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • 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. • 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 roles and responsibilities of parents, carers, children and other family members.
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The Big Question – King Lear

Teaching and Learning Activities

Starter – Exploring the theme of age

- Using the **extract from King Lear's first speech**, do a quick comprehension check and chat it through. Identify similar words, words that contrast and ideas and themes that are starting to develop already.
- Draw the students' attention to the final two lines where Lear uses the contrast of their youth and strength and his weakness and imminent death. Ask the class what it tells them about this character?
- Hand out **Scene 5 of the SSF abridged script** to groups and ask them to look for further examples of the themes of age and family within the scene. Ask them to also think about the reasons for these references and what clues they give us about the characters and their relationships.
- As the groups feedback their findings, begin to draw up a family tree to represent the main patriarchal relationships in this play (Lear and his daughters and Gloucester and his sons).
- Take this written version of a family tree and translate it to a physical version.
- Ask for a volunteer to represent Lear in the middle of a space and for further volunteers to represent the main characters around Lear, starting with his daughters. They, with the help of the rest of the class should position themselves around Lear to convey their relationship with him.
- Ask for the students to turn this into a living image – not quite a freeze frame but more like a Harry Potter image. On a count, ask all of the other characters to show their feelings towards Lear, using facial expressions and gestures only. You could prompt them to do this for different points in the play.
- Hopefully this will start a discussion regarding the character's feelings towards King Lear and what they want from him. How does this contradiction help to inform their decision of where to position themselves?

Teaching and Learning Activity One

- Ask students to make their own list of people in their lives who are at least one generation older than them.
 - A generation can be defined as: *'The period of time, usually considered to be about thirty years, that it takes for children to grow up and become adults and have children of their own.'*
- Students select one of these people on their list and talk to their partner about something that they have in common with this person or something that unites them. This could be a hobby or a point of view or a way that they live.
- They should then talk about what they consider to be biggest difference between them – bring their focus to the way that they think, behave, believe etc.
- Discuss some of these comparisons and make a list for the whole class to refer to. What are the common differences between them and why do they think this is?

Teaching and Learning Activity Two

- In groups ask the students to research one of the following generational groups:
 - The Silent Generation: Born 1928-1945 (73-90 years old)
 - Baby Boomers: Born 1946-1964 (54-72 years old)
 - Generation X: Born 1965-1980 (38-53 years old)
 - Millennials: Born 1981-1996 (22-37 years old)
 - Post-Millennials: Born 1997-Present (0-21 years old)
- Provide them with some guidance for their research. E.g. major socio political or legislative changes, inventions and discoveries made, the treatment of minority groups.
- When they have researched these areas, ask them to consider the effect all of this will have on their intergenerational relationships.
 - For example what was a Baby Boomer's relationship like with their grandparent and how does it compare with their own grandchildren or how will the Post Millennial generation's relationship with their grandparents compare with their own potential grandchildren? You may find this [report](#) from the Government Office for Science helpful, in particular the following information:

Age cohorts in the population are often assumed to share exposure to important socio-political events such as war or economic depression. The 'baby boom generation' is a large cohort, born after the Second World War and now entering later life. "The biggest cohort on the block" (Gilleard and Higgs, 2002: 370), they grew up within a social setting of welfare capitalism and have

experienced economic growth through much of their lives. Their progress into later life – and movement into the older chronological age groups of the population – has sparked much debate and provided the impetus for significant public reform of welfare, notably changes to retirement ages and pension eligibility. The generation born between 1965 and 1979, sometimes called ‘generation X’, has experienced the establishment of the European Union, high unemployment in the 1990s and the economic recession of the mid-2000s. Young adults born between 1980 and 2000 (‘generation X’ (BMO Wealth Institute, 2014) or the ‘jilted generation’ (Howker and Malik, 2010)) are portrayed as struggling in the employment and housing markets and facing an uncertain future. These two younger generations are growing up in an era of the internet, economic and cultural globalisation and in societal contexts that increasingly value individual over collective provisions for health and social needs (Phillipson, 2015).

- It may be useful here to discuss the big difference in the way the youngest generation voted in the 2016 referendum compared to the oldest generation.
- Each group should present their findings in any way they feel appropriate. They could create an interactive presentation, a piece of drama or a seminar style talk.
- Find the time and the opportunity now to reflect on how we can learn from how other’s lived and how this can have an impact on the way we live our own lives? Ask what the point is in intergenerational relationships?

Written Activity

- Ask pupils to imagine that they can intervene in the story and reach out to King Lear and his daughters before they ban him from their households. Using all of their research so far, ask them to write letters of advice to Lear or to one of the daughters. They should be focused on helping them to understand the other’s viewpoint, supporting them to listen to their parent/child and respond better than they do in the play!

Plenary

- How can they help to foster positive intergenerational relationships? Do they know of any organisations that might be able to support this? You could ask them to research local organisations that work with this purpose or ask them to make a commitment of intent to foster these relationships in the future. It could be as simple as visiting an elderly neighbour or family member on a regular basis.

Useful follow up

- 'Old People's Home for Four Year Olds' is a Channel Four documentary which follows a group of young children as they spend time with some elderly residents from an old people's home and welcome them into their classroom. This is all done with the aim to improve the older generation's health and happiness. You can watch episodes [here](#).
- If you would also like to explore the issue of dementia with your class, there are some excellent organisations out there that specialise in working with schools to develop knowledge and understanding of this disease.
<https://www.dementiaaction.org.uk/dementiafriendlyschools> - for creating a dementia friendly generation.

Appendix 1

KING LEAR

THE BIG QUESTION

Resources Pack



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Lear Extract Scene 1

Give me the map here,
Know that we have divided
In three our kingdom, and t'is our fast intent
To shake all cares and business from our age,
Conferring them on younger strengths, while we
Unburthen'd crawl toward death.

Lear Extract Scene 5

[Enter GLOUCESTER with REGAN and CORNWALL.]

[Enter LEAR, KENT, FOOL and retinue.]

REGAN I am glad to see your grace.

LEAR Beloved Regan,
Thy sister's naught;
Thou'lt not believe with how depraved –

REGAN I cannot think my sister in the least
Would fail her obligation –

LEAR My curses on her.

REGAN O sir, you are old. I pray you
That to our sister you do make return,
Say you have wronged her.

LEAR Ask her forgiveness?
“Dear daughter, I confess that I am old;
Age is unnecessary -

REGAN Return you to my sister.

LEAR Never, Regan: she hath abated me of half my
train -

[A trumpet sounds.]

CORNWALL

What trumpet's that?

REGAN

I know't, my sister's.

[Enter GONERIL. The sisters clasp hands and exchange words.]

LEAR

O Regan, will you take her by the hand?

GONERIL

Why not by the hand, Sir?

REGAN

Return and sojourn with my sister
Dismissing half your train, come then to me.

LEAR

Return to her? And fifty men dismissed?
Rather will I be comrade with the wolf and owl.

GONERIL

At your choice, Sir.

LEAR

I prithee, daughter, do not make me mad.
I can stay with Regan, I and my hundred knights.

REGAN

Give ear, sir, to my sister. She knows what she does.

King Lear

10 Events

1. Lear plans to split England between his daughters, and asks them to show their love. Goneril and Regan pander but Cordelia remains silent. Lear, furious, banishes Cordelia and her supporter, Kent.
2. Lear is gradually driven mad by Goneril and Regan's miserable treatment of him.
3. Edmund, Gloucester's bastard son, convinces his father that his other son, Edgar, is plotting to murder him.
4. Edgar flees, disguising himself as Poor Tom, and meets Kent (also in disguise), a Fool and Lear on a lonely heath. Lear rages madly at a storm then takes shelter.
5. Gloucester brings them supplies but is betrayed by Edmund and punished. His eyes are put out by Lear's daughters, Goneril and Regan.
6. Edgar (still disguised) leads his father to Dover where the French army, under Cordelia, have landed. A battle ensues but the English, under Edmund, triumph.
7. Gloucester is reunited with the mad Lear, then dies in the arms of his good son, Edgar.
8. Lear and Cordelia are captured and Edmund orders their death. A messenger informs Edmund that Goneril and Regan have killed themselves.
9. Edgar appears and duels with his brother, killing him.
10. Lear enters, bearing Cordelia's body then collapses overcome with sorrow, and dies in front of Kent and Edgar.

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.