

KING LEAR 1.1: Teaching Notes

The lists and tables here are intended to help an instructor see more quickly some of the textual elements worth exploring in the opening scene of *King Lear*. Text and performance considerations necessarily wait on each other. But, as Professor Miriam Gilbert of the University of Iowa points out, questions about the text come first, then questions about performance.¹

The vocabulary list divides words, somewhat arbitrarily, into three categories. The first is made up of some that many students might see as obsolete but that in fact appear in the contemporary, though often formal, writing of educated speakers of English. The second consists of words now obsolete; these are glossed in most editions of the play. The third contains the dangerous words, those most students know but not with the meaning they have in the text. 'Appear,' for example, in Gloucester's comment that "it appears not which of the Dukes he values most," (4) has the now lost meaning of 'to be apparent, clear, or obvious.' Often the combination of context and cognates will help, as with Lear's "To thee and thine hereditary ever / Remain this ample third of our fair kingdom...." (76-77) The word 'hereditary' appears to be our modern adjective, but the context makes it clear that Lear uses it here as a noun. The word's lexical associations should help a reader recognize that it stands where we would use the noun 'heirs.' For many, though, a modern ear will have to rely on an understanding of character, theme, and tone to discern a problem. Reading 'sometime' in Lear's calling Cordelia "my sometime daughter" (117) with the sense of occasional or on-and-off does damage to the line that Shakespeare intends as an abrupt renunciation, the culmination of a rejection so strong that it prompts Kent's first cry of protest.

The play's opening scene provides examples of the use of the 'thou/thee' forms that reward investigation. Lear uses 'thee' throughout to pull Goneril and Regan emotionally closer to himself. Ironically, he will use it to cast Cordelia aside. He has called her 'you' from the start: "What can you say..." (82) "your sisters" (83), "Mend your speech...." (91), "...mar your fortunes" (92) The *you* form normally shows respect; *thou* and *thee* mark a lack of respect, either because affection makes respect unnecessary or because words and actions have overcome any respect. So the 'familiar' form can be affectionate or denigrating. Sir Ian McKellen wears two wedding rings as Lear in the 2007 Royal Shakespeare Company production, telling Paul Lieberman in an interview that the king married twice, once to the mother of the depraved older daughters, then to a "beloved second Queen Lear [who] died in

childbirth...."² From what Lieberman calls the "complex feelings in the recesses of the king's mind," may grow the respect he shows Cordelia But when she gives him a response he does not want, he first shifts to the familiar to remind her that she is his child and must show obedience—"But goes thy heart with this?" (103). When that fails, the familiar becomes the withering medium of his curse: "Let it be so: thy truth then be thy dower!" (105) Shakespeare reinforces the notion when he has Lear revert to calling Cordelia 'you,' when they are reunited in Act 5, even before he acknowledges that he recognizes her.

We can speculate on other relationships. Goneril and Regan, incapable of affection, use the polite forms even on each other. Lear calls France "you," but shifts when France takes up Cordelia, "Thou hast her, France, let her be thine...." (259) France and Kent call Cordelia "thou"; Goneril and Burgundy call her "you." Clearly, there's food for interpretative study.

The prosody of the play's opening scene can lead into rich discussion. Shakespeare clearly marks the distinction between the court assembly that dominates the scene and the more private conversations that begin and end it. Lear's commanding presence changes the lines to verse, where they stay until he exits. Noticing where, how, and why the two shifts occur will prepare a tool that will become more and more useful throughout the play.

Shakespeare will have characters share lines of blank verse, sometimes to pull them close to each other, sometimes to underscore conflict. In this scene the most dramatic examples lie in the increasingly fiery exchange between Lear and Kent who interrupt each other's lines, if not always each other's speech, no fewer than seven times in the forty-six lines that pick up speed from the pattern (117-163). Shakespeare begins to draw France and Cordelia together when he has them share line 220, although both are talking to Lear. By their next shared line, though, France is easing her away from the family that has turned on her, "Well may you prosper! / Come, my fair Cordelia." (279) Neither Goneril nor Regan shares a line with anyone else until they unite to "gang up" on Cordelia, "[Regan] Prescribe not us our duty. [Goneril] Let your study / Be to content your lord...." (273-74).

Finally we list the antitheses that so enhance France's taking up of Cordelia. They come 'in happy time,' too, helping to smooth into courteous behavior what could be played as rougher treatment of a Cordelia who has not openly consented to the bargain. (Does she look wistfully back at Burgundy as she leaves?)

¹ Miriam Gilbert. Lecture. The Shakespeare Center, Stratford-upon-Avon. 19 June 2007.

² Ian McKellen, interviewed by Paul Lieberman for "The Knight Who Would Be King," *Los Angeles Times*, 14 October 2007, F1, Print.

Shakespeare: King Lear § Act 1, Scene 1

Enter Kent, Gloucester, and Edmund.

Kent I thought the King had more affected the Duke of Albany than Cornwall.

Gloucester It did always seem so to us; but now in the division of the kingdom, it appears not which of the Dukes he values most, for *equalities* are so weighed, that curiosity in neither can make choice of either's moiety.

Kent Is not this your son, my lord?

Gloucester His breeding, sir, hath been at my charge. I have so often blushed to acknowledge him, that now I am brazed to't.

10 **Kent** I cannot conceive you.

Gloucester Sir, this young fellow's mother could; whereupon she grew round wombed, and had indeed, sir, a son for her cradle ere she had a husband for her bed. Do you smell a fault?

15 **Kent** I cannot wish the fault undone, the issue of it being so proper.

20 **Gloucester** But I have a son, sir, by order of law, some year elder than this, who yet is no dearer in my account. Though this knave came something saucily to the world before he was sent for, yet was his mother fair, there was good sport at his making, and the whoreson must be acknowledged. Do you know this noble gentleman, Edmund?

Edmund No, my lord.

Gloucester My Lord of Kent. Remember him hereafter as my honourable friend.

25 **Edmund** My services to your lordship.

Kent I must love you, and sue to know you better.

Edmund Sir, I shall study deserving.

Gloucester He hath been out nine years, and away he shall again.

[Sound a sennet.] The King is coming.

Enter one with a coronet, King Lear, Cornwall, Albany, Goneril, Regan, Cordelia, and attendants.

30 **Lear** Attend the lords of France and Burgundy, Gloucester.

Gloucester I shall, my lord.

Exit with Edmund

35 **Lear** Mean time we shall express our darker purpose. Give me the map there. Know that we have divided In three our kingdom; and 'tis our fast intent To shake all cares and business from our age, Conferring them on younger strengths, while we Unburthen'd crawl toward death. Our son of Cornwall, And you, our no less loving son of Albany, We have this hour a constant will to publish Our daughters' several dowers, that future strife May be prevented now. The princes, France and Burgundy, Great rivals in our youngest daughter's love, Long in our court have made their amorous sojourn, And here are to be answer'd. Tell me, my daughters (Since now we will divest us both of rule, Interest of territory, cares of state), Which of you shall we say doth love us most, That we our largest bounty may extend Where nature doth with merit challenge? Goneril, Our eldest born, speak first.

45 **Goneril** Sir, I love you more than *words* can wield the matter, Dearer than eyesight, space, and liberty, Beyond what can be valued, rich or rare, No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honour; As much as child e'er lov'd, or father found; A love that makes breath poor, and speech unable: Beyond all manner of so much I love you.

55

Cordelia [Aside] What shall Cordelia speak? Love, and be silent.

60 *Lear* Of all these bounds, even from this line to this,
 With shadowy forests and with champains rich'd,
 With plenteous rivers and wide-skirted meads,
 We make thee lady. To thine and Albany's [issue]
 Be this perpetual. What says our second daughter,
 Our dearest Regan, wife of Cornwall? *Speak*.

65 *Regan* I am made of that self metal as my sister,
 And prize me at her worth. In my true heart
 I find she names my very deed of love;
 Only she comes too short, that I profess
 Myself an enemy to all other joys
 70 Which the most precious square of sense possesses,
 And find I am alone felicitate
 In your dear Highness' love.

Cordelia [Aside] Then poor Cordelia!
 And yet not so, since I am sure my love's
 75 More ponderous than my tongue.

Lear To thee and thine hereditary ever
 Remain this ample third of our fair kingdom,
 No less in space, validity, and pleasure,
 Than that conferred on Goneril. — Now, our joy,
 80 Although our last and least, to whose young love
 The vines of France and milk of Burgundy
 Strive to be interest'd, what can you say to draw
 A third more opulent than your sisters'? *Speak*.

Cordelia Nothing, my lord.

85 *Lear* Nothing?

Cordelia Nothing.

Lear Nothing will come of nothing, speak again.

Cordelia Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave
 My heart into my mouth. I love your Majesty
 90 According to my bond, no more nor less.

Lear How, how, Cordelia? Mend your speech a little,

Lest you may mar your fortunes.

Cordelia Good my lord,
 You have begot me, bred me, lov'd me: I
 Return those duties back as are right fit,
 95 Obey you, love you, and most honour you.
 Why have my sisters husbands, if they say
 They love you all? Happily, when I shall wed,
 That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry
 Half my love with him, half my care and duty.
 Sure I shall never marry like my sisters,
 To love my father all.

Lear But goes thy heart with this?

Cordelia Ay, my good lord.

Lear So young, and so untender?

Cordelia So young, my lord, and true.

105 *Lear* Let it be so: thy truth then be thy dower!
 For by the sacred radiance of the sun,
 The *mysteries* of Hecate and the night;
 By all the operation of the orbs,
 From whom we do exist and cease to be;
 110 Here I disclaim all my paternal care,
 Propinquity and property of blood,
 And as a stranger to my heart and me
 Hold thee from this for ever. The barbarous Scythian,
 Or he that makes his generation messes
 To gorge his appetite, shall to my bosom
 Be as well neighbour'd, pitied, and reliev'd,
 As thou my sometime daughter.

Kent Good my liege —

Lear Peace, Kent!
 Come not between the dragon and his wrath;
 I loved her most, and thought to set my rest
 On her kind nursery. [to *Cordelia*.] Hence, and avoid my
 sight!
 So be my grave my peace, as here I give

120

Her father's heart from her. Call France. Who stirs?
 Call Burgundy. Cornwall and Albany,
 125 With my two daughters' dowers digest the third;
 Let pride, which she calls plainness, marry her.
 I do invest you jointly with my power,
 Pre-eminence, and all the large effects
 That troop with majesty. Ourself, by monthly course,
 130 With reservation of an hundred knights
 By you to be sustained, shall our abode
 Make with you by due turn. Only we shall retain
 The name, and all th' addition to a king;
 The sway, revenue, execution of the rest,
 135 Beloved sons, be yours, which to confirm,
 This coronet part between you.

Kent Royal Lear,
 Whom I have ever honoured as my king,
 Loved as my father, as my master followed,
 As my great patron thought on in my prayers —

140 *Lear* The bow is bent and drawn, make from the shaft.

Kent Let it fall rather, though the fork invade
 The region of my heart; be Kent unmannerly
 When Lear is mad. What wouldst thou do, old man?
 Think'st thou that duty shall have dread to speak
 145 When power to flattery bows? To plainness honour's
 bound,

When majesty falls to folly. Reserve thy state,
 And in thy best consideration check
 This hideous rashness. Answer my life my judgment,
 Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least,
 150 Nor are those empty-hearted whose low sounds
 Reverb no hollowness.

Lear Kent, on thy life, no more.

Kent My life I never held but as a pawn
 To wage against thine enemies, *nor fear* to lose it,
 Thy safety being motive.

Lear Out of my sight!

155 *Kent* See better, Lear, and let me still remain

The true blank of thine eye.

Lear Now, by Apollo —

Kent Now, by Apollo, King,
 Thou swear'st thy gods in vain.

Lear O vassal! Miscreant [*Starts to draw his sword.*]

Alb & Dear sir, forbear.

Corn.

160 *Kent* Kill thy physician, and *the* fee bestow
 Upon the foul disease. Revoke thy gift,
 Or whilst I can vent clamor from my throat,
 I'll tell thee thou dost evil.

Lear Hear me, recreant,
 On thine allegiance, hear me!
 165 That thou hast sought to make us break our vows,
 Which we durst never yet, and with strain'd pride
 To come betwixt our sentence and our power,
 Which nor our nature nor our place can bear,
 Our potency made good, take thy reward.
 Five days we do allot thee, for provision
 To shield thee from disasters of the world,
 And on the sixth to turn thy hated back
 Upon our kingdom. If, on the tenth day following,
 Thy banished trunk be found in our dominions,
 175 The moment is thy death. Away! By Jupiter,
 This shall not be revok'd.

Kent Fare thee well, King; sith thus thou wilt appear,
 Freedom lives hence, and banishment is here.
 [*To Cordelia.*] The gods to their dear shelter take thee, maid,
 That justly think'st and hast most rightly said!
 [*To Regan and Goneril.*] And your large speeches may your
 deeds approve,
 That good effects may spring from words of love.
 Thus Kent, O princes, bids you all adieu,
 He'll shape his old course in a country new.

Exit

Flourish. Enter Gloucester with France and Burgundy, attendants.

185 *Cordelia ?* Here's France and Burgundy, my noble lord.
Lear My Lord of Burgundy,
 We first address toward you, who with this king
 Hath rivalled for our daughter. What, in the least,
 Will you require in present dower with her,
 190 Or cease your quest of love?

Burgundy Most royal Majesty,
 I crave no more than hath your Highness offered,
 Nor will you tender less.

Lear Right noble Burgundy,
 When she was dear to us, we did hold her so,
 But now her price is fallen. Sir, there she stands:
 195 If aught within that little seeming substance,
 Or all of it, with our displeasure pieced,
 And nothing more, may fitly like your Grace,
 She's there, and she is yours.

Burgundy I know no answer.

Lear Will you, with those infirmities she owes,
 200 Unfriended, new adopted to our hate,
 Dowered with our curse, and strangered with our oath,
 Take her, or leave her?

Burgundy Pardon me, royal sir,
 Election makes not up in such conditions.

Lear Then leave her, sir, for by the power that made me,
 205 I tell you all her wealth. [*To France.*] For you, great King,
 I would not from your love make such a stray
 To match you where I hate; therefore beseech you
 T' avert your liking a more worthier way
 Than on a wretch whom Nature is ashamed
 210 Almost t' acknowledge hers.

France This is most strange,
 That she, whom even but now was your *best* object,
 The argument of your praise, balm of your age,
 The best, the dearest, should in this trice of time
 Commit a thing so monstrous, to dismantle
 215 So many folds of favour. Sure her offence
 Must be of such unnatural degree

That monsters it, or your fore-vouch'd affection
 Fall into taint; which to believe of her
 Must be a faith that reason without miracle
 220 Should never plant in me.

Cordelia I yet beseech your Majesty —
 If for I want that glib and oily art
 To speak and purpose not, since what I *well* intend,
 I'll do't before I speak — that you make known
 It is no vicious blot, murder, or foulness,
 225 No unchaste action, or dishonoured step,
 That hath deprived me of your grace and favour,
 But even for want of that for which I am richer —
 A still-soliciting eye, and such a tongue
 That I am glad I have not, though not to have it
 230 Hath lost me in your liking.

Lear Better thou
 Hadst not been born than not t' have pleased me better.

France Is it but this — a tardiness in nature
 Which often leaves the history unspoke
 That it intends to do? My Lord of Burgundy,
 235 What say you to the lady? Love's not love
 When it is mingled with regards that stands
 Aloof from th' entire point. Will you have her?
 She is herself a dowry.

Burgundy Royal King,
 Give but that portion which yourself proposed,
 240 And here I take Cordelia by the hand,
 Duchess of Burgundy.

Lear Nothing. I have sworn, I am firm.

Burgundy I am sorry then you have so lost a father
 That you must lose a husband.

Cordelia Peace be with Burgundy!
 245 Since that *respect and fortune* are his love,
 I shall not be his wife.

France Fairest Cordelia, that art most rich being poor,
 Most choice forsaken, and most loved despised,
 Thee and thy virtues here I seize upon,

250 Be it lawful I take up what's cast away.
 Gods, gods! 'tis strange that from their cold'st neglect
 My love should kindle to inflamed respect.
 Thy dowerless daughter, King, thrown to my chance,
 Is queen of us, of ours, and our fair France.
 255 Not all the dukes of waterish Burgundy
 Can buy this unprized precious maid of me.
 Bid them farewell, Cordelia, though unkind,
 Thou lovest here, a better where to find.
 260 *Lear* Thou hast her, France, let her be thine, for we
 Have no such daughter, nor shall ever see
 That face of hers again. [*to Cordelia.*] Therefore be gone,
 Without our grace, our love, our benison. —
 Come, noble Burgundy.
 [*Flourish. Exeunt all but France, Goneril, Regan, and Cordelia*]
 265 *France* Bid farewell to your sisters.
 270 *Cordelia* The jewels of our father, with washed eyes
 Cordelia leaves you. I know you what you are,
 And like a sister am most loath to call
 Your faults as they are named. Love well our father;
 To your professed bosoms I commit him,
 275 But yet, alas, stood I within his grace,
 I would prefer him to a better place.
 So farewell to you both.
 280 *Regan* Prescribe not us our duty.
Goneril Let your study
 Be to content your lord, who hath received you
 At fortune's alms. You have obedience scanted,
 And well are worth the want that you have wanted.
Cordelia Time shall unfold what plighted cunning hides,
 Who covers faults, at last with shame derides.
 Well may you prosper!
France Come, my fair Cordelia.
 [*Exeunt France and Cordelia.*]
 285 *Goneril* Sister, it is not little I have to say of what most nearly
 appertains to us both. I think our father will hence

to-night.

That's most certain, and with you; next month with us.

You see how full of changes his age is; the observation we have made of it hath not been little. He always loved our sister most, and with what poor judgment he hath now cast her off appears too grossly.

'Tis the infirmity of his age, yet he hath ever but slenderly known himself.

The best and soundest of his time hath been but rash; then must we look from his age to receive not alone the imperfections of long-ingrained condition, but therewithal the unruly waywardness that infirm and choleric years bring with them.

Such unconstant starts are we like to have from him as this of Kent's banishment.

There is further compliment of leave-taking between France and him. *Pray you* let us *hit* together; if our father carry authority with such disposition as he bears, this last surrender of his will but offend us.

We shall further think of it.

We must do something, and i' th' heat. [Exeunt.]

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Teaching Notes for a Close Analysis Exercise

1. Vocabulary

Current words			Obsolete words			'Danger' words		
	<i>line</i>	<i>word</i>		<i>line</i>	<i>word</i>		<i>line</i>	<i>word</i>
1	6	moiety (?)	1	21	whoreson	1	4	appears
2	9	brazen (v)	2	71	felicitate ?	2	10	conceive
3	19	saucily	3	82	interest	3	15	issue
4	43	amorous	4	158	miscreant	4	20	fair
5	43	sojourn	5	159	forbear	5	27	study
6	51	wield	6	166	durst	6	34	fast
7	60	champaign	7	168	nor... nor...	7	39	constant
8	61	mead	8	177	sith	8	40	several
9	62	issue	9	195	aught / naught	9	48	bounty
10	75	ponderous	10	291	therewhital	10	52	space
11	83	opulent				11	65	self
12	105	dower				12	65	metal
13	111	propinquity				13	70	square
14	114	mess				14	76	hereditary
15	121	hence				15	87	unhappy
16	158	vassal				16	91	how
17	195	aught				17	94	fit
18	207	beseech				18	97	happily
19	213	trice				19	114	mess
20	275	alms				20	117	sometime(s)
21	293	choleric				21	121	nursery
						22	141	fork
						23	144	dread
						24	146	reserve
						25	152	pawn
						26	192	right
						27	197	like
						28	211	even
						29	215	fold
						30	221	want
						31	222	purpose
						32	239	portion
						33	273	study
						34	298	hit

2. Familiar and Formal Address

Characters who use formal address:

<i>Speaker</i>		<i>addressed</i>	<i>form</i>	<i>line</i>
Kent	to	Gloucester	you	7
Gloucester	to	Edmund	you	13
Edmund	to	Kent	you	25
Kent	to	Edmund	you	26
Lear	to	Albany	you	38
Goneril	to	Lear	you	51
Regan	to	Lear	you	72
Lear	to	Cordelia	you	82
Cordelia	to	Lear	you	89
Lear	to	Burgundy	you	187
Burgundy	to	Lear	you	191
Lear	to	France	you	205
France	to	Burgundy	you	235
Burgundy	to	Cordelia	you	243
Goneril	to	Cordelia	you	273
Regan	to	Goneril	you	283
Goneril	to	Regan	you	284
France	to	Lear	your	211

Characters who use 'familiar' address:

<i>speaker</i>		<i>addressed</i>	<i>form</i>	<i>line</i>
France	to	Cordelia	art	247
Lear	to	Goneril	thee	62
Lear	to	Regan	thee	76
Kent	to	Cordelia	thee	179
Kent	to	Lear	thou	143
Lear	to	France	thou	259
Lear	to	Cordelia	thy	102
Lear	to	Kent	thy	151

Summary

There are 26 pairs of characters
8 use the familiar forms
(5 of those are Lear)
1 character changes his form of
address (Lear to Cordelia)

3. Prosody

Lines 1-31 are prose (Kent, Gloucester, and Edmund)

Lines 32-279 are verse (the court scene)

Lines 280-302 are prose (Goneril and Regan)

So:

Prose accounts for 54 lines, or 18% of the scene

Verse accounts for 248 lines or 82% of the scene

No character uses any prose while King Lear is on stage.

Lear has the first line of blank verse; Cordelia has the last.

When Goneril and Regan are left alone, they fall immediately into prose.

Both Kent and Gloucester change from prose to blank verse when Lear enters.

4. Shared Lines

<i>Line</i>	<i>Begun by</i>	<i>Ended by</i>	<i>Line</i>	<i>Begun by</i>	<i>Ended by</i>
92	Lear	Cordelia	198	Lear	Burgundy
102	Lear	Cordelia	203	Lear	Burgundy
117	Lear	Kent	210	Lear	France
136	Lear	Kent	220	France	Cordelia
151	Kent	Lear	230	Cordelia	Lear
154	Kent	Lear	238	France	Burgundy
157	Lear	Kent	244	Burgundy	Cordelia
158	Kent	Lear	264	Lear	France
163	Kent	Lear	273	Regan	Goneril
190	Lear	Burgundy	279	Cordelia	France
192	Burgundy	Lear			

5. Antithesis

France's speech on Cordelia:

<i>line</i>		
247	rich	poor
248	choice	forsaken
248	loved	despised
250	take up	cast away
251-52	cold	inflamed
251-52	neglect	respect
253	dowerless	queen
256	unprized	precious

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Text Questions

Familiar forms of address

- Does Shakespeare have Burgundy address Cordelia as you or thou? Why? Does he have France address Cordelia as you or thou? Why?
 - Lear calls Cordelia you in lines 82, 91, and 92. But he shifts to thy in line 102 and will not call her you again. Why does Shakespeare have him change?
 - Why does Lear call Goneril and Regan thou/thee/thy in lines 62 and 76, while he is still calling Cordelia you?
 - Kent addresses Lear by titles only, without pronouns, calling him “good my liege,” “Royal Lear,” “my king... my father... my master... my great patron.” Why does he shift suddenly to thou in line 143?
-

Prosody

- Why does Shakespeare have Kent, Gloucester, and Edmund speak in prose in lines 1-31?
 - Why does he shift to verse for the court scene of lines 32-279?
 - Why does he shift back to prose for the balance of the scene?
 - To which character does Shakespeare give the first line of blank verse in the scene? What comment might he be making about him?
To which character does Shakespeare give the last line of blank verse in the scene? What comment might he be making about her?
-

Shared Lines

- Shakespeare will often have two characters share a line of blank verse, usually to subtly indicate a closeness, sometimes to quicken the pace of an exchange. (Occasionally it's not Shakespeare at all but a type compositor or editor who has split the line.) What purposes can we reasonably attribute to the sharing of the following lines?
 - Lear and Kent in lines 117 and 136
 - Kent and Lear in lines 154 and 158
 - Lear and Burgundy in lines 190 and 198
 - Lear and France in line 264
 - Regan and Goneril in line 273
 - Cordelia and France in line 279
-

Antithesis and Paradox

- Shakespeare structures the King of France's comment on Cordelia around a set of antitheses, beginning with *rich—poor* in line 247. List six or seven more examples from that speech. Then decide what impression of Cordelia they are intended to make on the audience. What impression of France do they create? What impression of Lear? of Burgundy?

Word Order

- Shakespeare will alter the normal order of words in an English sentence in order to keep the meter of a line of verse or to emphasize a word or phrase by moving it to the end of a phrase or sentence. Rewrite the following lines, putting the words back in their normal order. Then decide why he makes each change. (Words have been omitted in some places here; you do not need to replace them.)
 - he... shall to my bosom/Be as well neighbour'd... As thou my sometime daughter. (114-117)
 - Ourself, by monthly course,
With reservation of an hundred knights
By you to be sustained, shall our abode
Make with you by due turn. (129-132)
 - The gods to their dear shelter take thee, maid, (179)
 - He'll shape his old course in a country new. (184)
 - We shall further think of it. (301)

Word omission

- Shakespeare will often omit words we would not drop in normal speech. (The verb *to go* often disappears, as it does in line 28). Again, he's often preserving the meter or adding emphasis. What words are missing from these lines?
 - The gods to their dear shelter take thee, maid, (179)
 - Bid them farewell, Cordelia, though unkind. (257)

Shifting Parts of Speech

- Shakespeare will often create a new word by changing the part of speech of a familiar one. France says Cordelia's misdeed must be monstrous by verbalizing the noun *monster*: "Her offence/Must be of such unnatural degree/That monsters it" (217). Explain the similar shifts in the following lines:
 - Thou lovest **here**, a better **where** to find. (258)
 - And find I am alone **felicitate**
In your dear Highness' love. (71-72)

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Production Questions

1. If Lear plans to divide his kingdom among his three daughters, why do Kent and Gloucester talk as if they already know he is going to split it between Albany and Cornwall? (1-6)
2. Why does Kent change the subject so suddenly and quickly? (7)
3. Does Edmund hear what his father says about him? (8-21) If so, how does he react? If not, does someone enter with him at line 1? Who?
4. In what tone does Gloucester deliver the comments about Edmund? Are they comments bitter insults? good-humored joking? didactic warnings? something else? Is his audience for these lines Kent or Edmund or himself or some combination of the three?
5. What is the 'subtext' of Edmund's line 'I must love you'? (26) Do you want the actor to say 'must' in a tone that shows that he means he feels a desire? he feels a social obligation? he is obliged to follow his father's unreasonable orders? Something else?
6. Does Edmund react to Gloucester's statement that 'away he shall again'? (28) If so, how?
7. To whom is Lear speaking in the first part of line 33? Where did the map come from? What does it look like? Does Lear take it? put it on a table? the floor? the wall?
8. How big a crowd is on stage here? Do you want a huge court assembly with a score of unnamed courtiers looking on? Is it more of a family gathering? Something else?
9. We learn in line 44 that it's a special day at court. How does Lear say lines 41-44? How do those on stage react? Cordelia? Burgundy? France? Kent? Goneril? Regan?
10. Has Lear prepared this speech? Is he delivering it impromptu or from notes? How attentively is each of the others listening? Why?
11. Why on earth does Lear suddenly break away from announcing his favorite daughter's engagement to start the 'love test'? Notice that Shakespeare doesn't even let him wait until the end of a line.
12. The parenthetical lines 45-46 do not appear in the Quarto version of the play. Should they be included here? If so, in what tone do you want the actor to read them?
13. Do Goneril and Regan know this game is coming? Are they delivering prepared speeches?
14. Shakespeare has Lear mention Goneril and Regan's children, knowing that neither has one to inherit the kingdom (lines 62 and 76). Is he mocking them or their husbands? Implying a request? a command? something else?
15. What possible topics or themes of the play might Shakespeare be signaling this early in these lines:
 - ❖ Out of my sight!
See better, Lear, and let me still remain
The true blank of thine eye. (154-56)
 - ❖ a wretch whom Nature is ashamed
Almost t' acknowledge hers. (209-210)
 - ❖ That we our largest bounty may extend
Where nature doth with merit challenge (48-49)
 - ❖ be Kent unmannerly
When Lear is mad. (142-43)
 - ❖ To plainness honour's bound,
When majesty falls to folly. (145-46)
 - ❖ Who covers faults, at last with shame derides.
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