Close Analysis Shakespeare

Shakespeare at the Clark

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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?)

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[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.

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.

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?

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

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.

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.

Lear Attend the lords of France and Burgundy, Gloucester.

Gloucester I shall, my lord.

Exit with Edmund

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.

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.

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

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.*

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
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
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,
Although our last and least, to whose young love
The vines of France and milk of Burgundy
Strive to be interess'd, what can you say to draw
A third more opulent than your sisters'? Speak.

Cordelia Nothing, my lord.

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
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,
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.

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;
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

Her father's heart from her. Call France. Who stirs?
Call Burgundy. Cornwall and Albany,
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,
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,
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 —

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
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,
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!

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 & Corn. Dear sir, forbear.

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!
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,
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.

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,
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:
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,
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,
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
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
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
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, murther, or foulness,
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
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,
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,
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!
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,

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.
Not all the dukes of waterish Burgundy
Can buy this unprized precious maid of me.
Bid them farewell, Cordelia, though unkind,
Thou losest here, a better where to find.

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]

France Bid farewell to your sisters.

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,
But yet, alas, stood I within his grace,
I would prefer him to a better place.
So farewell to you both.

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.]

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.

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

Goneril 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.

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

Goneril 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-ingraffed condition, but therewithal
the unruly waywardness that infirm and choleric years
bring with them.

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

Goneril 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.

Regan We shall further think of it.

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

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Teaching Notes for a Close Analysis Exercise

1. Vocabulary

Current words

	line	*word*
1	6	moiety (?)
2	9	brazen (v)
3	19	saucily
4	43	amorous
5	43	sojourn
6	51	wield
7	60	champaign
8	61	mead
9	62	issue
10	75	ponderous
11	83	opulent
12	105	dower
13	111	propinquity
14	114	mess
15	121	hence
16	158	vassal
17	195	aught
18	207	beseech
19	213	trice
20	275	alms
21	293	choleric

Obsolete words

	line	*word*
1	21	whoreson
2	71	felicitate ?
3	82	interess
4	158	miscreant
5	159	forbear
6	166	durst
7	168	nor… nor…
8	177	sith
9	195	aught / naught
10	291	therewhital

'Danger' words

	line	*word*
1	4	appears
2	10	conceive
3	15	issue
4	20	fair
5	27	study
6	34	fast
7	39	constant
8	40	several
9	48	bounty
10	52	space
11	65	self
12	65	metal
13	70	square
14	76	hereditary
15	87	unhappy
16	91	how
17	94	fit
18	97	happily
19	114	mess
20	117	sometime(s)
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:

Speaker		*addressed*	*form*	*line*
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:

speaker		*addressed*	*form*	*line*
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

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

5. Antithesis

France's speech on Cordelia:

line		
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 phase 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 losest **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. (278)

Shakespeare: Hamlet
Act 1, Scene 2

[Trumpet call.] [Enter Claudius, King of Denmark, Gertrude The Queen; Hamlet, Polonius; Laertes, Voltemand, Cornelius, Lords attendant

King Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death
The memory be green, and that it us befitted
To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom
To be contracted in one brow of woe,
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature
That we with wisest sorrow think on him
Together with remembrance of ourselves.
Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,
Th' imperial jointress to this warlike state,
Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy,
With an auspicious, and a dropping eye,
With mirth in funeral, and with dirge in marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight and dole,
Taken to wife; nor have we herein barr'd
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone
With this affair along. For all, our thanks.
Now follows that you know; young Fortinbras,
Holding a weak supposal of our worth,
Or thinking by our late dear brother's death
Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,
Co-leagued with this dream of his advantage,
He hath not fail'd to pester us with message
Importing the surrender of those lands
Lost by his father, with all bands of law,
To our most valiant brother. So much for him.
Now for ourself, and for this time of meeting,
Thus much the business is: we have here writ
To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras --
Who, impotent and bed-rid, scarcely hears
Of this his nephew's purpose—to suppress
His further gait herein, in that the levies,
The lists, and full proportions are all made
Out of his subject; and we here dispatch
You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltemand,
For bearers of this greeting to old Norway,
Giving to you no further personal power
To business with the King, more than the scope
Of these delated articles allow.

[Giving a paper.]

Farewell, and let your haste commend your duty.

Cor & Volt In that, and all things, will we show our duty.

King We doubt it nothing; heartily farewell.

[Exeunt Voltemand and Cornelius.]

And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?
You told us of some suit, what is't, Laertes?
You cannot speak of reason to the Dane
And lose your voice. What wouldst thou beg, Laertes,
That shall not be my offer, not thy asking?
The head is not more native to the heart,
The hand more instrumental to the mouth,
Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.
What wouldst thou have, Laertes?

Laertes My dread lord,
Your leave and favor to return to France,
From whence though willingly I came to Denmark
To show my duty in your coronation,
Yet now I must confess, that duty done,
My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France,
And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.

King Have you your father's leave? What says Polonius?

Polonius Hath, my lord, wrung from me my slow leave
By laborsome petition, and at last
Upon his will I seal'd my hard consent.
I do beseech you give him leave to go.

King Take thy fair hour, Laertes, time be thine,
And thy best graces spend it at thy will!
But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son --

Hamlet *[Aside.]* A little more than kin, and less than kind.

King How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

Hamlet Not so, my lord, I am too much in the sun.

Queen Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted color off,
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.
Do not for ever with thy vailed lids

Seek for thy noble father in the dust.
Thou know'st 'tis common, all that lives must die,
Passing through nature to eternity.

Hamlet Ay, madam, it is common.

Queen If it be,
Why seems it so particular with thee?

Hamlet Seems, madam? nay, it is, I know not "seems."
'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
Nor customary suits of solemn black,
Nor windy suspiration of forc'd breath,
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
Nor the dejected havior of the visage,
Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,
That can denote me truly. These indeed seem,
For they are actions that a man might play,
But I have that within which passes show,
These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

King 'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,
To give these mourning duties to your father.
But you must know your father lost a father,
That father lost, lost his, and the survivor bound
In filial obligation for some term
To do obsequious sorrow. But to persever
In obstinate condolement is a course
Of impious stubbornness, 'tis unmanly grief,
It shows a will most incorrect to heaven,
A heart unfortified, or mind impatient,
An understanding simple and unschool'd:
For what we know must be, and is as common
As any the most vulgar thing to sense,
Why should we in our peevish opposition
Take it to heart? Fie, 'tis a fault to heaven,
A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,
To reason most absurd, whose common theme
Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried,
From the first corse till he that died to-day,
This must be so. We pray you throw to earth
This unprevailing woe, and think of us
As of a father, for let the world take note
You are the most immediate to our throne,
And with no less nobility of love
Than that which dearest father bears his son
Do I impart toward you. For your intent
In going back to school in Wittenberg,
It is most retrograde to our desire,
And we beseech you bend you to remain
Here in the cheer and comfort of our eye,
Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

Queen Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet,
I pray thee stay with us, go not to Wittenberg.

Hamlet I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

King Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply.
Be as ourself in Denmark. Madam, come.
This gentle and unforc'd accord of Hamlet
Sits smiling to my heart, in grace whereof,
No jocund health that Denmark drinks to-day,
But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,
And the King's rouse the heaven shall bruit again,
Respeaking earthly thunder. Come away.

[Flourish. Exeunt all but Hamlet.]

Hamlet O that this too too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God, God,
How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world!
Fie on't, ah fie! 'tis an unweeded garden
That grows to seed, things rank and gross in nature
Possess it merely. That it should come to this!
But two months dead, nay, not so much, not two.
So excellent a king, that was to this
Hyperion to a satyr, so loving to my mother
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth,
Must I remember? Why, she should hang on him
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on, and yet, within a month --
Let me not think on't! Frailty, thy name is woman! --
A little month, or ere those shoes were old
With which she followed my poor father's body,
Like Niobe, all tears—why, she, even she—
O God, a beast that wants discourse of reason
Would have mourn'd longer—married with my uncle,
My father's brother, but no more like my father
Than I to Hercules. Within a month,

Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
She married—O most wicked speed: to post
With such dexterity to incestious sheets,
It is not, nor it cannot come to good,
But break my heart, for I must hold my tongue.

[Enter Horatio, Marcellus, and Barnardo.]

Horatio Hail to your lordship!
Hamlet I am glad to see you well.
Horatio—or I do forget myself.
Horatio The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever.
Hamlet Sir, my good friend—I'll change that name with you.
And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio?
Marcellus
Marcellus My good lord.
Hamlet I am very glad to see you. *[To Barnardo.]* Good even, sir.
But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?
Horatio A truant disposition, good my lord.
Hamlet I would not hear your enemy say so,
Nor shall you do my ear that violence
To make it truster of your own report
Against yourself. I know you are no truant.
But what is your affair in Elsinore?
We'll teach you to drink deep ere you depart.
Horatio My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.
Hamlet I prithee do not mock me, fellow student,
I think it was to see my mother's wedding.
Horatio Indeed, my lord, it followed hard upon.
Hamlet Thrift, thrift, Horatio, the funeral bak'd meats
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.
Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven
Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio!
My father—methinks I see my father.
Horatio Where, my lord?
Hamlet In my mind's eye, Horatio.
Horatio I saw him once, 'a was a goodly king.
Hamlet 'A was a man, take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again.
Horatio My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.
Hamlet Saw, who?
Horatio My lord, the King your father.
Hamlet The King my father?
Horatio Season your admiration for a while
With an attent ear, till I may deliver,
Upon the witness of these gentlemen,
This marvel to you.
Hamlet For God's love let me hear!
Horatio Two nights together had these gentlemen,
Marcellus and Barnardo, on their watch,
In the dead waste and middle of the night,
Been thus encount'red: a figure like your father,
Armed at point exactly, cap-a-pe,
Appears before them, and with solemn march
Goes slow and stately by them; thrice he walk'd
By their oppress'd and fear-surprised eyes
Within his truncheon's length, whilst they, distill'd
Almost to jelly with the act of fear,
Stand dumb and speak not to him. This to me
In dreadful secrecy impart they did,
And I with them the third night kept the watch,
Where, as they had delivered, both in time,
Form of the thing, each word made true and good,
The apparition comes. I knew your father,
These hands are not more like.
Hamlet But where was this?
Marcellus My lord, upon the platform where we watch.
Hamlet Did you not speak to it?
Horatio My lord, I did,
But answer made it none. Yet once methought
It lifted up it head and did address
Itself to motion like as it would speak;
But even then the morning cock crew loud,
And at the sound it shrunk in haste away
And vanish'd from our sight.
Hamlet 'Tis very strange.
Horatio As I do live, my honor'd lord, 'tis true,
And we did think it writ down in our duty
To let you know of it.
Hamlet Indeed, indeed, sirs. But this troubles me.
—Hold you the watch to-night?
Mar & Bar We do, my lord.
Hamlet Arm'd, say you?
Mar & Bar Arm'd, my lord.
Hamlet From top to toe?

Mar & Bar My lord, from head to foot.
Hamlet Then saw you not his face.
Horatio O yes, my lord, he wore his beaver up.
Hamlet What, look'd he frowningly?
Horatio A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.
Hamlet Pale, or red?
Horatio Nay, very pale.
Hamlet And fix'd his eyes upon you?
Horatio Most constantly.
Hamlet I would I had been there.
Horatio It would have much amaz'd you.
Hamlet Very like, very like. Stay'd it long?
Horatio While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred.
Mar & Bar Longer, longer.
Horatio Not when I saw't.
Hamlet His beard was grisl'd, no?
Horatio It was, as I have seen it in his life,
A sable silver'd.
Hamlet I will watch to-night,
Perchance 'twill walk again.
Horatio I warr'nt it will.
Hamlet If it assume my noble father's person,
I'll speak to it though hell itself should gape
And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,
If you have hitherto conceal'd this sight,
Let it be tenable in your silence still,
And whatsomever else shall hap to-night,
Give it an understanding but no tongue.
I will requite your loves. So fare you well.
Upon the platform 'twixt aleven and twelve
I'll visit you.
All Our duty to your honor.
Hamlet Your loves, as mine to you; farewell.

[Exeunt all but Hamlet.]

My father's spirit—in arms! All is not well,
I doubt some foul play. Would the night were come!
Till then sit still, my soul. Foul deeds will rise,
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eye

[Exit.]

HAMLET 1.2
Teaching Notes for a Close Analysis Exercise

1. Vocabulary

Current words

	line	*word*
1	2	green
2	2	befit
3	11	auspicious
4	13	dole
5	81	visage
6	86	trappings
7	91	filial
8	107	unprevailing
9	114	retrograde
10	125	jocund
11	132	canon
12	195	marvel
13	204	truncheon
14	231	countenance

Obsolete words

	line	*word*
1	20	disjoint
2	32	levies
3	32	lists
4	33	subject
5	38	delated
6	68	nighted
7	79	suspiration
8	115	beseech
9	127	bruit
10	141	beteem
11	155	galled
12	168	in faith
13	177	I prithee
14	147*	or ere/ever
15	184*	methinks
16	189	yesternight
17	193	attent
18	200	cap-a-pé
19	229	beaver
19	243	perchance
20	248	tenable

Danger words

	line	*word*
1	8	sometime
2	8	sister
3	14	barred
4	39	commend
5	50	dread
6	51	leave (n.)
7	62	fair
8	74	common
9	92	obsequious
10	109	immediate
11	137	merely
12	167	'good even'
13	207	dreadful
14	209	deliver
15	238	tell
16	244	person

2. Familiar and Formal Address

Characters who use formal address:

Speaker		*addressed*	*form*	*line*
King	to	assembly	your	15
King	to	assembly	you	17
King	to	Cor & Volt	you	34
King	to	Cor & Volt	you	36
King	to	Cor & Volt	your	39
King	to	Cor & Volt	your	39
King	to	Laertes	you	42, 43, 44, 45
Laertes	to	King	your	51, 53, 56
King	to	Laertes	you	57, 57
Polonius	to	King	you	61
King	to	Hamlet	you	66
King	to	Hamlet	your	87, 88, 89, 112
King	to	Hamlet	you	89, 106, 109, 12, 115, 115
Hamlet	to	Queen	you	120
Hamlet	to	Horatio	you	160
Horatio	to	Hamlet	your	160
Horatio	to	Hamlet	your	162
Hamlet	to	Horatio	you	163, 164
Hamlet	to	Horatio	you	167, 168
Hamlet	to	Horatio	your	170, 172, 174
Hamlet	to	Horatio	you	171, 173, 175, 175
Hamlet	to	Horatio	yourself	173
Horatio	to	Hamlet	your	176
Horatio	to	Hamlet	your	191
Horatio	to	Hamlet	your	193
Horatio	to	Hamlet	you	195
Horatio	to	Hamlet	your	199
Horatio	to	Hamlet	your	211
Hamlet	to	Horatio	you	213
Horatio	to	Hamlet	you	223
Hamlet	to	Horatio	you	225
Hamlet	to	Mar & Bar	you	226
Hamlet	to	Horatio	you	228
Hamlet	to	Horatio	you	233
Hamlet	to	Horatio	you	235
Hamlet	to	Horatio	you	245, 246
Hamlet	to	Group	your	247, 250
Hamlet	to	Group	you	250, 252
Group	to	Hamlet	your	252
Hamlet	to	Group	your	253

Characters who use 'familiar' address:

Speaker		*addressed*	*form*	*line*
King	to	Laertes	thou	45
King	to	Laertes	thy	49
King	to	Laertes	thou	50
King	to	Laertes	thy	49
King	to	Laertes	thine	62
King	to	Laertes	thy	62
King	to	Laertes	thy	63
King	to	Laertes	thy	63
Queen	to	Hamlet	thine	68
Queen	to	Hamlet	thy	68
Queen	to	Hamlet	thy	70
Queen	to	Hamlet	thy	71
Queen	to	Hamlet	thou	72
Queen	to	Hamlet	thee	75
Queen	to	Hamlet	thy	118
Queen	to	Hamlet	thee	119
Hamlet	to	"Frailty"	thy	146

The exchange between Claudius and Laertes

Speaker		*addressed*	*form*	*line*
King	to	Laertes	you	42, 43, 44, 45
King	to	Laertes	thy	45
King	to	Laertes	thou	45
King	to	Laertes	thy	46
King	to	Laertes	thy	49
King	to	Laertes	thou	50
Laertes	to	King	your	51, 53, 56
King	to	Laertes	you	57, 57
Polonius	to	King	you	61
King	to	Laertes	thy	62
King	to	Laertes	thine	62
King	to	Laertes	thy	63
King	to	Laertes	thy	63

Summary

The familiar forms are used only by the King on Laertes, by the Queen to Hamlet, and by Hamlet in apostrophe.

3. Prosody

The entire scene is in verse except for part of the exchange about the ghost. Lines to look at are:

Lines	165-166	Hamlet and Marcellus
Line	190	Hamlet's question
Lines	227-228	Hamlet with Marcellus and Barnardo
Line	230	Hamlet's question
Line	232	Hamlet's question
Lines	235-236	Horatio and Hamlet's question
Line	238	Marcello and Barnardo

4. Shared Lines

Line	*Begun by*	*Ended by*
50	King	Laertes
74	Hamlet	Queen
160	Horatio	Hamlet
185	Horatio	Hamlet
191	Horatio	Hamlet
195	Horatio	Hamlet
212	Horatio	Hamlet
214	Hamlet	Horatio
220	Horatio	Hamlet
225	Hamlet	Mar & Bar
226	Hamlet	Mar & Bar

Line	*Begun by*	*Ended by*
233	Horatio	Hamlet
234	Horatio	Hamlet
239	Horatio	Hamlet
241	Horatio	Hamlet
242	Hamlet	Horatio
252	Hamlet	Group

Line 226 is split three ways—begun and ended by Hamlet with an intervening speech by Marcellus and Barnardo.

5. Rhetorical Style

The organization of the King's opening to the "court scene"

Lines	*Area*	*Topic*
1-7	Succession	Old Hamlet's death
8-16	Succession	Marriage
17-25	International	Norway's threat
26-41	International	The mission to Norway
42-63	The Court	Leartes's petition
64-105	Family	Hamlet's grief
106-122	Family	Hamlet as heir and son
123-128	Ending	The celebration