

***KING LEAR* –**

MALEVOLENT OR BENEVOLENT: CHARTING THE NATURE OF TWO BROTHERS

Lesson Overview:

Using evidence from the text and dramatic conventions the students will analyse and determine the true natures of Edmund and Edgar.

Grade Level(s)	9-12
Subject Area(s)	English, Drama
Curriculum Expectations & Learning Outcomes	<p>By the end of the lesson students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hone their critical literacy skills by identifying and analysing in detail the perspectives evident in the text;<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> English<ul style="list-style-type: none">⇒ (Oral Communication): 1.8, 2.1, 2.4⇒ (Reading & Literature Studies): 1.4, 1.8, 3.2, 4.1⇒ (Writing): 1.3, 2.1<input type="checkbox"/> Drama: B1.1• Develop and explain interpretations of the text through the use of dramatic conventions;<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> English<ul style="list-style-type: none">⇒ (Oral Communication): 1.5, 1.9, 2.2, 2.6⇒ (Reading & Literature Studies): 1.7, 3.3⇒ (Writing): 1.4, 2.2, 2.5<input type="checkbox"/> Drama: B2.4• Explain how dramatic exploration helps create awareness of a character's development.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> English<ul style="list-style-type: none">⇒ (Oral Communication): 1.4, 1.7, 2.3⇒ (Reading & Literature Studies): 1.3, 1.6, 2.1⇒ (Writing): 1.2, 2.5<input type="checkbox"/> Drama: A3.1
Time Needed	2-3 class periods
Space	Desks in groups, then open spaces for exploring the text
Materials	Handouts: Edgar's Speeches and Soliloquies / Edmund's Speeches and Soliloquies / Charting the Character Arc

[Post-reading Activity]

The Activity:

Pre-Activity Discussion ~

- ☐ How many times during the course of reading a play or seeing a movie or TV show did we assume at the start that the character was good or bad but halfway through we started to feel differently towards that person?
- ☐ Can you safely assume that a character is completely malevolent (bad) or benevolent (good) at all times? Are there exceptions to the rule? Name some characters that aren't completely black or white and have varying shades of grey.

- ☐ By studying the major speeches and soliloquies of a character we see a pattern or development that might change our initial assumption or perspective about that character. Are there any plays or novels you have read that have done that for you?
- Divide the class into two teams. With a flip of a coin, one of the teams will be assigned Edmund and the other will get Edgar. Distribute the appropriate handouts to each person.
- Each team will be responsible for analysing the various speeches and soliloquies of that character. To simplify the task, each group will sub-divide into five groups to analyse a particular speech/soliloquy or several smaller speeches/soliloquies.
- Read the speeches/soliloquies several times for clarity and understanding. Underline any words that may be unfamiliar and then look up their various meanings.
- Once the students are familiar with the meaning of the text, have the students move around the room, delivering the lines either as a choral piece or using tableaux, stylized movement or group sculpture. (Note: this does not have to be memorized as the students may deliver their lines using the handouts provided.)
- After an established appropriate time of rehearsal, have the students reassemble and have each team perform their speeches and soliloquies for the other team.

Post-Activity Discussion

- ☐ Were there early hints of the coming conflict in the early stages of the character's speeches and soliloquies?
- ☐ Was there a noticeable increase in tension at some point during these speeches and soliloquies?
- ☐ Did you notice if at one point if there was a reversal of fortune or circumstances?
- ☐ At what point was there a "realization" from the character?
- ☐ After seeing the development of these two characters can you label one as benevolent and the other as malevolent? Why or why not?

Post Activity:

- Distribute the handout "Charting the Character Arc" to the teams.
- Each team is to discuss the questions and their findings and write their responses.