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| **‘The Taming of the Shrew’ knowledge organiser** | | | | | |
| **Context** | **Key quotations** | | | | **Plot** |
| 1. ‘The Taming of the Shrew; is believed to be one of Shakespeare’s earliest works. It was published in 1594. 2. The play explores the problems that come with married life. This topic was of interest to English audiences during the Renaissance period because of King Henry VIII’s behaviour. 3. King Henry VIII separated England from the Catholic church in 1534 in order to be able to obtain a divorce (the Pope had refused to allow him one!). 4. Marriages in the Elizabethan era between members of the upper class were rarely love matches. They were often arranged like business deals for money, land or power. 5. There were very few ways out of an unhappy marriage during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and this meant that audiences liked to see material about marital disputes in plays and other literature. 6. Women who resisted the authority of their husbands were seen by Renaissance society as “shrews” or “scolds”. 7. A large number of sermons, plays and pamphlets of the time discussed the figure of the “shrew” often depicting their punishment or humiliation. It was not easy to tell which were parodying the treatment of these women (making fun of it) and which were truly misogynistic (prejudiced against women). | **Gender**  **Lucentio: ‘**But in the other's silence do I see Maid's mild behavior and sobriety.’  **Grumio:** ‘“Katharine the curst," A title for a maid of all titles the worst’  **Curtis**: ‘By this reck'ning, he is more shrew than she.’  **Katherine:** ‘And when she is froward, peevish, sullen, sour, And not obedient to his honest will, What is she but a foul contending rebel’  **Katherine:** ‘Thy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper,’  **Transformation**  **Grumio:**  ‘an she stand him but a little, he will throw a figure in her face and so disfigure her with it that she shall have no more eyes to see withal than a cat’  **Lucentio:**  ‘Cambio is changed into Lucentio.’  **Baptista Minola:**  ‘Another dowry to another daughter, For she is changed, as she had never been’ | | **Marriage**  **Hortensio:** ‘He hath the jewel of my life in hold, His youngest daughter, beautiful Bianca,’  **Petruchio**: ‘I come to wive it wealthily in Padua’  **Petruchio:** ‘Be patient, gentlemen. I choose her for myself. If she and I be pleased, what's that to you?’  **Katherine:** ‘She is your treasure, she must have a husband’  **Katherine:** ‘Of all thy suitors, here I charge thee tell Whom thou lov'st best.’  **Education**  **Christopher Sly:** ‘Am not I Christopher Sly, old Sly's son of Burton Heath, by birth a peddler, by education a cardmaker, by transmutation a bearherd, and now by present profession a tinker?’  **Tranio:** ‘In brief, sir, study what you most affect.’  **Lucentio:** ‘Counsel me, Tranio, for I know thou canst. Assist me, Tranio, for I know thou wilt.’  **Bianca:** ‘I am no breeching scholar in the schools. I'll not be tied to hours nor 'pointed times, But learn my lessons as I please myself.’  **Family**  **Katherine:** ‘Now must the world point at poor Katherine And say, 'Lo, there is mad Petruchio's wife, If it would please him come and marry her.’  **Petruchio:** ‘I will be master of what is mine own. She is my goods’  **Petruchio:** ‘Antonio, my father, is deceased, And I have thrust myself into this maze,’  **Tranio:** ‘Fathers commonly Do get their children. But in this case of wooing, A child shall get a sire, if I fail not of my cunning.’ | | **Induction:** Christopher Sly, a drunkard, passes out in front of a tavern and a passing lord decides to play a prank on him. He has his servants take him back to his manor, put him in a bed and dress him as a lord. The lord also dresses his pageboy as a woman and instructs him to pretend to be Sly’s wife. When Sly wakes up he is confused at first, but then accepts his new life. |
| **Act 1**: Lucentio and Tranio are talking when they are interrupted by a confrontation. Baptista arrives with his daughters Katherine and Bianca and Bianca’s suitors. Baptista states that Bianca will not be allowed to marry before Katherine finds a husband and the suitors insult Katherine. Katherine threatens violence in return and they despair that they will never find a willing husband for her.  Petrucio needs to find a wealthy wife in order to hold on to his dead father’s fortune. One of Bianca’s suitors suggests Katherine and attempts to warn him about her temper, but Petruchio only cares about her wealth. |
| **Act 2:** Petruchio visits Baptista and finds out that a marriage to Katherine will earn him a large dowry. He is confident that he can “tame” her and starts by calling her “Kate” and contradicting everything she says. When Baptista returns, Petruchio explains (falsely) that he and Katherine have agreed to marry. Katherine is so shocked that she says nothing to argue against the lie. |
| **Act 3**: Bianca has clearly started to favour one of her suitors though each of them still hopes to marry her. Everyone gathers for the wedding of Katherine and Petruchio. Petruchio arrives and it is clear that he has purposefully dressed shabbily to humiliate his bride. Baptista begs him to change his clothes but Petruchio refuses. |
| **Act 4:** Petruchio is disagreeable about everything upon their return and Katherine pleads with him to be more patient with the servants. He fusses over the poor state of the food and rejects it, ignoring that Katherine is hungry and then while she is unable to hear him, he explains his plan complain about the state of the bed so that Katherine cannot sleep. His behaviour is all part of his plan to deprive her and through doing this, “tame” her. |
| **Act 5:** Bianca is finally married and the characters gather to celebrate. Petruchio takes advantage of his audience to demonstrate Katheine’s new obedience. Katherine gives a speech on the duty that wives owe their husbands. She admits that she was once was badly behaved and claims that she has changed – she now willingly obeys her husband. |
| **Key themes** | **Characters** | | | **Key Terms** |
| 1. Gender 2. Transformation 3. Marriage 4. Education 5. Family | * Katherine (Kate) * Christopher Sly * Bianca * Bartholemew * Baptista * Lucentio * Hortensio | * Gremio * Tranio * Grumio * Biondello * The Lord | | 1. Renaissance 2. Parody 3. Domestication 4. Misogyny 5. Irony |