

YEAR 8 KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER:

The Tempest (c.1610-1611)

Context & Shakespeare's Ideas

- The Elizabethan Era was known as the Age of Exploration; the Elizabethan Empire was expanding through sea travel, where countries were colonised. Shakespeare was influenced by this and this influenced the plot of The Tempest.
- Colonialism saw huge benefits for the colonisers, but often negatively impacted the country's natives, who were often enslaved, imprisoned or even killed. The Tempest explores both sides of this power balance.
- During the Elizabethan era, Italy was not one country like it is today; it was divided into city-states. This led to much conflict, with each city-state competing for wealth and power. City-states would often go to war with each other to attempt to take each other's land. Many of the main characters in The Tempest are rulers of Italian city-states.

Key Knowledge – Big Questions

You need to know the answers to the following questions. Sample answers can be found on your [Big Question Answer](#) document.

- What is colonialism?
- What does it mean to usurp someone?
- What is the plot of The Tempest?
- How does Prospero treat Ariel?
- What is the relationship between Prospero and Caliban like?
- How does Caliban feel about the way Prospero treats him and why?
- How does Shakespeare create pathos for Caliban?
- What are the different ways Shakespeare has characterised Caliban?
- How has Prospero tried to nurture Caliban?

Plot

The Tempest: Alonso, the King of Naples, is on a ship with his son Ferdinand and his companions Sebastian, Antonio, Stephano and Trinculo. They are struck by a terrifying, howling storm. They abandon ship and swim to a nearby island but are washed ashore in different places.

After the Storm: From a nearby island, Miranda watches the huge tempest. She lives with her father Prospero and has little memory of her life before the island. Prospero tells his daughter of their past: he was the Duke of Milan, but he was so involved with his books and studies that he did not realise his brother Antonio was stealing power from him. One night, Antonio ordered soldiers to take Prospero and Miranda and put them on a boat to their death. But they were washed ashore this island safely and have lived there ever since. Prospero is a powerful magician who rules over the island. He created the tempest.

Ariel and Caliban: Ariel agrees to be a servant for Prospero as Prospero freed them from Sycorax. Prospero has agreed to release Ariel after this last mission. Caliban is a deformed savage slave who is also under Prospero's control. He is the son of an old witch, Sycorax, and is a native of the island. Prospero taught Caliban how to speak but Caliban resents the control Prospero has over him.

King Alonso: King Alonso, his brother Sebastian, and Antonio wander around the island. King Alonso weeps as he believes his son Ferdinand is dead. Sebastian and Antonio plot to kill Alonso so that Sebastian can be king. They are stopped by Ariel's magical intervention.

Caliban, Stephano and Trinculo: Caliban is found by Stephano and Trinculo. They give him alcohol and he gets drunk. Caliban offers to serve Stephano because he believes he is a god because of the heavenly drink! Caliban explains to them how Prospero has treated him and that he will be their guide on the island if they overthrow him. They go to find and kill Prospero.

Ferdinand and Miranda: Ferdinand has survived the storm. He is safely on the island and is found by Miranda. They fall instantly in love. Prospero wants to test that the love is real. Ferdinand has to endure hard labour to prove his intentions are honourable. Miranda pities Ferdinand and wants to marry him. Prospero blesses their marriage.

The End: After blessing Ferdinand and Miranda's marriage, Prospero recalls the threat from Trinculo, Stephano and Caliban. Prospero and Ariel send spirit dogs to scare them away. Alonso, Sebastian and Antonio meet Prospero. He explains what has been happening on the island. He shows them Ferdinand and Miranda. Alonso is filled with regret and asks for forgiveness from Prospero which he grants.

Epilogue: Prospero declares that he will be giving up his magic. Ariel is released from his service. The party travel back to Milan.

Characters

Alonso King of Naples (he helped Antonio usurp Prospero)

Sebastian Alonso's brother

Ferdinand Alonso's son

Antonio Prospero's brother (Antonio usurped Prospero as Duke of Milan)

Gonzalo old counsellor to the King of Naples (he helped Prospero escape Milan)

Trinculo a jester

Stephano a drunken butler

Prospero the rightful Duke of Milan



Miranda Prospero's daughter

Ariel an airy spirit; Prospero's servant

Caliban a savage and deformed slave of Prospero's who is native to the island

Key Vocabulary

Word	Meaning	Image
aside	when a character briefly talks away from the other characters, usually talking to themselves or the audience	
callous	when someone is cruel and does not care about other people	
colonialism	when one country establishes itself in another country	
metaphor	a non-literal comparison of one thing to another	
nurture	how someone is brought up	
pathos	when a writer makes us feel sympathy or sorrow for someone or something	
soliloquy	a speech in a play that the character speaks to themselves or to the audience, rather than to the other characters	
tempest	a violent storm	
treason	a crime that harms your country or government	
usurp	to take control of someone else's power when you do not have the right to	

victim	a person harmed, injured, or killed as a result of a crime, accident, or other event or action	
villain	a bad person who harms other people or breaks the law	

Other Useful Vocabulary

Y7	brutal, chaos, conflict, corrupt, malicious, mock, moral, naïve, patriarchy, resolve, severe, unpredictable, vulnerable
Y8	compassionate, futile, infallible

Useful Quotations

Prospero, to Miranda (about the boat they came to the island on)	'a rotten carcass'	
Caliban, to Prospero	'this island's mine ... which you takest from me'	
Prospero, to Caliban	'thou most lying slave ... filth as thou art'	
Caliban's soliloquy (when he talks of what Prospero has done to him)	'sometime am I all wound with adders who ... hiss me into madness'	
Caliban, to Stephano and Trinculo (Caliban suggests ways to kill Prospero)	'thou mayst brain him, having first seized his books, or with a log batter his skull'	
Caliban, to Stephano and Trinculo (Caliban attempts to calm them)	'be not afeard; the isle is full of noises ... sometimes a thousand twangling instruments will hum about mine ears'	