

YEAR 8 KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER:
The Tempest (c.1610-1611)

Context

- The Elizabethan Era was known as the Age of Exploration; the Elizabethan Empire was expanding through sea travel, where countries were colonised.
- Colonialism saw huge benefits for the colonisers, but often negatively impacted the country's natives, who were often exploited or oppressed. 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 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.


Shakespeare's Ideas

- Although Shakespeare was writing hundreds of years ago, his works are still relevant today. Many of his plays are social commentaries, exploring how and why people act the way they do.
- Shakespeare may be questioning the impact of control, specifically power, and the oppression of vulnerable people.
- Shakespeare may be highlighting the consuming power of obsession, by exploring the things people do and the ways they act when they are obsessed with something.

Key Knowledge


What is a play?

Plays are divided into acts and scenes. Plays have stage directions, which give information such as: how a character is feeling; how a character should speak, act or move; any key technical elements such as lighting, sound, costume, staging or props.



How did audiences experience plays during the Elizabethan era?

Many of Shakespeare's plays were experienced at the Globe theatre.



The theatre had different sections depending on their class. Plays were not just for the affluent; they were designed to be enjoyed by all classes. Shakespeare included dramatic devices such as props and soliloquys to ensure that all of the audience understood what was happening.

What are the conventions of a comedy play?

There is a more light-hearted tone to the story. There is a happy ending, usually involving a marriage. Characters must overcome an obstacle in order to have the happy ending. There is conflict between control and freedom.

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
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
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 slave of Prospero's who is native to the island

Key Vocabulary

Word	Meaning
affluent	Having a lot of money or possessions.
brutal	Describes something or someone very cruel and violent.
callous	When someone is cruel and does not care about other people.
colonialism	When one country establishes itself in another country.
compassionate	Describes someone who shows pity and concern about the suffering or bad luck of other people.
conflict	A serious disagreement, battle or struggle between two sides or ideas.
convention	The usual way of doing something.
exploitation	The act of treating someone unfairly to benefit from their work.
manipulate	To control or influence someone or something unfairly.
metaphor	A non-literal comparison of one thing to another.
obsession	The state of always having something on your mind.
obstacle	Something that blocks someone's way or prevents progress.
oppression	The treatment of a group of people in an unfair way, often by limiting their freedom.
pathos	When a writer makes us feel sympathy or sorrow for someone or something.
remorse	Deep regret or guilt for a wrongdoing.
social commentary	Writing about issues in society.
society	People living together as a community.
soliloquy	A speech in a play that the character speaks to themselves or to the audience, rather than to the other characters.
submissive	Describes someone who always obeys others without arguing.
victim	A person harmed, injured, or killed as a result of a crime, accident, or other event or action.