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Teaching Unit™

# Sample

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## Literature Teaching Unit

Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide



### The Tempest

by William Shakespeare

- Learning objectives
- Study Guide with short-answer questions
- Background information
- Vocabulary in context
- Multiple-choice test
- Essay questions
- Literary terms



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# The Tempest

## Objectives

*By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:*

1. discuss how the theme of repentance and forgiveness is developed in the play by
  - identifying which characters are repentant
  - citing incidents in the play which support the idea that forgiveness itself is what is important.
2. point out the significance of the title of the play.
3. understand the meaning of the words “providence” and “patience” as they apply to this play; point out which characters believe in providence.
4. discuss the Elizabethan belief that a man is predetermined at birth to be either a noble or a servant; point out how Shakespeare uses prose for the servants and verse for nobles.
5. discuss the ways Shakespeare equates physical beauty with the nobility and emphasizes the idea that people are happiest when they accept their God-given place in society.
6. define vocabulary words using the context of the story.
7. identify examples of the comic elements in the play including slapstick comedy and the use of puns.
8. write a character sketch of Gonzalo noting his role as a mediator and loyal friend; point out the speeches that indicate his belief in providence.
9. discuss the scope of Prospero’s magical powers and the willingness of the Elizabethan audience to accept magic in the play.
10. comment on Ariel’s nature and mention these four points:
  - the various forms he can assume
  - his lack of emotion
  - his ability to summon other spirits
  - his desire to be free.
11. cite incidents in the story where Prospero exhibits God-like qualities (judging, punishing, and forgiving).
12. discuss the character flaw which costs Prospero his dukedom; point out incidents in the play which show that Prospero manages to overcome the flaw.

# The Tempest

## Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. At the conclusion of the play, which characters are repentant and which characters never ask for forgiveness?
2. Assume that the storm is a blessing in disguise. Who benefits from the storm and why?
3. Select two characters from the play who believe in providence. Cite incidents from the story to support your choices.
4. Why does Caliban, a servant, speak in verse? What other indicators, besides his occupation, identify Caliban as a low-class character?
5. Define the words “bark,” “butt of sack,” and “harpy.”
6. What are the differences between an aside and a soliloquy? Find an example of each in the play.
7. Point out examples of slapstick comedy in Act II Scene I.
8. List three ways Prospero uses his magical powers to control his enemies.
9. Some critics believe Prospero is too harsh on Ariel. Cite incidents from the play to support or refute this idea.
10. In what ways does Prospero exhibit God-like behavior toward Ferdinand, Antonio, and Sebastian? (God-like behavior includes judging, punishing, and forgiving.)
11. Define the character flaws that cost Prospero his dukedom. Do you believe he has overcome these flaws while living on the island? Cite incidents from the play to support your answer.
12. Compare the ways Caliban and Ariel each serve Prospero. Discuss their willingness to be his servant and his subsequent treatment of them.
13. What is the purpose of the many songs in the play?

# The Tempest

## Act I Scene i

### VOCABULARY

- blasphemous** – verbally abusive; insulting to God
- cur** – a coward; an undesirable dog (this insult works in conjunction with Sebastian’s previous insult when he refers to the Boatswain as an “incharitable dog.”)
- furlongs** – measures of distance; a furlong is one-eighth of a mile
- insolent** – arrogant
- mar** – to damage; spoil
- pox** – a disease (usually smallpox)
- whoreson** – a son of a whore

1. This first scene is very short, but begins to establish the personalities of the characters. In what ways does Gonzalo try to calm the frightened nobles?

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2. Define “providence” as it applies to the following quotation. What does this passage suggest to the audience about Gonzalo’s belief in providence?

Now would I give a thousand furlongs of sea for an acre of barren ground—long heath, brown furze, anything. The wills above be done, but I would fain die a dry death.

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3. What do Sebastian’s and Antonio’s behavior toward the boatswain suggest to the audience about their personalities?

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**ACT II, Scene i**

## VOCABULARY

**beseech** – to ask

**contentious** – quarrelsome, combative

**cubit** – a measure of distance; it was originally determined by the length of a person's forearm, which resulted in varying measurements. A cubit usually measured between 18 and 22 inches.

**docks** – hardy weed-like herbs that were said to remedy the stings from the nettle plants

**doublet** – a jacket

**enmity** – hatred

**importuned** – begged, pleaded

**kibe** – a sore on the heel of a foot; chilblain

**mallows** – weeds; the roots excrete a type of ointment that also soothe the “nettle stings.”

**nettle-seed** – a type of plant with leaves that irritate the skin

**paragon** – a perfect example; perfection

**plantation** – the power to colonize

**prate b-** to talk senselessly

**repose** – a rest, period of relaxation; sleep

**sloth** – laziness

**succession** – the ability to inherit property

**supplant** – to remove

1. Briefly identify the following characters and describe the relationships between the following pairs of characters:

Alonso and Sebastian

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Prospero and Antonio

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Adrian and Francisco

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3. Mir. Alas, now, pray yo,  
Work not so hard. I would the lightning had  
Burnt up those logs that you are enjoind to pile!  
Pray, set it down, and rest you. When this burns,  
'Twill weep for having wearied you.

What literary term is used in the above quotation?

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4. Shakespeare is renowned for his use of puns. In what way can the following excerpt be interpreted in two ways, making it an example of a Shakespearean pun? Why is this an unusual speech?

Mir. ...I am your wife, if you will marry me;  
If not, I'll die your maid: to be your fellow  
You may deny me but I'll be your servant  
Whether you will or no.

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5. Write a brief character sketch of Miranda. How do you interpret her personality? Is she coy, direct, or shy? In what ways do the circumstances of her childhood contribute to the fairy-tale quality of this play? Cite a line to support your answer.

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6. How is Prospero's short speech at the end of this scene an example of foreshadowing?

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