



Prestwick House
Response Journal™

Sample

Prestwick House

Response Journal

Reflections: A Student Response Journal



King Lear
William Shakespeare



Click here
to learn more
about this
Response Journal!



Click here
to find more
Classroom Resources
for this title!



 **Prestwick House**

More from Prestwick House

Literature

Literary Touchstone Classics
Literature Teaching Units

Grammar and Writing

College and Career Readiness: Writing
Grammar for Writing

Vocabulary

Vocabulary Power Plus
Vocabulary from Latin and Greek Roots

Reading

Reading Informational Texts
Reading Literature



 **Prestwick House**
Response Journal
Reflections: A Student Response Journal



King Lear
William Shakespeare



Prestwick House

P.O. Box 658, Clayton, DE 19938

www.prestwickhouse.com

800-932-4593

Copyright © 2006 by Prestwick House, Inc., P.O. Box 658, Clayton, DE 19938.
1-800-932-4593. www.prestwickhouse.com Permission to copy this unit for
classroom use is extended to purchaser for his or her personal use. This material, in
whole or part, may not be copied for resale.

ISBN 978-1-60389-584-2

Item No. 302033

King Lear

To The Student

Although we may read a novel, play, or work of non-fiction for enjoyment, each time we read one, we are building and practicing important basic reading skills. In our ever-more complex society, in which reading has become more and more crucial for success, this, in itself, is an important reason to spend time reading for enjoyment.

Some readers, however, are able to go beyond basic reading techniques and are able to practice higher thinking skills by reflecting on what they have read and how what they read affects them. It is this act of reflection—that is, stopping to think about what you are reading—that this journal is attempting to encourage.

To aid you, we have included writing prompts for each section; however, if you find something that you wish to respond to in the book more compelling than our prompts, you should write about that. We hope you enjoy reading this book and that the act of responding to what you have read increases this enjoyment.

After you read the indicated sections, choose the questions to which you will respond. Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers to these prompts, and there is no one direction in which you must go.

Author/Life & Times

1. In William Shakespeare's time, officials did not record births and deaths but rather baptisms and funerals. Based on those dates, scholars believe that Shakespeare was born on April 23, 1564, and died on that same day fifty-two years later. The fact that Elizabethan society depended upon church records for census data shows how big a role the Church of England played in the politics of Shakespeare's day. In fact, it was illegal to be Catholic in England at that time. One can speculate, therefore, that Shakespeare set *King Lear* (circa 1605) in eighth-century England to avoid stirring up controversy with his explorations of societal norms and morality, his ruminations on the nature of fate, and his belief that the family is a fragile network on which to build a kingdom. If you wrote a story revealing your innermost opinions about controversial subjects, how would you avoid upsetting the masses? Write a one or two paragraph response.

2. In Shakespeare's time, the wealthy hired private tutors to teach their children at home. In the middle class, only boys attended school while parents taught girls at home. Choose one of the following, and write a persuasive paragraph.
 - A. Imagine a group of parents has asked you to convince officials to allow girls to attend school.

 - B. Imagine a group of parents has asked you to convince officials to ban corporal punishment at school.

King Lear

5. When King Lear asks Cordelia what she will say to garner a larger inheritance than her sisters do she replies, “Nothing.” To which he responds, “Nothing will come of nothing.” This late sixteenth-century English credo still applies as a modern adage, albeit in slightly different language: “Nothing from nothing leaves nothing.” An adage becomes such because of the universal truth it contains. Such a truth stands the test of time. Draw on experiences from your life in which you learned something that’s true for everybody. Write your own list of adages about work, love, or life in general.

6. Because of their skillful flattery, King Lear’s love contest ends in a draw between Goneril and Regan, with each of them getting half of the ancient Kingdom of Britain. Shakespeare was no stranger to flowery, flattering professions of love. He wrote 154 sonnets, one of which was to himself. Imagine a king commissions you to write the most convincing and flattering of love poems. Begin with this line from Shakespeare’s eighteenth sonnet: “Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?”

7. King Lear swears by the Greek goddess of the moon, Hecates and by the Roman king of the gods, Jupiter. Jupiter was said to have been responsible for the lightning. Research the Greek and Roman gods and goddesses (often they are the same entities with different names in each culture, as the Greeks influenced the Romans). Imagine you are a chef who dreams of owning a restaurant. Invent a theme restaurant based on the mythology of deities, and then create a menu with twenty dishes reflecting the theme. Write a tantalizing description using appropriate imagery for each dish.

King Lear

21. Goneril and Regan persist in mistreating their father, eventually driving him out into the storm, and then refusing him reentry. The goodhearted Duke of Albany seems blinded by love for Goneril, while the Duke of Cornwall seems as heartless as his wife Regan. Whatever their motivations, they merely stand by while their wives perpetrate injustices. Imagine you write for a reality talk show, and these five characters are today's guests. How would they defend themselves and implicate each other verbally? Write a brief script. How would the show's host introduce the guests? What would each of them say to the host and to each other?

22. As the play progresses, Goneril and Regan prove themselves capable of committing evil. While Edmund proves expert at villainy, as well. Imagine what life must have been like for Cordelia and Edgar growing up with these characters. Did Cordelia's sisters hate her? Did they share the same mother? Were they jealous of her because she was the king's favorite daughter? Why did he favor her? Did Edgar and Edmund live together with their father? Did the two always vie for the attention of the earl? Write a fictional childhood for Cordelia or Edgar, in which you answer these questions.

King Lear

Act IV

30. Edgar convinces the blind Gloucester that he has arrived at the cliffs of Dover and, later, that he has survived a leap from those cliffs. Why do you think Gloucester was so easily convinced?

Spend a few minutes thinking about your classroom. What things would convince you that you are in your classroom if you could not see it? Make a list of as many classroom indicators as you can.

31. Blindness is an important symbol in *King Lear*. Gloucester's blindness parallels Lear's inability to see the truth about his children. Imagine you are blind. Close your eyes, and think about the appearance of your teacher, a classmate, or an object in the classroom. When you open your eyes, do not reexamine the person or object. Write a description from memory. When you are finished, compare the reality of appearance with what you wrote. Did your visual memory serve you well?
32. In Act I, King Lear disinherits Cordelia, and Burgundy rejects her. The King of France, however, proclaims his love for her despite her lack of dowry. Now the French king has sent his troops to invade Britain and rescue King Lear, on Cordelia's behalf, of course. The king does not accompany Cordelia on this dangerous mission. Do you think he really loves Cordelia? Could he have married her as a political move? Did he know that the division of power would inevitably lead to civil war? A monarchy divided cannot stand after all. What do you think Shakespeare was trying to say about love, family, and politics? Write a two paragraph essay explaining your interpretation.