

(a) The double opening

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The Taming of the Shrew (a) The double opening

- ❖ **Lesson focus:** To explore the functions and impact of the play's double opening.
- ❖ **Opening exercise:** Brainstorm devices and examples of how plays, films, and books start their stories (e.g. flashback, circular narrative, prologue, start 'in media res', framing device, dramatic event such as a fight, straightforward exposition of characters and setting).
 - How would we describe the way Shakespeare begins *The Taming of the Shrew*? (an Induction, or prelude, creates a sort of false or double opening, casting the rest of the story as 'a play within a play')
 - What are the possible advantages and disadvantages of beginning a story in this way?
 - Why might some productions simply skip this part?
 - ✕ [The Taming of the Shrew > Structure > The framing device](#)
- ❖ **Textual examination:** Recap (skim-read and summarise) the events of the two Induction scenes. Cut up then distribute ***The Taming of the Shrew: a)i The double opening Theme word handout*** to students for a focused re-reading.
 - Re-read the two Induction scenes, ideally printed on paper with wide margins, enabling highlighting and annotating. As students read, they look for examples of their allocated themes (could 'buzz in') to highlight and label.
 - Teacher leads whole class analysis in making links and annotations, considering the thematic links between the Induction scenes and the main plot.
- In what ways do the Induction scenes prepare the audience to be thinking about the themes of the play, before the main plot begins?
 - How might this affect, consciously or unconsciously, the experience of watching the play?
 - ✕ [The Taming of the Shrew > Synopses and commentaries > Induction Scene 1; Induction Scene 2](#)
 - ✕ [The Taming of the Shrew > Structure > The framing device](#)
- Next re-read Act 1, Scene 1 and consider the very different purposes of this scene:
 - Which important characters are introduced?
 - What important information is communicated in the scene?
 - What new themes are introduced? (learning, courtship, polarised types of females, parent-child relationships, etc.)
 - How does the language and tone differ from the Induction scenes?
 - ✕ [The Taming of the Shrew > Synopses and commentaries > Act 1 Scene 1](#)
- What different functions do the two openings perform?
 - ❖ **Discussion ideas:** Read ***The Taming of the Shrew: a)ii The double opening Discussion statements handout*** and debate. There is a column for students to write a response (agree/disagree and why) for each statement, and rows at the bottom for them to generate their own statements about the play's opening.
 - ✕ [The Taming of the Shrew > Structure > The framing device](#)

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The Taming of the Shrew: (a) The double opening

- ❖ **Recreative task:** One controversy is that this opening 'frame' is not returned to at the end of the play.
 - What might a closing 'frame' look like? Draft a scene which ends the play by returning to the Sly plot.
 - Present and discuss these alternative endings, and why they do or don't 'work'.
 - How would they affect the impact of the final scene of the main plot?

- ❖ **Critical task:** 'The Induction scenes are an essential introduction to the themes and ideas of the play.'
 - To what extent do you agree?

- ❖ **Extension task:** Research how different directors/productions have dealt with the Induction scenes.
OR research other opening devices employed by Shakespeare e.g. his use of prologues.