

(c) Bianca – the perfect woman?

✕ Refers to links on www.crossref-it.info

The Taming of the Shrew: (c) Bianca – the perfect woman?

- ❖ **Lesson focus:** To explore the presentation of the character of Bianca.
- ❖ **Opening exercise:** Give students three minutes in silence to draw and label 'the perfect woman' (a stick figure is fine). Then share ideas in groups and enjoy!
 - To what extent does the character of Bianca fit our idea of the perfect woman
 - At the beginning of the play?
 - And at the end?
 - ✕ *The Taming of the Shrew* > Characterisation > Bianca
- ❖ **Textual examination:** Reread Act One Scene One from 'Enter Baptista, Katharina...' to 'Enter Biondello' and analyse the presentation of Bianca.
 - What impressions does the audience get of Bianca in this scene? (E.g. highly desirable/sought after, meek.)
 - Analyse her brief speech and appearance. How is she presented as the ideal submissive daughter in a patriarchal society?
 - List all the terms the male characters use to describe her (e.g. good, sweet).
 - Does Katharina share this positive view of Bianca?
- Fill in the first row of ***The Taming of the Shrew: c) Bianca – the perfect woman? Scene examination handout***, then allocate the given scenes to pairs/groups of students, and ask them to research the presentation of Bianca.
- Feedback to complete the table.
 - ✕ *The Taming of the Shrew* > Synopses and commentaries > Act 1 > Scene 1; Act 2 > Scene 1; Act 3 > Scene 1; Act 4 > Scene 2; Act 5 > Scene 2
- ❖ **Discussion ideas:** Distribute ***The Taming of the Shrew: c)ii Bianca – the perfect woman? Statements handout***. Read and rank the statements from 'most agree' to 'most disagree'.
 - Then discuss and mind map the idea of whether or not Bianca is the perfect woman.
- ❖ **Recreative task:** It is not until the later scenes that we see Bianca's 'true colours', but perhaps the potential for secret rebellion is there all along.
 - Write a diary entry for Bianca at the beginning of the play, expressing her real feelings towards her father and situation, despite her outward compliance.
- ❖ **Critical task:** 'In the character of Bianca, Shakespeare shows how females are expected to conform to male ideas of femininity.' Explore Shakespeare's presentation of Bianca as a product of a patriarchal society.
- ❖ **Extension task:** Consider/research Shakespeare's other 'ideal daughter' figures such as Hero (*Much Ado about Nothing*) and Juliet (*Romeo and Juliet*).
 - To what extent do they conform to the restrictions of their patriarchal societies?