

(d) Petruchio vs Katherina

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

- ❖ **Lesson focus:** To explore the pairing and relationship of Petruchio and Katherina.
- ❖ **Opening exercise:** Draw a Venn diagram on the board, with the two parts representing the characters of Petruchio and Katherina.
 - Students suggest adjectives/character attributes for the characters e.g. 'witty' might go in the overlap.
 - How well matched do the characters appear to be, based on the diagram?
 - ✕ *The Taming of the Shrew* > Characterisation > Petruchio; Katherina
- ❖ **Textual examination:** Re-read Petruchio's hopes/motives for marriage in Act 1, Scene 2
 - What sort of husband would an audience expect him to be, based on this introduction to his character at the start of the play?
 - Is this born out in his relationship with Katherina?
 - Is he purely after her money, for example?
 - How does Shakespeare develop their relationship in a different direction?
 - Allocate the following scenes to pairs/groups of students:
 - Act 2, Scene 1
 - Act 3, Scene 2
 - Act 4, Scene 1
 - Act 4, Scene 3
 - Act 4, Scene 5
 - Act 5, Scene 2.For their allocated scenes, students are to make notes on how Shakespeare presents the characters as husband and wife.

- Where are the 'surprises' in their presentation, and in the development of their relationship?
- Either feedback and makes notes directly on the text, or in the form of a simple table:

Scene	P as husband	K as wife

- Or simply save the feedback as it will be covered by the discussion task activity (see below).
 - ✕ *The Taming of the Shrew* > Synopses and commentaries
 - ✕ *The Taming of the Shrew* > Language > Linguistic duels, a battle of wits
 - ✕ *The Taming of the Shrew* > Imagery and symbolism > Animal imagery and falconry
 - ✕ *The Taming of the Shrew* > Themes > Social status – gender roles and class
 - ✕ *The Taming of the Shrew* > Characterisation > Petruchio; Katherina

- ❖ **Discussion ideas:** Explain that the class will create a diagram which represents the stages of Petruchio and Katherina's relationship. Working as a whole class or in groups, students produce a labelled diagram of the development of Petruchio and Katherina's relationship, based on their findings from the textual examination (above).
 - This could be as creative as you like, with pictures, quotations, etc. It should form the basis of general discussion for how Shakespeare presents their relationship.
- By the end of the play, are we convinced Petruchio and Katherina are well matched?

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- ❖ **Recreative task:** The formula of the unlikely couple, where feelings move from hate to love, is a winning one in literature and film.
 - Use the pattern of Petruchio and Katherina's relationship as a stimulus for a story about a modern relationship (also see *Ten Things I Hate about You* for inspiration)
 - Which aspects of their relationship will or won't easily translate for modern sensibilities?

- ❖ **Critical task:** 'The biggest problem of the play is that the central relationship of the play leaves the modern audience uneasy.'
Discuss the extent to which you see Petruchio and Katherina's relationship as a 'problem' for the audience.
 - ✕ [The Taming of the Shrew > Critical responses > Feminist criticism](#)

- ❖ **Extension task:** Research other Shakespearean plays, in which sparring couples end up together.
 - For example, see Benedick and Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*.
 - Does seeing Petruchio and Katherina's relationship in terms of a comic pattern make it more acceptable as 'entertainment'?