

# Classroom Connections

## Before the Performance



### TEMPER, TEMPER

In *Henry IV, Part 1*, Hotspur is known for his fiery temper, which in some instances he is able to control and at other times controls him. Starting with Hotspur's first scene, I.iii, focusing on the monologue that begins "My liege, I did deny no prisoners...", investigate how Hotspur communicates his anger. How is he able to convey his emotions without openly stating how he feels? What words or sounds does he use to portray anger? Read the monologue aloud as a class and have students search the text circling words or phrases that show Hotspur's temper. Select a gesture to represent anger (e.g. a raised fist) then read the monologue a second time with students gesturing when "anger words" are read. Reflect on the similarities and differences between students' choices, having them explain why they circled a particular phrase or word.



### WRITE LIKE SHAKESPEARE

Divide students into groups. Ask each group to rewrite one of the horoscope passages below using iambic pentameter.

- Friends find you difficult to pin down for making plans.
- Keep playing hard-to-get; lovers will certainly want you more.
- Get focused on money: bargain-hunting, clipping coupons and budget highlighted.
- This is your year for high hopes and big rewards.
- An ex returns with apologies—it's all up to you, but call on a friend for support.

Ask each group to share in front of the class.



### WHY ART?

Ask students to discuss the role of art in society. How does it affect, reflect, enhance a society, a culture or a community? What is the purpose of theatre? To entertain or to educate? Split the class in half and ask the students to debate theatre's purpose as either entertainment or education. Which do they expect when they go to the theatre? To the movies?



### IMITATING THE SUN

In *Henry IV, Part 1* the audience watches Prince Hal change from a reckless and irresponsible youth to a more mature and dependable young man. Ask students to imagine themselves in Hal's position: instead of living up to responsibilities, they spend their days partying with friends and disappointing their family. Students should write a journal entry debating whether or not they should "grow up" and assume more responsibility in the adult world. What are the reasons for deciding this? What will they lose? What will others say about this transformation? After journaling, read Hal's monologue from I.ii. How does Hal's description of his plan compare with the students'? Do they agree with his assessment of the situation?



### STRUCTURING HENRY IV, PART 1

Shakespeare divides this play fairly evenly into two worlds: the world of King Henry, the nobles and civil strife, and the world of Falstaff, Prince Hal and tavern life. Examine this choice in dramatic structure with your students from two perspectives:

- How does Shakespeare make these two worlds distinctive?
- Why is it important to the story of *Henry IV, Part 1* for Shakespeare to include characters and plotlines outside of Henry's court?

Encourage students to consider the arrangement of the play's scenes—the balance of serious scenes of impending rebellion with the more-jovial tavern scenes. Then examine each scenes' primary language form—verse or prose. Ask students to imagine that they are a member of the Lord Chamberlain's men and compose a letter to Shakespeare either supporting the inclusion of Falstaff and the tavern world or attempting to persuade the Bard to cut those scenes from the play.

# Classroom Connections

## After the Performance



### CRUEL INTENTIONS

After Hal and Poins reveal to Falstaff it was they who robbed him in the woods, Falstaff informs them he knew it all along. Read aloud Falstaff's response (II.iv.221-231) in its entirety. How truthful is his declaration? What might Falstaff be feeling? What might he want Hal and Poins to do as a result of speaking to them about the dangers of instinct? Ask students to imagine a time when Falstaff and Hal are reminiscing about this event. Write a monologue for Falstaff in which he reveals his true feelings about Hal robbing him and then outing Falstaff's cover-up in front of friends at the alehouse. Have students share their monologues with the class.



### TEMPER TANTRUM

Have you ever considered how a situation might have turned out better had you either controlled or lost your temper? Give students a short period of time to reflect on a moment in their lives where they either lost or controlled their temper, and wished in retrospect they had done the opposite. Who were the players in that situation and what were their relationships? What were the circumstances? What happened in the end? What might have happened differently had tempers flared or been controlled? Then, working in small groups, ask students to change the outcome of one of the following scenes: I.iii, III.i, IV.i. Analyze Hotspur's actions in the scene using the same questions above. Rewrite the scene and share the new result with the class.



### HISTORICAL CHARACTERS

Distribute the names of characters in *Henry IV, Part 1* from the court and the rebels, repeating characters if necessary so that each student has one character. Have them write a character sketch/biography, describing the character's personality, lineage, relationship to the throne, good and bad deeds, etc. using Shakespeare's play as the sole source. Then allow time for students to research the characters from a selection of historical, non-fiction sources from various time periods. Have them write another character sketch/biography using only their historical research. Compare the two biographies; did students get the same view of the character from the play as their historical sources?



### CROSSING WORLDS

In *Henry IV, Part 1* Shakespeare created two unique and contrasting worlds—the court and the tavern—and characters rarely crossover from one world to the other. Discuss with students how the characters from these two worlds intermix throughout the play. How do they behave differently? How does their language (prose, verse) change? What happens when both worlds collide during the final battle scenes? In small groups have students select a character that exists in the play solely in one world and script a new scene in which s/he finds her/himself in the other world (Hotspur in the tavern, Falstaff in Henry's court). How does her/his attitude, behavior or language change? Have students read their scripts aloud to the rest of the class upon completion.



### INTERPRETING HISTORY

Over the years, there has been scholarly debate about the accuracy of Shakespeare's portrayal of historical figures and the motives for reworking specific events for his history plays. Have the class brainstorm the major events in the lives of one of the following figures:

- George Washington
- Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Queen Elizabeth I
- Napoleon
- Ghandi
- King Arthur

Divide the class into groups to write a scene-by-scene outline or storyboard for a play about the life of this historical figure. Groups may take artistic license to adjust events and character traits where necessary to fit their message. Have each group present their play to the class and discuss the role of the playwright as an historian.