Consistent with the Shakespeare Theatre Company’s central mission to be the leading force in producing and preserving the highest quality classic theatre, the Education Department challenges learners of all ages to explore the ideas, emotions and principles contained in classic texts and to discover the connection between classic theatre and our modern perceptions. We hope that this *Curriculum Guide* will prove useful to you while preparing to attend *King Charles III*.

This curriculum guide provides information and activities to help students form a personal connection to the play before attending the production. It contains material about the playwright, their world and their works. Also included are approaches to explore the play in the classroom before and after the performance. We encourage you to photocopy these articles and activities and use them as supplemental material to the text.

**Enjoy the show!**

The *First Folio Curriculum Guide* for the 2016-2017 Season was developed by the Shakespeare Theatre Company Education Department:

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Shakespeare & Bartlett’s Language

“The idea for King Charles III arrived in my imagination with the form and content very clear, and inextricably linked. It would be a play about the moment Charles takes the throne, and how his conscience would lead him to refuse to sign a bill into law. An epic royal family drama, dealing with power and national constitution, was the content, and therefore the form had surely to be Shakespearean. It would need five acts, quite possibly a comic subplot, but most worryingly, the majority of it would have to be in verse.” - Excerpt from the Guardian’s Article “Mike Bartlett: How I Wrote King Charles III”

Verse & Prose

William Shakespeare wrote all of his plays in verse and prose, as did King Charles III playwright, Mike Bartlett. When writing in verse, they both chose to write in blank verse using the rhythm of iambic pentameter. Let’s define these terms.

PROSE is the ordinary form of written or spoken language. Prose can be very descriptive, but it follows the rules of grammar instead of a rhythmic pattern. Essays, news articles and novels are examples of written prose.

VERSE is the word for dramatic poetry. When the lines in a play are written in a rhythmic structure, say the play is written in verse. We refer to the rhythm as the meter.

METER is a recognizable rhythm in a line of verse consisting of a pattern of regularly recurring unstressed and stressed syllables.

BLANK VERSE is verse that does not rhyme.

IAMBIC PENTAMETER is a rhythmic pattern widely used in Elizabethan drama because it almost mimics our natural speaking rhythm.

Iambic Pentameter

Every line of pentameter has 10 syllables. When analyzing the verse, we divide up the syllables into sets of two and we call them feet.

A foot = 2 syllables

Pentameter = a line with 10 syllables which we divide into 5 feet

But soft! / What light / through yon / der win / dow breaks?

Iambic refers to the rhythm of the line. When the first syllable is unstressed and the second syllable is stressed, as in the word Hello, it is called an iamb.

Iambic = unstressed stressed rhythm

The rhythm of iambic pentameter is similar to the human heartbeat, a horse gallop, or the beat underneath a piece of music. Clap the rhythm of iambic pentameter. Without specific words, the rhythm of iambic pentameter is:

da DUM da DUM da DUM da DUM da DUM

Identifying the rhythm of a verse line is called scansion. Actors scan their lines by marking the unstressed syllables with this symbol ~ and stressed syllables with a slash /.

~ / ~ / ~ / ~ / ~ / ~

But soft! What light through yonder window breaks?

Classroom Activity: Scansion

Have students scan the following verse lines from the play.

My life has been a ling’ring for the throne.—Charles, 1.1

The queen is dead, long live the King. That’s me.—Charles, 1.1

Without my voice, and spirit, I am dust,
This is not what I want, but what I must.—Charles, 2.2

I do not think you weak at all but wrong.
Become the man I know you are and act. - Kate, 3.4
Shakespeare & Bartlett’s Language

Persuasive Writing & Writing in Verse

1) Have your students choose one of the following writing prompts:
   - I would make an excellent King/Queen because….
   - I would make an excellent President because….
   - Think of a rule at your school you would like to see change and explain why the rule should be changed.
   - Think of a law in this country that should change and explain why the law should be changed.
   - There should be no restrictions on the freedom of the press because….
   - There should be a lot of restrictions on the freedom of the press because….

2) Have students write a persuasive response to the prompt.

3) Have them rewrite it in iambic pentameter.

4) Have students share both versions with the class either by reading it out loud or sharing their work in small groups.

5) Discuss the differences in both versions.
   - Which version do they like better? Why?
   - Which version had a stronger impact on their argument?
   - What was the process writing in iambic pentameter like compared to writing in prose?

Code Switching: Verse & Prose

Just like we change our language depending on our situation, so do the characters in verse plays. Ask your students to think about how they change their language in different situations.

Discussion Questions

Do you speak differently and choose different words when you talk to your friends versus when talking to your parents or teachers?
Would you speak differently at a job interview versus a family gathering?
How does our language change in these situations?
Why does our language change in these situations?

Playwrights like William Shakespeare and Mike Bartlett use Verse & Prose to achieve the same goal.

If a character’s lines are written in **VERSE** we assume the following:
* The character is most likely from the upper class and/or nobility and very wealthy.
* The character is most likely formally educated.
* The character may be experiencing a strong emotion like love or jealousy and needs to use heightened language.
* The character may be in a formal or public setting.

If a character’s lines are written in **PROSE** we assume the following:
* The character is most likely from the lower class and not very wealthy.
* The character is most likely uneducated.
* Or (if noble/upper class) the characters are in a private, informal setting with peers.

Read the excerpts from *King Charles III* on the following pages. Discuss the following:

Which excerpt is written in prose?
Which excerpt is written in verse?
Why do you think Mike Bartlett chose verse or prose for the scene?
What does it reveal about the characters?
How does it effect the mood or tone of the scene?
Harry and Spencer, in the VIP room at Boujis. Behind them, out in the club itself, clubbers mill about with drinks – dancing.

Spen. Look, I completely understand you must respect a serious period of mourning and all that boo hoo, but you’ve been away so long! You deserve a classic night out, and here’s something to cheer you up.
   It’ll take your head off.

Coot. Wassup bitches.

Spen. Speak English Cootts.

Har. What’s all that?

Coot. Don’t know what you mean?

Spen. You look like you’ve been raped by TJ Maxx

Coot. Under cover mate.

Spen. What?

Coot. Been mixing with the commoners. They’re all going bonkers out there. I needed to blend in.

Spen. Why?

Coot. To get your surprise. She’s a lovely girl. Quite poor but very distinctive. She was shouting her mouth off saying she didn’t care about the queen, I thought she needs a lesson, and now you’re home you might want to, you know -

Har. Cootsey

Coot. Grit your oyster

Har. Where is she?


Spen. What’s she like?

Coot. Don’t know, mate. Can’t get past the voice.

Jess enters. She’s mid-twenties, well dressed, clearly clever.

Jess. Er… hello.

Coot. Jessica!

Jess. Not joking then.

Coot. What?

Jess. Here he is. Prince Harry.

Har. Yeah?

Jess. Is Charles really your dad?

Har. What?

Jess. Or was it the other one?

Spen. The other one?

Jess. What’s his name?

Spen. No.

Jess. Hewlitt.

Spen. Hewitt.

Jess. Her butler or whatever.

Spen. Not the butler.

Coot. No the butler didn’t do it.

Jess. Cos you’re very ginger. I don’t think that’s a bad thing, but if you haven’t done a test yet you should, cos if Hewlitt was your dad instead, you’d be out of the family.

Har. What?

Jess. Free of it!

Har. Why would I want to be free of it?

Jess. Cos you hate it. Don’t you?

Har. …no.

Spen. He really doesn’t.

Jess. Yeah you do! This dressing up, getting wrecked, it’s because you’re part of this big thing, but you don’t get anything back. You’ll just be the drunken uncle. Grow a beard. Get fat. Golf. It’s a trap.

Har. That’s what you think?

Jess. Yeah.

Har. So what should I do then?

Jess. What?

Har. What should I do instead?

Jess. You really want to know?

Coot. Look, I think it’s time for you to tap out darling. Go on. Off you pop. We’ve seen girls like you before, won’t be long before the camera phone comes out –

Har. Coutsey, Spencer –
   Mate! Someone wants you at the bar.

Coot. You telling us to jog on, mate?

Har. Yes I am.

Coot. Er - You realize she’s probably a socialist or something?


They go. Now it’s just Jess and Harry.
Excerpt from Act I Scene 3 of *King Charles III* by Mike Bartlett

*The Prime Minister enters with King Charles*

Char. Well good, so how shall we begin?

PM. Well oft I run through current legislation
Or international matters sometimes might
Take precedence, but here today I thought
We might commence by talking of a bill
About to land upon your desk that seeks
The royal approval.

Char. Yes? What bill d’you mean.

PM. To limit future growth and mass expanse
Of runways. What environmental checks
There are, have long been out of date -

Char. You must
Excuse me, much as this wants our attention,
I had assumed we’d start with something else.

PM. Of course. Whichever subject you would like.

Char. Your bill concerning privacy, that sets
Restriction on the freedom of the press.
I understand it’s passed the house and soon
Will be the British law, is that correct?

PM. That is correct, the regulation of the press
We feel is overdue, and although we would
Prefer them in an ideal world to keep their house
In order by themselves, this has been tried,
So many times and each time failed.

Char. I’ve read the bill.

PM. You have? Well, good.

Char. What else is there to say, the bill has wide
Support across the house both commons and
The Lords, and will today arrive with you
For signature to enter into law.

PM. You like this bill?

Char. I absolutely do.
For we have seen, and you yourself must know
Too well the lasting wounds the press inflict.

PM. We cannot risk another murder case
Where phones belonging to the dead are hacked.
It cannot be a right or civilized
Country, in which, in any private place
A toilet, bedroom, might be there concealed
A tiny camera, then these photos ‘spayed
As front page news, the consequences thrown
Around the world and ever-lasting, so
Without a jury, judge, or evidence
A punishment is meted out, a life
Is ruined, reputation murdered.

Char. You do not think a principal is here
At stake, that something vital to our sense

PM. Your Majesty, thanks, I understand and say
I will, if opportunity transpires,
Make sure I take your view into account.
Perhaps we should move on to other things.

Char. It is the law on privacy that holds
Concern. And so I ask you tell me what
As my Prime Minister you do intend.

PM. The law is made, and passed. It is too late.

Char. My views to you mean nothing then.

PM. Your views mean much, but on this subject yes.

Char. Then our weekly meeting’s done.
Timely and Timeless:
Echoes of Shakespeare in *King Charles III*

The structure of *King Charles III* was clear to playwright Mike Bartlett from the first moments of inspiration. “The idea for [the play] arrived in my imagination with the form and content very clear, and inextricably linked,” says Bartlett. “The content was an epic royal family drama, dealing with power and the national constitution, and therefore the form had surely to be Shakespearean.” The play would be five acts, just like Shakespeare’s dramas. King Charles III would be the tragic central figure, akin to King Lear or Prince Hamlet. And Bartlett knew that his play would have a comic subplot, similar to the one in Henry IV, probably involving Prince Harry. But even though Bartlett began the project with a strong handle on the structure, it would still be a long time before the play found its place on the page.

The Challenge of Verse

It took so long for Bartlett to begin writing because, in truth, he was intimidated. He knew that writing a Shakespearean-style play necessitated writing in iambic pentameter, a kind of poetic meter in which each line has (roughly) ten syllables that alternate between unstressed and stressed (da-DUM da-DUM da-DUM da-DUM da-DUM). This was the verse in which Shakespeare wrote most of his plays. Bartlett says, “Verse is one thing (and a thing I knew very little about), but verse drama? And a form of verse drama that would lay this play alongside the greatest literature in the English language? All of this was enough to stop me writing a word, so for two years the play remained merely a good idea—unspoiled by any attempt to write it into reality.”

But finally, Bartlett mentioned his idea to director Rupert Goold, who convinced him to give it a chance to grow. And that meant Bartlett had to find some way to make writing in verse more accessible. He was inspired by the performances of Ken Campbell (1941–2008), an actor who improvised scenes with his theater company in nearly perfect iambic pentameter. Campbell had a theory about how Shakespeare was able to be so prolific. Many playwrights of that era wrote in iambic pentameter because the rhythm made the lines easy for actors to remember. Because the Bard was also an actor, he performed in iambic pentameter all the time. The meter became instinctual to him.

Bartlett knew that he needed to get the rhythm of iambic pentameter into his bones, just like Shakespeare did. So he began to live in verse. “I wrote lines and lines of iambic pentameter, speaking it round the house to myself, trying to get to the point where I might be able to improvise the verse fluidly, hoping that if I could, the writing would be driven by the desires and thoughts of the characters, rather than aesthetics or metric requirements.”

When *King Charles III* was performed at last, Bartlett realized that some audience members didn’t even notice the play was written in verse. At first he was disappointed by this, but he came to see that it was actually a compliment to the playwriting. “The mechanics of verse drama should happen behind the scenes, allowing the audience to experience the characters and story.”

Unsexed and Underestimated: Kate and Lady Macbeth

In their experiences of *King Charles III*, audiences and critics alike found striking similarities between Bartlett’s characters and Shakespeare’s—but Bartlett did not actually intend most of these likenesses. For example, he did not anticipate that people would compare his Kate to Lady Macbeth. And yet the parallels are remarkable. In *Macbeth*, the titular character receives a prophecy that he will become king. For him to take the throne, however, the current king must die. Lady Macbeth, whom Shakespeare scholar Marjorie Garber calls “the strongest character in the play,” knows that her husband doesn’t have the courage to kill the king, so she pushes him to carry out the murder and then helps him hide the evidence.

*Macbeth* is largely a rumination on the effects of guilt, but in the beginning of the play, Garber says that we see in Lady Macbeth “rigidity, resolution, and the rejection of a restricted notion of a woman’s place.” Garber gleans this from lines such as “Come, you spirits / That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here, / And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full / Of direst cruelty” and “Come to my woman’s breasts, / And take my milk for gall, you murd’ring ministers.”
Lady Macbeth’s rejection of femininity casts a fascinating light on Kate’s soliloquy in *King Charles III*:

> But I know nothing, just a plastic doll,
> Designed, I’m told, to stand embodying
> A male-created bland and standard wife
> Whose only job is prettifying the prince, and then,
> If possible, get pregnant with the royal
> And noble bump, to there produce an heir
> Or two. And oft I’m told I don’t have thought
> Or brains to comprehend my strange position.
> But being underestimated so
> Does give me what these men could never have.
> Since no one asks me what I think, I can
> Observe and plan and learn the way to rule.

Kate recognizes that her femininity dehumanizes her: she is a “plastic doll,” created by the male gaze, whose only purpose is to produce an heir to the British throne. But despite the effect her femininity has on the way she is perceived by the public, she ultimately embraces it. Because no one cares what she thinks, she realizes she can spend her time observing and learning how to be an effective queen. That way, when it comes time for her to take action, she will know exactly what to do and will “be a queen unlike the ones before.” Instead of calling upon masculinity to make her strong, as Lady Macbeth does, Kate accepts the position in which her femininity places her.

**An Arc of Redemption?: Prince Harry and Prince Hal**

Although Bartlett has said that most similarities between his characters and Shakespeare’s are incidental, there was one comparison he intended—Prince Harry and the character of Prince Hal in *Henry IV*. When the audience first meets Hal, who is next in line for the throne, he is hanging out in a tavern with his bawdy friends. Our first impression is that he is unfit to be king, given the company he keeps: womanizers, drunkards, and robbers. Similarly, very early on in *King Charles III*, we see Harry forego spending time with his royal family to hit up a club with his pals. Both Harry and Hal spend time with the “lower” classes, and they enjoy their experiences there. But they spend time away from royalty for different reasons. Hal divulges that he spends time in the tavern to familiarize himself with the people he will one day rule over. Unlike Hal, Harry is probably never going to be king. He is destined to have the title of prince forever, and he must follow all the rules of royalty without the promise of power. Following those protocols is exhausting for Harry, so he escapes that world by hanging out with his non-royal friends in clubs. After he meets and falls in love with Jess, a working-class art student, he wants to leave the royal family altogether—something that Hal would never dream of doing, despite how much he loves his tavern buddies.

Ultimately, Hal’s and Harry’s stories end in the same way: they are both allegiance to the monarchy. Hal takes the crown because he knows it’s his duty and his destiny. He doesn’t fight it. Harry is almost successful in leaving the royal family. Charles was going to allow it, but he is forced to abdicate. William then takes the crown, and he forbids Harry from leaving the family, and Harry doesn’t fight it.

**Being Nothing: Charles III and Richard II**

In many reviews of *King Charles III*, Bartlett’s tragic lead character has been compared to Shakespeare’s Richard III, Lear, and Hamlet. Charles certainly bears some similarities to all of these characters, but he also very closely resembles the king in *Richard II*. Both that play and *King Charles III* follow the downfall and ultimate abdication of an English king. Both characters end up as fascinating meditations on the nature of kingship. Comparing Charles to Richard reveals some of the ways that Bartlett may have been influenced by one of Shakespeare’s lesser-known history plays.
When these two characters are laid alongside each other, one of the first things that becomes clear is an essential difference in motivation. As a king, Richard serves his own interests before those of his people. He is vain, wasteful, and surrounded by sycophants. Only after he is forced to abdicate do we feel for him, partly because his poetry is so eloquent and partly because his identity is so shaken:

Thus play I in one person many people,
And none contented: sometimes am I king;
Then treasons make me wish myself a beggar,
And so I am: then crushing penury
Persuades me I was better when a king;
Then am I king’d again: and by and by
Think that I am unking’d by Bolingbroke,
And straight am nothing: but whate’er I be,
Nor I nor any man that but man is
With nothing shall be pleased, till he be eased
With being nothing.

*(Richard II, Act V, Scene 5)*

Compare this speech to Charles’s words after he is forced to abdicate:

So there, it’s done, the king is at an end.
I will retreat to bed, and when I wake
To a new dawn, I’ll simply be an old
Forgotten gardener, who potters round
And talks to plants and chuckles to himself,
Whilst far away the king and queen do rule
Over a golden age of monarchy,
That bothers no-one, does no good, and is
A pretty plastic picture with no meaning.

Unlike Richard, Charles is not so upset at the loss of identity that comes with abdication. He might not like it, but at least Charles knows who he’ll be after giving up the crown. Instead, he seems more distraught that the monarchy has lost any actual political purpose it might have had. Arguably, Charles’s mistakes were made not in his own self-interest (like Richard II’s), but in the interest of the monarchy as an institution and the country as a whole.

**The Immortal Bard**

These are only a few of the fascinating comparisons to be drawn between *King Charles III* and the Shakespearean canon. Just as Bartlett dreaded, writing his play in a Shakespearean form did indeed invite audiences to lay it “alongside the greatest literature in the English language,” but his worst fears never came true. *King Charles III* doesn’t pale in comparison to the works of Shakespeare. “What could have been only a cleverly executed stunt is instead an intellectually and emotionally gripping study of the strangely enduring anachronism that is the British monarchy,” says *New York Times* critic Ben Brantley. “And for Bardophiles, *King Charles III* provides the bonus of confirming the immortal topicality of Shakespeare.”

Royal Primer
Real Characters in Regal Drama

Charles
*Prince of Wales, Duke of Cornwall, first heir to the throne*

- Served in both the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force.
- 750 million people watched his wedding to Lady Diana Spencer in 1981 on television all over the world.
- Publicly separated from Princess Diana in 1992, legally divorced in 1996.
- Married Camilla Parker Bowles, a long-time love interest, in 2005 in a private civil ceremony.
- Charles’ parents did not attend. (They did attend a televised blessing a day later.)
- Continues to encounter issues with media coverage of his personal life, from newspapers publishing personal journal entries to releasing personal phone calls.

Diana
*Princess of Wales*

- Became the Princess of Wales at 20 years old when she married Charles. 600,000 people lined the streets to catch a glimpse of the couple in their carriage.
- Wanted to give her sons William and Harry a wider range of experiences than other royal children, famously taking them to Disney World, McDonald’s and homeless shelters.
- Framed by the press as the “People’s Princess,” she was naturally wonderful during public appearances and became a beloved member of the royal family.
- Their marriage troubled, Charles began again seeing his former girlfriend Camilla, and Diana was linked to Major James Hewitt. Both Charles and Diana’s personal reputations were besmirched by scandal, including leaked tapes and phone conversations.
- On August 31, 1997, Diana was fatally injured in a car crash in a Parisian road tunnel.

Camilla
*Duchess of Cornwall*

- Born into British gentry and dated Prince Charles 1971-1973. Many believe any engagement would have been rejected by the royal family.
- Married Andrew Parker Bowles in 1973, with whom she had 2 children. They amicably divorced in 1995.
- Married Prince Charles in 2005 after a slow integration into public royal life.
- Appointed to the Queen’s Privy Council in June 2016, the first British princess by marriage to hold the office.
- If Charles becomes King, Camilla’s title becomes Princess Consort.
Royal Primer
Real Characters in Regal Drama

Prince William
Duke of Cambridge, second heir to the throne
Eldest son of Prince Charles and Princess Diana, second in line for the throne. He was 15 when Diana died.
Studied at Eton College and the University of St. Andrews.
Served in two branches of the British military: the British Army and the Royal Air Force.
Retiring from active military service, William became a full-time pilot in the East Anglican Air Ambulance.
Started dating Kate Middleton in 2003, and due to intense media attention, William personally asked the media to keep their distance from Kate.
William and Kate’s wedding took place in 2011, televised all over the world. A reported 3 billion people tuned into the event.
They have two children: Prince George (born 2013) and Princess Charlotte (2015).

Catherine Middleton
Duchess of Cambridge
Born into a prosperous and upper class family—but not royal.
Studied at University of St. Andrews. Worked at her family business in many capacities including design, production, marketing and photography.
Welcomed into the royal family fairly quickly, attending many high-level royal events even without the Prince’s escort long before their engagement was announced.
In 2010, pursued a claim of invasion of privacy when photographers followed her over Christmas. She received a public apology and recompense.
Known as a fashion icon and selected as one of Time’s “100 Most Influential People in the World” in 2012 and 2013.

Prince Henry (Harry)
Prince of Wales
Fifth in line for the throne after Charles, William and William’s children.
Was 12 years old at the time of his mother’s death.
Rumors of his illegitimacy persist, though Harry was born long before Diana and Hewitt began their affair.
Very active in charity work, including the launch of the Invictus Games in 2014, which celebrate the athletic achievements of injured servicemen and women.
Earned a reputation for rebellion in his younger years, photographed drinking, smoking and engaging in unseemly behavior.
How a Bill Becomes Law in the United Kingdom

In the UK, Parliament is responsible for making laws. There are two houses in Parliament:

- **House of Lords**: A body of officials assigned to their office by the Queen or by inheritance.
- **House of Commons**: A body of officials elected to their office by popular vote.

A proposed law is called a bill. A bill can be proposed by either the House of Commons or the House of Lords.

- **Bill is proposed by the House of Lords**
- **Bill is proposed by the House of Commons**

Five rounds of internal debate, review and editing

- **House of Commons**
- **House of Lords**

Back-and-forth debate between the houses until bill is approved by both

- **Both Houses**

It is expected that the queen will always give royal assent to the bills that come across her desk, and this has worked for quite some time; a monarch hasn't refused assent since 1707. But when it's time for the queen's signature, Parliament isn't showing her the bill for the first time. The Prime Minister will consult her throughout the entire process, and she will be able to confidentially offer her opinions, which the Prime Minister may take into account (although he or she can't publicly say that the opinions belong to the Queen).

However, *King Charles III* presents a unique situation. The monarch who is expected to sign the bill (Charles) wasn't monarch while the bill was being created. He was never consulted or expressed his opinions. And it turns out that he completely disagrees with what the bill stands for. Regardless, he is expected to sign. This is the heart of the crisis in Mike Bartlett’s play.

Classroom Activity: Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is an important tool that actors use to understand what their verse lines mean and how their character feels. **Paraphrasing** means restating each line of verse *in your own words*. Paraphrasing should be done in first-person (using “I”).

Practice paraphrasing these difficult verse lines from *King Charles III*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prime Minister:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They have Your Majesty. For when thirsty I,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did mention water, Prince of Wales did then</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go fetch it thus himself, and bring it hence.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King Charles:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A future King waits butler-like upon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The people! That awaits us all, perhaps,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A monarchy reduced to smiling dolls</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like waitresses in diners themed towards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The stars of Hollywood, we are dressed up,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And earn our cheque by roller skating round.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kate:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Say the thing that must be said.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The fact that both of us command support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That does near thrice outweigh the aged King</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And if we wanted might begin to itch</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>In waiting for the throne.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Newspaper Woman:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>In times like this a paper feels absurd.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Unless we could reprint the articles</td>
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<tr>
<td>In every second, news contained in here</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Is counted history.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sir Gordon, Chief to the Defense:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The men that stand so still outside the gates</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Do practice with their rifles every week.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The funny hats are just a way to fuzz</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The brutal fact the army’s on the streets,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>And answerable not to the police</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Or to the politician’s changing whims,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But only to their officer, and so,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>By ladder of command, to you, the crown.</td>
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</table>
Classroom Activity: IF/THEN Statements

*King Charles III* is a work of historical fiction, yet the play is based on fictional circumstances that are likely to happen. Charles, Prince of Wales, will most likely become King of England when Queen Elizabeth passes away in the next few years.

What are other political and cultural events that are most likely to happen in the next decade? Have students brainstorm events they assume will occur in politics, culture, entertainment, food, and technology in the next few years (the election of a new President, the next superhero movie, a new album from a mega artist, protests over the next war, a new iPhone feature, etc.).

Have students choose ONE likely significant event to inspire a series of IF/THEN statements, with each statement inspired by the previous one (students can write as many statements as you would like to assign.)

**For Example:**

IF a new iPhone feature allows users to read other users’ text conversations, THEN people will find ways to hack into private conversations.

IF people find ways on iPhones to hack into private conversations, THEN high school students will use that information to bully others.

IF students bully others with private conversations from iPhones, THEN schools will adopt policies demanding access to private electronic conversations.

IF schools demand access to private electronic conversations, THEN issues of student privacy will be fought in the courts.

IF student privacy is fought in the courts, THEN the Supreme Court may rule that students do not have a right to keeping their phone use private at school.

**Follow-up Activity:**

Have students write a scene between two characters who are impacted by these historical events. Have students choose one statement as inspiration to find two characters in a dialogue with each other. Using the example above, students might write a scene between a student bully and target, between a school official and a parent, or between a student and a teacher.
Classroom Activity: Family Portrait

Part 1: Royal Family Portrait Game

Family portrait is a collaborative improvisation game for all ages. It involves movement, gestures and facial expression.

1) Break students into groups of five. One student will be the photographer.

2) Group will pose as if they were taking a family portrait. When the photographer says “3-2-1 Cheese” the group will create their portrait and freeze.

3) Teacher can suggest different types of families they want their students to create. Teacher should encourage students to use different levels, and add specificity in their body and face.

Here are a few examples:

- Superhero Family
- Rock Star Family
- Librarian Family
- Professional Wrestling Family
- Ballerina Family
- Firefighter Family
- Cheerleader Family
- Royal family
- Acting Family

Part 2: Royal Family Portrait Game

After completing the family portrait game, the classroom teacher should foster a class discussion about the Royal Family. Who are the members of the family? What do they know about each member? What is their persona in the media? Once the students have a strong foundation on the royal family, begin the Royal Family Portrait Game.

1) Break class into six groups

2) Give each group an image of a member of the royal family (images found on page 16). They are to keep their image a secret from the other groups.

3) Explain that each group should create a portrait of the family member they were given. They should use their image as a reference, but add further details and characters.

4) Give each group a time to collaborate and stage their image. Assist students as needed and encourage the groups to add different levels and facial expressions to make the portrait as clear as possible.

5) Each group will present their still image to the class. The class will then try to guess which member of the royal family they were given,
Royal Family Portraits

Prince William's Family
Princess Diana
Queen Elizabeth & Prince Phillip
Prince Harry
Duchess Camilla
Prince Charles
Royal Traditions: Coronations

After a monarch passes away, the heir to the throne immediately becomes the King or Queen. However, the coronation and crowning ceremony often takes place several months later. Coronations are a joyous celebration for the new sovereign; therefore, it would be improper to take place immediately after the death of the previous ruler. A British coronation is a religious ceremony that has not changed for thousands of years, but still requires extensive planning. Westminster Abbey, a gothic style cathedral, has held the coronation ceremony for the past 900 years.

The Archbishop of Canterbury conducts the service. The Archbishop blesses the sovereign while they are seated in King Edward's chair (made in 1300, and used by every Sovereign since 1626). The sovereign takes an oath swearing to govern all the lands in the United Kingdom according to their laws and customs, create Law and Justice in Mercy, maintain the Laws of God and true profession of the Gospel and uphold the Church of England.

The Sovereign is handed the Orb and Scepter which represent Christ’s dominion over the world and the monarch’s temporal power under God. After receiving the orb and scepter, the Archbishop places St. Edward's Crown on the Sovereign's head. The ceremony is observed by the members of Parliament and the Prime Minister.
Royal Traditions: Funerals

Funerals for the top members of the Royal Family are planned for years in case of sudden passing away. Monarchs are given State Funerals. State funerals are declared as a national day of mourning and include an elaborate military and religious ceremony. Anyone can be granted a State Funeral if Parliament votes on it, but the remainder of the Royal Family is granted Royal Ceremonial funerals. In State Funerals the coffin carriage is pulled by sailors from the Royal Navy and in a Royal Ceremonial the coffin carriage is pulled by horses.

The Queen Elizabeth II has been involved in the planning of her own funeral for decades and has made the majority of decisions. Her funeral, code-named, ‘London Bridge’, has a procession path that has been practiced secretly at night for years. Her husband, Prince Philip, has requested not to have a private funeral and wishes to have a military funeral at St. George’s Chapel.

A Royal’s death affects the country greatly. Thousands line the streets to witness the funeral procession. Citizens leave flowers, notes and gifts outside the gates of Buckingham Palace to mourn the death of the family member.

Questions & Classroom Activity

British Tradition Questions

What British traditions are similar to United States traditions?
How do their traditions differ?
Which British tradition would you like to take a part in?
Who is the equivalent to the Royal Family in the United States?

Classroom Activity

The inauguration of the President of the United States is a large American tradition. It is the closest ceremony we have to a coronation. Research the history of Presidential inaugurations. Find out the following information;

* Where does it take place?
* Who conducts the ceremony?
* What is the oath the President swears?
* Who attends?
* Has the ceremony always been conducted the same way? If not, what other traditions used to exist?
1) Why do you think playwright Mike Bartlett chose to write most of the play in verse? How does it affect the storytelling?

2) Bartlett refers to King Charles as a Shakespearean tragic hero. What makes Charles a tragic hero? Does he deserve the fate he suffers in the play?

3) Bartlett says that he actually didn’t intend most of the similarities between his characters in King Charles III and the characters of Shakespeare. Why do you think audiences find similarities despite his lack of intention?

4) King Charles III acts beyond the norms of a monarch out of a sense of duty. Where would you break from tradition in order to support your sense of duty?

5) William makes a choice to stand in opposition to his father. Why do you think he made that decision? What would you choose to do?

6) Why is Harry so taken with Jess and her lifestyle? What are the benefits and drawbacks of being a prince? Would you make the same decision as Harry?

7) Is Kate manipulative, or is she just doing her job?

8) Paul, the man that runs the kebab truck, wonders what makes Britain what it is. What defines a country? When does it stop being a country?

9) How can you connect the events of this play to the current political climate in the United States?

10) Why do you think the citizens of the United Kingdom have supported a monarchy to this day? Do you support the monarchy in the UK? Why or why not?

11) If you were to write a play about the future of the United States, when would you set it? Why?

12) King Charles III is one of many pieces of fiction that have come out in the past few years showing inside Buckingham Palace. Why do you think artists are drawn to telling stories about British royalty? Why are audiences interested?

A portion of the King Charles III: Discussion Questions first appeared in American Conservatory Theatre’s performance guide series, Words on Plays, in 2016. For more information about Words on Plays, visit: www.act-sf.org/wordsonplays
**King Charles III: Glossary**

**Abdication** is the act of a monarch formally giving up authority. The most recent abdication in the United Kingdom was that of King Edward VIII in 1936. He gave up the crown to marry Wallis Simpson, an American in the process of divorcing her husband. Because of the scandal, the government strongly opposed the marriage, so Edward gave up the throne to marry her.

The desire to abolish the monarchy is known in the UK as republicanism. There is a sizable minority of republicans who believe that the country can’t be a true democracy unless it abolishes the monarchy.

**Albion** is the oldest known name for Great Britain. When Charles says “Albion oak,” he is probably referring to the English oak, long a symbol for Britons of both strength (oak trees were used to build Royal Navy ships) and royalty (before he became king, Charles II hid in an oak tree in 1651 to escape after the Battle of Worcester).

**Assent reserved** means that a monarch has withheld royal assent—his or her signature—on a bill. No bill can become a law until it receives the monarch’s signature. Although today the monarch technically retains the power to refuse to sign a bill, they are supposed to act on the advice of their ministers and sign. If the monarch were to refuse, it would create a constitutional crisis. The last time royal assent was reserved was in 1707, when Queen Anne (on the advice of her ministers) refused to sign a bill creating a militia in Scotland; she feared that the militia would be disloyal to Britain.

**The Blitz** was a period during World War II when Nazi Germany strategically bombed British cities from September 1940 to May 1941. London suffered widespread damage and the royal family earned admirers worldwide for their fortitude.

The British Empire declined throughout the twentieth century. There is no one moment that marks the empire’s definite end. At its most robust, it comprised 57 colonies, dominions, territories, or protectorates across the globe, leading to the famous saying, “The sun never sets on the British Empire.” Britain’s power began to dwindle during World War II, which destroyed the country’s industrial capacity. In 1947, India declared independence, and throughout the 1950s and ’60s, Britain’s depressed economy forced it to give up most of its remaining colonies. Many point to 1997 as the official end of the British Empire, when it finally gave up Hong Kong.

**Buckingham Palace** is the official home of the British royal family, located in the center of London.

**The Church of England** was created in the sixteenth century. For five hundred years after the Norman Conquest in the eleventh century, England was ruled in part by the monarchy and in part by the Roman Catholic Church. This worked well until King Henry VIII wanted to divorce his wife, and the pope forbade it. Henry VIII renounced Rome’s political power and declared himself head of the Church of England. Today, the monarch of the United Kingdom is still the head of the Church of England and is known as the defender of the faith.

Winston Churchill was the prime minister of the United Kingdom from 1940 to 1945 and from 1951 to 1955. Queen Elizabeth II was crowned during Churchill’s second term as prime minister.

**The Civil Service** is an administrative staff of officials who are appointed by the prime minister instead of elected by popular vote. Civil servants advise ministers on policy matters and help implement government policies. They are allowed to hold personal political opinions, but they cannot hold positions within political parties or publish their political views in print.

**The Commonwealth** refers to an organization of 53 states, most of which were once part of the British Empire. The Commonwealth was formalized in the 1949 London Declaration and includes Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

**The Conservative Party** is one of the two main political parties in the United Kingdom (the other being the Labour Party). It is comparable to the Republican Party in the United States. Most Tories (supporters of the Conservative Party) believe in preserving tradition, keeping taxes low, preventing Britain from being part of a European “super state,” maintaining the military, and retaining the country’s position as one of the world’s superpowers.

**Coronation Day** is the traditional ceremony in which the crown is placed upon the monarch’s head, but the ceremony isn’t necessary for one to become monarch. If the king or queen doesn’t want a ceremony, they don’t have to have one. Tradition holds that, immediately after the death of one monarch, the next in line ascends to the throne. This is the reason that the royal standard, the flag of the monarch, is never at half-mast.
The Daily Mail is a British tabloid newspaper. Most newspapers in the United Kingdom have a clear political slant; the Daily Mail aligns itself with the Conservative Party.

Dissolving the Parliament sounds revolutionary, but it’s actually a regular occurrence. Traditionally, the monarch has called for the dissolution of Parliament on the advice of the prime minister. The prime minister could do this whenever he or she wanted. After Parliament was dissolved, there would be an election to fill the House of Commons and form a new government. However, in 2011 Parliament passed the Fixed-Term Parliaments Act, which ruled that Parliament must be dissolved every five years.

Freedom of the press has been a consistent issue among British journalists since the printing press was created. Press regulation became especially problematic when newspapers proliferated during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and invasions of privacy, sensationalism, and inaccuracies increased. Since the 1930s, there have been multiple investigations regarding press regulation. Each of these has concluded that the best solution is self-regulation—an organization of industry professionals and laypeople to ensure high ethical standards among journalists. Critics argue that these organizations are ineffective because they have little power to punish, and because the organizations are run by self-serving newspaper owners. As the prime minister in King Charles III says, “Although we would prefer them in an ideal world to keep their house in order by themselves, this has been tried, so many times and each time failed.” In 2014, the Press Complaints Commission (PCC) shut down in the wake of a phone-hacking scandal. The PCC was replaced by the Independent Press Standards Organisation, which is the current press regulation body in the United Kingdom.

Great Britain refers to the single island that contains England, Scotland, and Wales. While Northern Ireland is also part of the United Kingdom, it is not part of the island of Great Britain.

The guards in front of Buckingham Palace are called the Queen’s Guard. When the monarch is in residence at the palace, there are four guards; at all other times there are two. These are the guards that wear the famous red tunics and towering bearskin hats.

James Hewitt is a former officer in the British Army infamous for being Princess Diana’s lover during her marriage to Charles in the 1980s and early ’90s. Some conspiracy theorists claim he is Prince Harry’s true father, because they both have red hair. Hewitt has denied this speculation. In 2002, he told the press, “There really is no possibility whatsoever that I am Harry’s father…When I met Diana, he was already a toddler.” Princess Diana’s former bodyguard, Ken Wharfe, confirmed this, explaining that Harry was born in 1984, but the princess didn’t meet Hewitt until 1986.

The House of Commons and the House of Lords are the two parts that make up the Houses of Parliament. Bills can be proposed by both the House of Commons and the House of Lords, but the House of Commons actually has more power; most laws start in the House of Commons, and the government is determined by whatever party holds the most seats there. In the House of Commons, members (called members of Parliament, or MPs) are elected by public vote; laws are proposed, amended, and voted down by majority vote within the House of Commons; and most members are affiliated with a political party. In the House of Lords, members (called peers) are either appointed by the monarch or inherit the title. They vote on legislation but can’t go against the will of the House of Commons. The peers keep their positions for life and tend to be more independent when it comes to political affiliation.

Kensington refers to Kensington Palace, the official residence of William, Kate, and their children, as well as Harry and several other members of the royal family. It is located in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea in London.

Kettled up is a reference to a police tactic in dealing with large, unruly crowds: protesters or demonstrators are “kettled up,” meaning they are confined to a small area.

The Labour Party is one of the two main political parties in the United Kingdom (the other being the Conservative Party). It is roughly comparable to the Democratic Party in the United States. Most supporters of the Labour Party believe in maintaining the welfare system, creating and maintaining social equality, and providing public services funded by taxes.

The man who rides the Clapham omnibus is a phrase that refers to an ordinary person.

The NHS, or the National Health Service, is the publicly funded healthcare system in the United Kingdom, financed mostly through taxation. The NHS provides healthcare for all legal UK citizens.
The oath is a series of questions that the monarch must answer at the coronation ceremony. The questions and answers change slightly over time. The questions are delivered by the archbishop of Canterbury, who has held this role since 1066.

“Out of date” refers to the five-pound note that Harry gives the owner of the kebab truck. The five-pound note features a picture of Queen Elizabeth II; because she has died, the note is now out of date.

Oxford, a city in southeastern England, is home to the University of Oxford, the utmost of your power maintain English-speaking world’s oldest university.

“Planned it was by her” refers to the fact that Queen Elizabeth herself has approved all of the preparations for her future funeral. Planning for this event is codenamed Operation London Bridge. Once a year, at night, security forces rehearse a royal funeral procession through the streets of London. There are protocols not only for the funeral arrangements (flowers, guests, hymns) but also for the chain of communication—including the Prince of Wales, the royal family, the prime minister, and the BBC.

The royal police is a reference to SO14 (Specialist Operations), the Royalty Protection branch of London’s Metropolitan Police Service. This is tasked with protecting the royal family and royal residences around the UK truck.

“Shall I be mother?” is an old-fashioned British phrase referring to the person who pours the tea out of the teapot.

The Sun is a tabloid newspaper published in the United Kingdom and Ireland. It aligns itself with the Conservative Party.

Tories—see The Conservative Party.

Trooping the Colour is a parade performed by regiments of the British and Commonwealth armies to celebrate the official birthday of the queen. She has two birthdays, a real one and an official one, because the weather in London tends to be bad on her real birthday, April 21. The tradition of monarchs having two birthdays dates back to George II in 1748, who felt that the weather on his November birthday would be too cold for the annual parade. Trooping the Colour is attended by many Britons as the parade moves from Buckingham Palace down the Mall toward Trafalgar Square. In 1981, during the Trooping the Colour ceremony, teenager Marcus Sarjeant fired six blank shots at the queen, who was riding on horseback. Sarjeant spent three years in a psychiatric prison and was released in 1984.

Unblinkered describes someone who has had their point of view expanded and is willing to consider and understand another opinion. The word comes from the fact that blinkers is another word for blinders, which are placed by horses’ eyes to prevent distraction.

“Unlike me, their ears, so rarely used / Are shriveled up and tiny” is a reference to Prince Charles’s famously large ears.

Wagamama is a British restaurant chain that serves pan-Asian cuisine.

“We cannot risk another murder case / Where phones belonging to the dead are hacked” is a reference to Milly Dowler, a teenage girl murdered in 2002. In 2011, the Guardian revealed that the News of the World (a newspaper owned by Rupert Murdoch) had illegally hacked into Dowler’s cell phone voice mail, which caused investigators and Dowler’s family to believe she might still be alive. This hampered the investigation and gave the Dowlers false hope. This was part of a larger crisis involving the News of the World hacking the phones of celebrities and politicians, but it wasn’t until the Milly Dowler scandal that the public became truly outraged.

Westminster Abbey is a Gothic-style church in Westminster, a borough of London. It has been the traditional location of royal coronations and burials of British monarchs since 1066.

A King Charles III Glossary first appeared in American Conservatory Theatre’s performance guide series, Words on Plays, in 2016. For more information about Words on Plays, visit: www.act-sf.org/wordsonplays
The phrase “theatre etiquette” refers to the special rules of behavior that are called for when attending a theatre performance.

Above all, it is important to remember that the actors on stage can see and hear you at the same time you can see and hear them. Be respectful of the actors and your fellow audience members by being attentive and observing the general guidelines below:

**Before you go:**
- Please help us create the appropriate soundscape by turning off your cell phone and other electronic devices (iPods, games, etc.). It can be very distracting to others, not to mention embarrassing to you, when your cell phone goes off during a performance. The lights from cell phones and other electronic devices are also a big distraction, so please, no text messaging.
- We ask that you spit out your gum before entering the theatre and leave all food and drinks in the lobby or the coat check.
- Please visit the restroom before the performance begins, as we don’t want you to miss our on any of the action.

**During the performance:**
- We want you to have honest reactions to what is happening onstage. You may laugh, applaud and enjoy the performance. However, please don’t talk during the performance; it is extremely distracting to other audience members and the actors. Save discussions with friends for intermission and after the performance.

**Thoughts about the importance of being an audience member from Shakespeare Theatre Company Artistic Director Michael Kahn**

“When you go to the theatre, you are engaging with other living, breathing human beings, having an immediate human response. In the theatre you sense that all of this may never happen again in this particular way.

As a member of the audience, you are actually part of how that’s developing—you have a hand in it … You are part of a community where you are asked to be compassionate, perhaps to laugh with or grieve as well as to understand people, lives and cultures different from your own.”
Resource List

Shakespeare Dictionaries

Books on Teaching Shakespeare

Books on William Shakespeare’s Life and Writing

Websites
Shakespeare Theatre Company—http://www.shakespearetheatre.org/education
ON SHAKEPEARE: Articles and information about Shakespeare’s life and world.
Teacher Curriculum Guides: Plot synopsis, character maps, lesson plans and discussion questions.

In Search of Shakespeare: Shakespeare in the Classroom—http://www.pbs.org/shakespeare/educators/
The companion website to Michael Wood’s four-part PBS series In Search of Shakespeare, this site includes extensive research about Shakespeare’s life and works, as well as interactive features.

Folger Shakespeare Library—http://www.folger.edu
Includes excellent resources for further reading about Shakespeare, as well as fun games and information designed specifically for students and teachers.

Shmoop Teacher Resources—http://www.shmoop.com
Learning Guides, Homework Help, Study tools and Test Prep

Standards of Learning
Participation in our student matinee program and the lessons and activities found in this curriculum guide support grade 8-12 Common Core standards in English Language Arts and The National Core Arts Standards for responding and connecting to Theatre Art. Primary content areas addressed include but are not limited to:

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