

**Theater at Monmouth  
2020 Shakespeare in Maine Communities Tour  
Teacher Resource Guide**



**Adapted and Directed by James Noel Hoban**

### **Inside This Guide**

<b>1</b>	From the Page to the Stage	<b>11</b>	Themes to Explore
<b>2</b>	My False O'erweighs Your True	<b>14</b>	Brief History of Montana
<b>3</b>	Who's Who in the Play	<b>15</b>	Collaborating on Design
<b>4</b>	About the Play	<b>16</b>	On William Shakespeare
<b>5</b>	The Substitute Lover	<b>17</b>	On Elizabethan England
<b>6</b>	A Problem Play	<b>18</b>	Performance in Shakespeare's Time
<b>7</b>	Shakespeare & Religion	<b>19</b>	Verse and Prose
<b>8</b>	Justice & Mercy & Genre	<b>20</b>	Before the Performance
<b>9</b>	When Words Fail	<b>21</b>	After the Performance
<b>11</b>	Themes to Explore	<b>22</b>	Resources for Teachers



Theater at Monmouth's production is part of Shakespeare for a New Generation, a national program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest.



Supported in part by The Onion Foundation a private philanthropic foundation based in Maine.

## FROM THE PAGE TO THE STAGE



John Gielgud as Angelo and Mary Barbara Jefford as Isabella in *Measure for Measure* 1950 Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon

expressively, and vocally exploring his words. Using performance-based activities will help students to build a richer understanding of the text and identify with the characters and conflicts in the plays.

Thank you for taking some of your classroom time to teach your students about *Measure for Measure*! If you need more information to support your preparation for the production, please call 207.933.2952 or email [boxoffice@theateratmonmouth.org](mailto:boxoffice@theateratmonmouth.org).

Enjoy the show!

Dawn McAndrews  
Producing Artistic Director  
Theater at Monmouth

This season, Theater at Monmouth's *Shakespeare in Maine Communities Tour* brings classic literature to students across Maine with a 90-minute version of *Measure for Measure*. The text was adapted to streamline the plot and help students connect more strongly to Shakespeare's verse, themes, and relevance to a modern audience. *Shakespeare in Maine Communities'* workshops and extended residencies offer students the opportunity to study, explore, and view classic literature through performance.

TAM's Education Tours and complimentary programming challenge 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 world.

Teacher Resource Guide articles and activities were developed to help students form a personal connection to the play before attending the production; Common Core-aligned activities are included to explore the plays in the classroom before and after the performance.

The best way to appreciate Shakespeare is to do Shakespeare. That means getting students up on their feet and physically,

# My False O'erweighs Your True...

## A synopsis of what happens in the play



*Measure for Measure* is a play about sex and law enforcement set in the city of Vienna. At the start of the play the Duke, who has been lax in enforcing laws for 14 years, appoints Angelo as the ruler of the town while he secretly goes undercover as a friar to observe the town's daily life. While Angelo is in charge, Claudio is arrested for having premarital sex...with his fiancée, Juliet. In Vienna, sex before marriage is one of the strictest laws so Angelo throws the book at Claudio sentencing him to death and Juliet is let free. Claudio asks his acquaintance, Lucio to get his sister, Isabella, from the convent to plead his case.

In the meantime, Angelo also enforces another unpopular law on brothels, bars, and prostitution which angers Mistress Overdone and some other bawds and clowns who were enjoying the 14 years of sexual licentiousness in Vienna as a way of making their income.

Isabella approaches Angelo and begs for Claudio to be released. Their passionate argument is a stalemate in terms of saving Claudio's life but arouses some passionate feelings in Angelo. He agrees to set Claudio free if Isabella agrees to have sex with him (p.s. he's a bit of a hypocrite). Isabella refuses because of her religious and moral objections and goes to speak with her brother about Angelo's offer and her brother's imminent death.

As this is happening the Duke, disguised as Friar Lodowick, interrupts the siblings' conversation to speak privately with Isabella. He tells her about the plight of Angelo's ex-fiancée, Mariana, (dumped by Angelo because her brother's ship sank with her brother and her dowry) and the Duke hatches a scheme for Angelo to think he's had sex with Isabella but instead will have sex with Mariana, so that Claudio (who had sex with his fiancée) can avoid hanging. This is called the "bed trick" and seems a little sketchy to modern audiences but the ladies both go for it finding no other options. The "trick" plays out as planned with everyone thinking they got what they wanted. Except until Angelo sends a letter to the prison saying, "Send me Claudio's head and don't be fooled if someone tells you I changed my mind." There's another guy in the jail waiting to be hanged, so the Duke (as Friar Lodowick suggests hanging him earlier than planned. Fortunately, another guy in the prison dies of mysterious fever, who looks kinda like Claudio, so they send Angelo his head instead. The Duke saves Claudio, but he tells Isabella that her brother is dead. Assumedly because he wants to hold all the cards until the very end.

The Duke gets everyone to meet at the town gates and, resuming his true identity, sentences Angelo to wed Mariana and then be put to death. Mariana and Isabella plead for Angelo's life; after all, justice is mostly served and forgiveness seems holier than an "eye for an eye." With all the pairs united, the Duke reveals that Claudio is alive, pardons Angelo and proposes to Isabella. All in a day's work for the Duke turned Friar turned Duke.

## WHO'S WHO IN THE PLAY

There are eight actors in TAM's production of *Measure for Measure*. To play the roles written by Shakespeare, most of the actors double—a convention also used in Shakespeare's time. For example, in our production, three actors play Provost.



**Escalus/ Provost 3 (Paul Haley):** Escalus is a lord at court, a kind-hearted man who does not approve of over-severity. When the Duke appoints Angelo to replace him, Escalus is named Angelo's second-in-command. He attempts to convince Angelo to be less severe, believing death to be too great a punishment for doing something by which all are tempted. Deeply loyal, he is outraged when Angelo's virtue is questioned, and even more so when he hears the Duke being slandered.



**Pompey/ Juliet/ Boy (Hannah Daly):** Pompey is Mistress Overdone's tapster, and helps her in her pimping. She agrees to become the executioner's assistant to gain her freedom. **Juliet** is Claudio's betrothed and a childhood friend of Isabella's, she slept with him since they were going to be married, and ended up pregnant. Very close to giving birth, she is remorseful when questioned by a priest.



**Angelo/ Provost 1 (Henry Hetz):** is a nobleman of Vienna chosen by the Duke to replace him during his absence. He is a morally rigorous puritan, inflexible, incorruptible, and well-known to be so. Given the Duke's full power during the latter's absence, he immediately begins to impose his own moral rectitude on everyone, closing the brothels and condemning Claudio to death for knocking up his fiancée.



**Lucio/ Abhorson (Kevin Aoussou):** Lucio is a fop well-acquainted with brothels, who enjoys a dirty joke and being in the spotlight. He goes, at Claudio's request, to tell Isabella of her brother's sentence and to ask her to plead for his life to Angelo, where he gives her good advice on how to do so. He disses the Duke when he is disguised as the Friar to not-so-great consequences for Lucio.



**Claudio/ Barnardine (Thomas Campbell):** Claudio is a young gentleman of Vienna. Being betrothed to Juliet and fully intending to marry her, though waiting for financial reasons, he sleeps with her and gets her pregnant. With Angelo enforcing the laws he finds himself arrested and scheduled to die. He respects his sister Isabella's abilities, and loves her though in the fear of death he is willing to trade her chastity for his life.



**Mistress Overdone/ Provost 2/ Mariana/ Francisca (Casey Turner):** Mistress Overdone is a madam. When her brothel is closed down by Angelo's order, she quickly opens another elsewhere. She feels very hard-done by, as a great number of men are ill, in the army, or too poor to be able to afford her services. She continues to ply her trade even after three warnings, and is arrested for it.



**Duke Vincentio (Ashanti Williams):** Duke Vincentio rules Vienna. He has slacked his duties and allowed the laws in his city to go unchecked. Not wishing to be seen as a tyrant by changing his mind on the subject, he goes on a trip, leaving his powers in the hands of a man who will reestablish the rigors of the law. He disguises himself as a monk to keep an eye on matters and learns a lot about his people and himself.



**Isabella (Erica Murphy):** Isabella is Claudio's sister, a devout novice to the order of Saint Clare. She spars with Angelo to convince him to spare Claudio's life and instead arouses him. When she rejects Angelo's lustful offer and her brother's pleas to save his life, she teams up with the disguised Duke. She gives no response to the Duke's proposal of marriage, though he asks her twice.

# ABOUT THE PLAY

## Sources and Background for *Measure for Measure*



Shakespeare's primary source for *Measure for Measure* was *The Right Excellent and Famous Historie of Promos and Cassandra: Divided into Commercial Discourses*, by George Whetstone, published in 1578. Whetstone had derived his plot from the Italian author Cinthio's collection of stories called *The Hecatommithi*, written in 1565. Although we have no direct proof that Shakespeare could read Italian, based on the frequency with which he used Italian works as source material, some of which were not even translated into English at the time, it is likely that Shakespeare did know Italian. In this case he probably read both Whetstone's version and the original work of Cinthio. Shakespeare follows the events in Whetstone's text closely, including the comic and bawdy sub-plot involving Mistress Overdone and her bordello. But

Shakespeare seems to have concluded that certain elements of Whetstone's play were unsuitable for his dramatic purposes. By introducing the Mariana story and the device of the bed-trick, he contrives to save the virtue of his heroine Isabella and, at the same time, does no disservice to Mariana, whose love for Angelo, it is made clear, had triumphantly survived the passage of time and his original dislike for her."

### "Some Rise by Sin, and Some by Virtue, Fall"

A once-great city is mired in economic and moral decay, its "strict statutes and biting laws" largely ignored by a populace who would rather explore the raunchier side of urban life. The city's leader, admitting his own culpability in the overly permissive atmosphere, goes on a personal mission, leaving the job of law enforcement to his pious, ascetic aide—whose response to the crisis is to levy draconian punishments upon a seemingly innocent man, then attempt to exact an unholy settlement from the man's sister, a young nun who desperately pleads his case.



This is the unsettled, chaotic world of *Measure for Measure*, long one of Shakespeare's most controversial "problem" plays, a virtuosic blend of low comedy, impending tragedy, and moral ambiguity. First presented in 1604, the play's classically comic structure (ending, as all good comedies of the era did, with a series of weddings) belied the very serious questions it posed: In a world beset by crisis, what kinds of authority should be given to our political leaders, and what exactly is a "just" punishment? What is the balance between justice and mercy? Between sensuality and rationality? Between duty to God and duty to family? Between church and state?

This hybrid of dramatic styles was deemed unwieldy by generations of critics after *Measure for Measure's* premiere; but modern audiences have found the play disturbingly prescient in its questioning of society's values and the conflicts among them. As our world becomes increasingly polarized economically, socially, and politically, its themes are timelier than ever. Although set in Vienna, Shakespeare obviously intended the play to reflect conditions in the London of his time, a fact immediately recognizable to his audience. We have chosen to set our production in a time and place that is similarly familiar to many: the American Frontier, specifically a fictional Vienna, Montana a boom town of Western expansion replete with economic challenges, misogyny, and a too-permissive ruler who allowed the law to go unchecked. Recent film and series on Netflix, HBO, and other providers with shows like *Deadwood* and *Westworld*, offer images of the type of society Shakespeare paints—providing a backdrop to this tale of corrupting power, moral excess, and religious zeal.

## The Substitute Lover or the “Bed Trick”



Mariana's substitution for Isabella in Angelo's bed (sometimes called the bed trick) has received considerable attention from scholars. Isabella has been sharply criticized for her willingness to allow Mariana to make such a sacrifice. The heroine's purity has been challenged on the basis of her easy compliance with the duke's scheme, which calls for Mariana to commit the very sin which so repulses Isabella. The Duke's character has been maligned for the perpetration of this vulgar trick. He is, critics charge, as immoral as the play's corrupt setting. Even the gentle Mariana has been attacked for her role in the deception.

Before making a judgment on the characters or their creator, however, it is important to gain an understanding of the conventions operating on Shakespeare's contemporary audience. When the play was written in 1604, it was customary to have a formal ceremony of betrothal some time before the actual wedding celebration. The betrothal involved repetition of

vows and gave conjugal rights to the betrothed. By this custom, it was no more immoral for Angelo and Mariana to share a bed than if they had actually been married.

Claudio and Juliet's secret betrothal, on the other hand, did not carry with it the conjugal rights since it was simply an exchange of promises, not formally witnessed or celebrated. For this reason, Claudio and Juliet are guilty of a crime and immorality, while Mariana's union with Angelo carries with it no stigma. An awareness of the custom of betrothal casts a new light on the play. Not only does it clear the Duke, Isabella, and Mariana of impurity, but it also has the effect of lessening Claudio's crime since there is only a question of a formal public betrothal between crime and convention.

The bed trick is admittedly a contrived bit of dramatic foolery, requiring an audience to believe that a woman can, without discovery, go to bed with a man who knows her and expects another. It further requires that an audience credit the woman's willingness to take part in such a deception after being heartlessly cast off by the man years previously. And finally, the existence of a Mariana who can be Isabella's proxy without smirching her own character is itself an unlikely bit of coincidence.

However, coincidence and the failure of a man to recognize his lover were established conventions of Renaissance drama. The deserted wife's return in disguise to her husband was traditional. Shakespeare's audiences were accustomed to accepting in the theater what they would have scoffed at in real life. The modern reader, then, should bear in mind that the bed trick would not have seemed as extraordinary to Shakespeare's audience as it does now.

Although contrived, it is certainly necessary. In order to bring the play to its final dramatic conclusion, while maintaining Isabella's virtue, Shakespeare had to devise a way to allow her to refuse Angelo's demands while making him think they had been met. Actual compliance would have stained Isabella's purity, damaging her as a symbol of good and destroying the dramatic effect of virtue set against corruption. A flat refusal would have meant that Claudio's execution would go forward unhindered, bringing the play to a conclusion with no opportunity for repentance, forgiveness, and the application of justice with mercy which together form the play's theme.

## Shakespeare's Measure for Measure: A Problem Play

Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* is referred to as one of Shakespeare's "problem plays." This term refers to three plays that Shakespeare wrote around the turn of the seventeenth century — *Measure for Measure* (1603), *All's Well that Ends Well* (1601), and *Troilus and Cressida* (1600, approx.) — that seem to be stylistically distinct from comedies, tragedies, and histories. These plays represent a transition in Shakespeare's style, generally accepted to have been between his golden age of comedies (*As You Like It*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, and *Twelfth Night*) and his period of high tragedy (*Othello*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*). His so-called "problem plays" are some of his least-known works, and some of his most difficult to classify.

The term "problem plays" was coined in 1896 by F. S. Boas in his book, *Shakespeare and his Predecessors*. Rather than implying that these plays are themselves problematic, the term "problem play," according to Boas, refers to plays that

. . . introduce us into highly artificial societies, whose civilization is ripe unto rottenness. Amidst such media abnormal conditions of brain and of emotion are generated, and intricate cases of conscience demand a solution by unprecedented methods. Thus, throughout these plays we move along dim untrodden paths, and at the close our feeling is neither of simple joy nor pain; we are excited, fascinated, perplexed, for the issues raised preclude a completely satisfactory outcome (p. 345).

Because these plays can neither be neatly classified as comedies or tragedies, Boas borrowed a term from the theater of his time and classified them as "problem-plays."

Shakespeare's audience would not have been accustomed to this blending of genres into tragicomedy. Comedies were plays that ended happily, usually in a marriage, in which a young couple must overcome obstacles to be together, clowns and servants banter and entertain the audience, and there is often some element of mistaken identity or deception. In the end, all is revealed and everyone ends happily. Tragedies were plays that ended in death and usually conformed to Aristotle's concept of tragedy and the tragic hero, who was admirable but had a fatal flaw that led to his downfall. Elizabethan history plays were a relatively new form, dramatizing actual historical events that occurred years earlier. Most of Shakespeare's tragedies focused on the story of the Tudor family, and how their ancestors came to power in England. "Problem-plays" fit into none of these categories, and are more similar to modern drama and "tragicomedies" than to the usual Elizabethan theater fare.

There is some speculation as to whether there was an event in Shakespeare's life that precipitated this change in his writing from comedies into problem plays, and eventually into tragedies. Shakespeare's father dies in 1601, but this could not have been more painful than the death of his only son Hamnet in 1596, several years earlier. Another theory is that Shakespeare was distraught over the failure of the conspiracy of Essex, after which the Earl of Essex was beheaded and Shakespeare's friend Southampton was imprisoned.

*Measure for Measure* itself might have been inspired by the ascendance of James I to the English throne after the death of Queen Elizabeth I. The 1604 Canons enacted by James I put harsh restrictions on those who wished to get divorced, pronouncing that no one could remarry if their spouse was still living. This statute was meant to end the "'epidemic' of 'disorderly marriages' and annulments and divorces." There are clear parallels between this statute and the harsh law enacted by Angelo at the beginning of the play, also intended to clean up the morals of Vienna. In fact, Shakespeare has never been to Vienna, and the city in *Measure for Measure* is more likely a fictionalized version of London at his time, teeming with brothels and drunks. By setting the play in fictionalized Vienna, Shakespeare could present it to James I in London without fear of retaliation.

Whatever the reason, Shakespeare made a stylistic shift in his writing around the turn of the century, changing his primary tone from festive comedy to tragicomic "problem play," to tragedy. The modern tone and feel of *Measure for Measure* itself is likely caused in part by its relatively new tragicomic genre, its ambiguity of tone, and its focus on contemporary social issues.

## Shakespeare and Religion in *Measure for Measure*



James VI of Scotland and James I of England

The title of *Measure for Measure* brings to mind justice. Pulled from the Gospel of Matthew, it reminds the reader that judgment falls not to man but to God: “Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you again.” In the early 1600s there was no separation between the Church and the State. Political power was considered a divine right. At the coronation of James I, in 1603, a sermon delivered by the Bishop of Winchester pronounced that even though royalty are not “Gods by Nature” they are “Gods by Office.” When James ascended the throne of England, he was no stranger to royal power, having been King of Scotland since childhood. A few years prior to his cousin Queen Elizabeth’s death, James wrote *The True Law of Free Monarchies*, a treatise on the monarch’s absolute power. Using religious language and biblical quotations, James explained how a monarchy, “as resembling the divinity, approacheth nearest to perfection” of any other style of political leadership.

The Church of England was relatively new when James came to power, the history of its growth played out, at times painfully, in his family. About thirty years before James was born to the ill-fated Mary Stuart, Henry VIII was declared head of the Church of England, effectively breaking with Catholicism. The Protestant Church of England was further solidified under Queen Elizabeth I. The Catholic Mary Stuart’s abdication from the Scottish monarchy and subsequent execution left the toddler James as the King, under the guidance of her Protestant half-brother.

By the time he took over rule in England, James was eager to rule over Scotland and England as “King of Great Britain.” As King of England, he stood at the head of the Church of England as well. Catholicism, however, had not disappeared from England despite persecution of priests. As he took power, James spoke of leniency toward practicing Catholics, at least those who worshiped in secrecy. In simple words, it was a case of don’t ask, don’t tell.

James brought with him more layers of government oversight introducing elements of state spying and higher levels of bureaucracy. Elizabeth was not a lenient ruler but James came into the monarchy with a show of power. Within the first few years of his reign the rule grew increasingly harsh as he faced a number of assassination attempts, the most well-known being Guy Fawkes’ attempt to blow up Parliament, known as the “Gunpowder Plot.” The public demonstrations of the law’s power created an environment not only of justice but of unlimited authority over the citizens. The government’s unlimited power was revealed both through the extensive enforcement and seemingly senseless clemency. Mercy was an important part of the theatrics, showing that the King’s government, like a God, has the ability to give and the ability to take away.

One of the communities James gave to liberally was the theatre. Under his patronage the Lord Chamberlain’s Men changed their name to The King’s Men. James’ taste for performances led to a boom in bookings for the King’s Men. They performed for royalty on average nearly 14 times a year. On December 26, 1604, the audience at Whitehall, including King James, watched *Measure for Measure*.

**Activity:** Discuss different ways our government has stepped in as a moral leader in our country both past and present. How do you think James may have reacted to Shakespeare’s dark vision of power and authority? Do you think the play is a defense of James’ use of divinely ordained absolute justice? Or is it a cautionary tale of how justice should be enforced by laws and the state? Why do you think so?



## Justice and Mercy and Genre

**Justice and Mercy:** *Measure for Measure* explores the spectrum from absolute justice to absolute mercy, with different characters representing different points along this spectrum. At the opening of the play, the Duke recognizes that the city has become a haven of sin due to his reluctance to enforce laws and his tendency to opt for mercy instead. He puts Angelo in charge, instructing him to enforce the laws but also to show mercy when needed, according to his humanity. He then goes into disguise to watch what happens.

Angelo subscribes to the idea of enforcing absolute justice. The ban on sex outside of marriage is intended to catch traffickers and sex workers, but instead they can evade the law while Claudio and Juliet — who are engaged to be married — are caught by it. Their sexual conduct is ruled illegal, because they are not married when Juliet becomes pregnant. Angelo decides to make an example of Claudio by enforcing the law.

Isabella, by contrast, represents absolute mercy. She begs for her brother Claudio's life at the beginning of the play, and later begs the Duke for mercy for Angelo even though she has been wronged by him. She advocates for his life not just out of a sense of forgiveness, but out of a desire for Marianna to be married to him to satisfy Marianna's desires and love. However, despite her strong desire for Claudio to be spared, she will not compromise her principles to save him.

This play raises questions about what is the right balance of justice and mercy, and presents characters advocating for various blends of the two extremes. Shakespeare presents one solution to all of the problems in the play, but it employs a *deus ex machina* character in the form of the Duke. As the curtain falls, consider if you would have taken a different approach to justice and mercy than Shakespeare did.

**Measure for Measure Genre:** Although included in the comedy section of the First Folio, *Measure for Measure* has been called tragedy, tragicomedy, satire, and allegory by its critics. Scholars have argued that the play is a comedy only by the force of the contrived happy ending. Its theme, characters, and action are tragic, and only the manipulations of the duke, who acts as a *deus ex machina*, bring the play to a happy conclusion. The eloquent poetic passages on the ephemerality of life and the fear of death's unknown realm are cited as indications of the tragic style.

The play has been related to Shakespeare's personal life. The poet is said to have been immersed in a tragic vein at the time *Measure for Measure* was written. He was in the midst of the creative flow which produced his great tragedies: *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*. A "sex nausea" is said to have overcome him at this period. Scholars have seen the evidence of collaboration in the play as implication that Shakespeare's devotion to the play was half-hearted, that he had no stomach for comedy at this time of his life. Biographical evidence is slight; it is only speculation to assume that the play suffered from its author's depression, sex revulsion, or tragic mood.

In considering what genre the play exemplifies, it is well to note that comedy in Shakespeare's time was chiefly identified by its happy ending. Conventions of romantic comedy of the 17th century included an idealized heroine, love as the basic theme, and a problem brought to happy conclusion. Tragicomedy offered a tragic theme with a happy close brought about by the intervention of a *deus ex machina*. Clearly, *Measure for Measure* might fall into either category and may reasonably be considered both romantic comedy and tragicomedy.

Numerous modern critics have objected to the abrupt appearance of a happy ending, but keep in mind that this was a convention of romantic comedy with which Shakespeare's audience was well acquainted.

## When words fail: A possible interpretation of Isabella's silence in *Measure for Measure* by Leandra Lynn



Karen Peakes (Isabella) and Mark Zeisler (Duke), *Measure for Measure*, directed by Aaron Posner, Folger Theatre, 2006. Photo by Carol Pratt.

Shakespeare's comedies have a winning formula: In the end, nobody dies and people get married! *Measure for Measure* is technically a comedy. At the end of the play, the Duke asks Isabella to marry him. She then delivers one of Shakespeare's most memorable responses: silence. Later, the Duke restates his proposal to Isabella, and again, Shakespeare gives her no words to express herself. To a modern audience, Isabella's silence is deafening.

There's no real way to know for sure what Shakespeare intended when he wrote *Measure for Measure*. However, an argument can be made that Isabella is unhappy about the proposal, and the likely upcoming marriage to the Duke.

One of the first things that Shakespeare tells us about Isabella is that she is about to become a nun. Claudio, her brother, says to Lucio in Act 1, Scene 3, "This day my sister should the cloister enter and there receive her approbation."

Shakespeare even goes as far as to name the order that Isabella has selected. Isabella wants to be a nun of the Order of Saint Clare, also known as the Poor Clares. This is a real order of nuns, and Shakespeare would have been at least somewhat aware of what type of religious order they were.

The Poor Clares are a strict order of women who withdraw from the outside world and live their days in quiet introspection, away from men. Francisca, the only nun Isabella interacts with onstage, even briefly goes through some of the rules that are expected of the nuns of Saint Clare in Act 1, Scene 4, "When you have vowed, you must not speak with men / But in the presence of the Prioress, / Then, if you must speak, you must not show your face; / Or if you show your face, you must not speak."

Isabella doesn't just want to be a nun; she wants to be a nun in a strict order that doesn't allow interaction with men. She even wishes that the order were stricter, saying earlier on in the same scene, that she wishes there were "a more strict restraint upon the sisterhood." It is reasonable to surmise that if Isabella doesn't want to interact with men, she probably also doesn't want to marry the Duke.



Pen and ink drawing by Louis Rhead for Charles Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare*, 1918. Folger Shakespeare Library.

Isabella first meets the Duke while he is disguised as a friar, when she is at the prison to comfort her condemned brother, Claudio. Isabella is a wreck. She was propositioned by Angelo, and she just got into an emotionally charged fight with Claudio, right before he is scheduled to die.

The Duke convinces Isabella that instead of letting her brother die, she should participate in a rather convoluted scheme that involves accepting Angelo's indecent proposal, and then participating in a bed trick: At the last minute, Mariana will sleep with Angelo instead, unbeknownst to Angelo. Later on, in Act 4, Scene 1, the Duke rationalizes this deception by saying to Mariana, "To bring you thus together 'tis no sin, | Sith that the justice of your title to him | Doth flourish the deceit."

Until meeting the Duke, Isabella has been a pillar of morality and clearly lives by a strict code of ethics. A devoutly religious woman like Isabella could reasonably be aghast when she realizes that the Duke has been pretending to be a holy man, and that he has even heard confession of prisoners.

One of the Duke's most deplorable actions towards Isabella occurs in Act 4, Scene 3. The Duke and the Provost have just conspired to secretly save Claudio. When the Duke hears Isabella coming, he decides that instead of telling her that Claudio is alive, he will tell her that Claudio is dead. His reasoning is that he should keep this information from her, "To make her heavenly comforts of despair | When it is least expected." In the final scene, after the friar is revealed to be the Duke, he still doesn't give up this charade. Instead, he remarks on how unfortunate it is that he wasn't able to save Claudio. The Duke not only lies to Isabella, but does so repeatedly, clearly to manipulate her emotions.

Ultimately, Isabella doesn't say yes to the Duke's proposals. However, it is unlikely that she would feel that she could say no. The Duke is the highest authority in Vienna. His two proposals in Act 5, Scene 1 are not questions, but rather commands. He first says, "Give me your hand and say you will be mine." When Isabella does not verbally accept his offer of marriage, the Duke later tries again, asserting, "What's mine is yours, and what is yours is mine."

Even if the Duke thinks that he is asking Isabella to marry him, it is at least plausible that Isabella could feel that she has no other options due to their inherent power imbalance. In a way, the Duke propositions Isabella as Angelo does earlier in the play, and Isabella might recall her own line from Act 2, Scene 4: "To whom should I complain?"

## Themes to Explore in *Measure for Measure*

Theater at Monmouth's production of *Measure for Measure* is set in the northern plains of the American Frontier in the 1890s. Western Expansion was well underway and the railroads had just found their way to the sleepy and somewhat lawless town of Vienna, Montana. Justice was meted out by Sheriffs and Judges for hire and often, the wealthiest person in town held all the cards.

### Justice and Judgment

---

When a corrupt deputy sentences a man to death for the crime of fornication, Shakespeare asks us to consider whether or not morality can or should be legislated. On the one hand, the play warns that men and women don't necessarily have the right to pass judgment on their fellow human beings. At the same time, *Measure for Measure* suggests that a person who commits a crime (or sins), should be made to pay; either by making some sort of restitution or by suffering an amount that's commensurate with the suffering they have caused.



#### Questions About Justice and Judgment

- Explain why Claudio has been sentenced to death. Is the sentence just?
- How does the title, *Measure for Measure*, speak to the theme of "Justice and Judgment" in the play? Also, describe the relationship between religion and law.
- Does the play think morality should be regulated by the government? Do *you* think it should be?

#### Chew on This

In the end, *Measure for Measure* promotes mercy and temperance rather than an "eye for an eye" system of justice. Although *Measure for Measure* acknowledges that social problems related to the sex industry exist, it also argues that sex (and morality in general) should not be regulated by the government.

### Sex

---



Sex is a big deal in this dark play and it's often associated with death, decay, and corruption. In Vienna, brothels are a dime a dozen, the spread of venereal disease is rampant, and the numbers of illegitimate children are on the rise (social problems that also plagued Shakespeare's London). Despite the fact that prostitution and fornication are illegal, it often seems like the entire city of Vienna is engaged in illicit sexual activity. While the play acknowledges that illegitimate children and the spread of STDs are pressing social concerns, *Measure for Measure* also questions whether or not the government should be involved in regulating sexuality.

#### Questions About Sex

- Why are all the brothels being torn down in Vienna?
- Discuss Isabella's attitude toward sex and explain why she wants to become a nun.
- What's the play's attitude toward Vienna's sex laws?

### Chew on This

In *Measure for Measure*, sex is nearly synonymous for death.

Part of what appeals to Isabella about becoming a nun is that life in a convent will offer shelter from Vienna's rampant, hyper-sexuality.

### Mortality

---



*Measure for Measure* is a play obsessed with death, both physical and spiritual. On the subject of mortality, Claudio delivers one of the greatest speeches in all of Shakespeare. For many characters, death goes hand in hand with sex and marriage. At other times, the play's view of mortality is more flippant than serious, as when Barnardine insists he's too hungover to be executed and when Pompey declares that a good hanging is the best cure for a hangover.

### Questions About Mortality

- What is Claudio's attitude toward death?
- Why do you think so many characters in the play equate sex with death?
- How does Barnardine's refusal to be executed create meaning in the play? In other words, why do you think Shakespeare includes the Barnardine plot in the play?

### Chew on This

Barnardine's blunt and comical refusal to be put to death draws out attention to the Duke's hypocrisy and immorality. For Isabella, sex is an act that's worse than physical death.

### Marriage

---

As we know, all Shakespearean comedies work their way toward endings that culminate in one or more marriages. This is also true of *Measure for Measure*, but, in this play, marriage doesn't necessarily bring about a happily ever after. For many characters, marriage is a form of punishment (literally and figuratively). For others, it's a fate worse than torture or death, making *Measure* one of the most cynical plays about the nature of marriage.



### Questions About Marriage

- Discuss the implications of Lucio's attitude toward being forced to marry a prostitute.
- Why do you think Isabella is silent when the Duke proposes to her?
- What does Claudio mean when he says that Juliet is "fast [his] wife" (1.2.146)?

### Chew on This

Lucio believes that marrying a prostitute is a fate worse than torture because being hitched to a promiscuous woman will compromise his masculinity. Isabella's silence (after the Duke's marriage proposal) forces the audience to wonder whether or not marriage is the means to a happy ending.

## Religion

---

The play dramatizes Christian doctrine in a prominent, in-your-face kind of way. In particular, Shakespeare invokes the concepts of sin, atonement, judgment, and mercy. The title, *Measure for Measure*, comes from the Gospel of Matthew and this biblical passage also informs the main plot, in which a hypocritical deputy sentences a man to death for having sex with his fiancée and then turns around and propositions a young woman. The play also features a Duke who spends most of his time disguised as a holy friar, a novice nun obsessed with virginity, and a man whose harsh and judgmental attitude resembles that of the 16th-century Puritans.



### Questions About Religion

- Discuss the relationship between sin and crime in the play.
- Why do you think the Duke disguises himself as a friar?
- To what biblical passage does *Measure for Measure* allude? Where in the play does this biblical allusion surface?

### Chew on This

*Measure for Measure's* critique of Angelo's Puritanical rigidity is also a critique of religious extremism in general. Duke Vincentio fashions himself as an all-knowing, justice delivering figure; when he disguises himself as a friar and takes confession, his behavior is more sacrilegious than anything else.

## Gender

---



In *Measure for Measure*, three major female characters have speaking roles: a prostitute who's arrested for running a brothel, a novice who's blackmailed by a corrupt deputy, and a woman jilted for not having a sufficient dowry. Shakespeare creates limited roles for these figures, prompting the audience to consider more generally a woman's place in society. Although these characters inhabit vastly different spaces in the social spectrum, they all have one thing in common—each is a victim of patriarchal authority.

### Questions About Gender

- Discuss the kinds of roles women play in *Measure for Measure*.
- What does Angelo's behavior toward Isabella and Mariana suggest about the relationship between gender and power?
- Explain Lucio's reasoning when he objects to marrying the mother of his child. What does this suggest about his attitude toward women?

### Chew on This

The roles of female characters are purposely limited in *Measure for Measure*, which suggests that social roles for 16th-century women are limited as well. Mistress Overdone is the quintessential “unruly” woman. As a prostitute who runs an illegal brothel, she operates outside the realm of masculine authority; until she's arrested and thrown in jail.

## Brief History of Montana



Native Americans were the first inhabitants of the area to become known as the state of Montana. Tribes include the Crows in the south-central region, the Cheyenne in the southeastern part of the state, the Blackfeet, Assiniboine, and Gros Ventres in the central and north-central areas, and the Kootenai and Salish in the western sector. The Pend d'Oreille were found around Flathead Lake, and the Kalispel occupied the western mountains.

The Lewis and Clark Expedition of 1804-1806 was the first group of white explorers to cross Montana. Hard on the heels of the expedition arrived the fur trappers and traders. Trappers brought alcohol, disease, and a new economic system to native populations. The fur trade was mostly over by the 1840s due to dwindling supplies of beaver and the loss of popularity of the beaver hat.

Roman Catholic missionaries followed the trappers into Montana. They established Saint Mary's Mission in the Bitterroot Valley, thought to be the first permanent settlement in Montana. They also promoted agriculture and built a sawmill. The discovery of gold brought many prospectors into the area in the 1860s, and Montana became a territory in 1864. The rapid influx of people led to boomtowns that grew rapidly and declined just as quickly when the gold ran out.

As more white people came into the area, Indigenous People lost access to traditional hunting grounds, and conflicts grew. The Sioux and Cheyenne were victorious in 1876 at the Battle of the Little Bighorn, and Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce won a battle in the Big Hole Basin (1877). Yet, in the end, the Indians could not hold out against the strength of the United States Army.

Miners weren't the only early settlers in Montana. Cattle ranches began flourishing in western valleys during the 1860s as demand for beef in the new mining communities increased. After 1870 open-range cattle operations spread across the high plains, taking advantage of the free public-domain land. During the 1880s railroads crossed Montana, and the territory became a state in 1889.



Cattle and sheep ranches continued to take advantage of Montana's abundant grasslands. Passage of the Enlarged Homestead Act in 1909 brought tens of thousands of homestead farmers into the state looking for inexpensive land. Wheat farming was popular until an extended drought, and a drop in market prices after World War I, ruined many farmers. The homestead "bust" forced many farmers to abandon Montana.

Post-war or "modern" Montana (1945-2000) has been characterized by a slow shift from an economy that relies on the extraction of natural resources to one that is service-based. Such traditional industries as copper, petroleum, coal, and timber have suffered wild market fluctuations and unstable employment patterns. Agriculture has remained Montana's primary industry throughout the era. After 1970 tourism supplanted mining as the state's second-largest industry.

Montana's post-war society has evolved significantly during the "modern" era. Still predominantly white, it has experienced the building of bridges with Indigenous communities, the acceptance of immigrants, the development of a Hutterite network, and the emergence of white-supremacist cells. Population shifts have loaded most of Montana's people in the western one-third of the state and "emptied out" eastern Montana's vast spaces, and a drop in population cost Montana a U.S. House seat in the 1990s. The state's population only surpassed one million in 2012.

# COLLABORATING ON DESIGN CONCEPT

This activity will provide your students with insight into theatrical design and practical experience in the creative process that stage designers use when establishing the world of a play.

**Essential Question:** How can we communicate the specific world of a play to an audience using characterization and analysis of the text?

## Objectives:

- Examine the plot, characters, and themes of the play
- Explore *what happens in the play* and *what the play is about* to inform design choices
- Analyze design choices based on playwright's intentions and relevancy to a modern audience

**Overview:** The job of theatrical designers is to support the director's vision and interpret the playwright's intentions by using costumes, sets, lights, and sound to create the world of the play for a modern audience. Each designer's work should:

- Evoke the mood and tone of the production
- Specify the time and place
- Clarify relationships between characters

Designers read the play many times searching for clues contained in the text about the look and feel of the play. They research the period in which the play was written as well as analyzing the plot and characters for visual motifs. The design team meets with the director to brainstorm a specific concept or approach to the play. The designers collaborate to ensure that all of the elements come together in a cohesive manner.

## Activity:

1. Divide students into teams of five with each member assuming the role of one of the artistic team for the production: director, sets, costumes, lights, and sound. Ask students to discuss the plot, character, time and place, and overall concept for the production.
  - a. Determine the mood of the production from beginning to end. How might it influence the design?
  - b. Decide where to set *Measure for Measure* to make it the most relevant for your audience?  
(Coaching) Remind students that the concept must work for the entire play—not just certain scenes.
  - c. What images or motifs occur repeatedly throughout the play? How would you show these onstage? What are the different locations of the play?
2. Once a setting is decided, ask each group to research the time period in order to be as authentic as possible in creating the world of the play.
3. Each member of the team should produce a creative representation of their design (a poster, sound clips, a collage, fabric swatches, and so on).
4. Ask each group member to write a design/director statement in support of the concept, including the historical research that supports their decisions.
5. Display the concept boards as a team and have each team present their concept to the class.

**Reflection:** After students see the production, ask them to reflect on the design choices made by the TAM team. Compare and contrast TAM's production concept with the students' vision for the play. How were the designer choices similar or different? How did they serve the play?



## ON SHAKESPEARE

No man's life has been the subject of more speculation than William Shakespeare's. For all his fame and celebrity, Shakespeare's personal history remains a mystery. We know a man named William Shakespeare was baptized at Stratford upon Avon on April 26, 1564, and was buried at Holy Trinity Church in Stratford on April 25, 1616. Tradition holds that he was born three days earlier, and that he died on his birthday—April 23—but this is perhaps more romantic myth than fact.

Scholars assume that Shakespeare went to grammar school, since his father was first a member of the Stratford Council and later high bailiff. A grammar school education would have meant that Shakespeare was exposed to the rudiments of Latin rhetoric, logic, and literature.

Church records tell us that banns (announcements) were published for the marriage of a William Shakespeare to an Ann Whatley in 1582. On November 27 of the same year a marriage license was granted to 18-year-old William and 26-year-old Anne Hathaway. A daughter, Susanna, was born to the couple six months later. Twins, Hamnet and Judith, were born soon after. We know that Hamnet died in childhood on August 11, 1596. We don't know how the young Shakespeare came to travel to London or how he first came to the stage.

Whatever the facts may be, it is clear that in the years between 1582 and 1592, William Shakespeare became involved in the London theatre scene as an actor and playwright. By 1594, Shakespeare was listed as a shareholder in the Lord Chamberlain's Men, one of the most popular acting companies in London. He was a member of this company for the rest of his career, which lasted until 1611. When James I came to the throne in 1603, he issued a royal license to Shakespeare and his fellow players, inviting them to call themselves the King's Men. In 1608, the King's Men leased the Blackfriar's Theatre in London. This theatre, which had artificial lighting and was probably heated, served as their winter playhouse. The famous Globe Theatre was their summer performance space.

In 1616 Shakespeare's daughter Judith married Thomas Quiney, the son of a neighbor in Stratford. Her father revised his will six weeks later; within a month he had died. The revised version of William Shakespeare's will bequeathed his house and all the goods to his daughter Susanna and her husband Dr. John Hall, leaving Judith and Thomas only a small sum of money; his wife, who survived him, received the couple's second best bed.

In the years since Shakespeare's death, he has risen from obscurity to the most read, adapted, and translated writer of all time. In the 1800s, his plays were so popular that many refused to believe that an actor from Stratford had written them. To this day some believe that Sir Francis Bacon or Edward De Vere, the Earl of Oxford, was the author. Still others prefer to believe that Walter Raleigh or Christopher Marlowe penned the lines attributed to Shakespeare. While most people are content to believe that genius can spring up in any social class or setting, the gap between the known facts and the myths that surround Shakespeare's life leaves ample room for speculation.



William Shakespeare

## ON ELIZABETHAN ENGLAND



Portrait of Queen Elizabeth by George Gower

The age of Shakespeare was a great time in English history. During the reign of Elizabeth I (1558—1603), England emerged as the leading naval and commercial power of the Western world, consolidating this position with the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. During this time, Elizabeth I firmly established the Church of England (begun by her father Henry VIII after a dispute with the Pope). London in the 16th century underwent a dramatic transformation; the population grew 400% between 1500 and 1600, swelling to nearly 200,000 people in the city proper and outlying region by the time an emerging artist from Stratford came to town. A rising merchant middle class was carving out a productive livelihood, and the economy was booming.

During Shakespeare's lifetime, England also experienced a tremendous cultural revival. This so-called English Renaissance found expression in architecture, music, literature, and drama. Shakespeare both drew inspiration from high and popular culture of the English Renaissance. Popular entertainment during the 16th century tended to be boisterous and often violent. Many men, women, and children attended public executions of criminals that took place on a regular basis, and persons of all social classes and genders attended theatre performances. The trade of bookmaking flourished during the period as public education fueled the appetite for great works in print.

During the years 1590-1593, England suffered from an outbreak of terrible proportions; the bubonic plague or "Black Death" claimed so many lives that English society stood on the verge of collapse. Many businesses, including theatres, closed, in part to keep people from spreading the disease and in part because of the labor shortage that resulted from such widespread illness and death. Once the epidemic subsided, the theatres reopened and quickly regained their former popularity.

This explosion of commerce and culture lasted throughout Elizabeth's reign and into that of her successor, James I. James' rule brought many changes to English life; the two most pivotal were a bankrupt economy and an intense dissatisfaction from a minority religious group—the Puritans. In September 1642, the Puritan Parliament issued an edict that forbade all stage plays and closed the theatres; an act that effectively brought to a close the Elizabethan Renaissance. Theatres rapidly fell into disrepair and neglect until the Restoration in 1660.

In writing his plays and sonnets, William Shakespeare drew ideas from many different sources. His eye for detail and his understanding of human nature enabled him to create some of the most enduring works of drama and poetry ever produced. But his work also provides an insightful commentary on 16th-century English values, life, history, and thought.



## PERFORMANCES IN SHAKESPEARE'S TIME

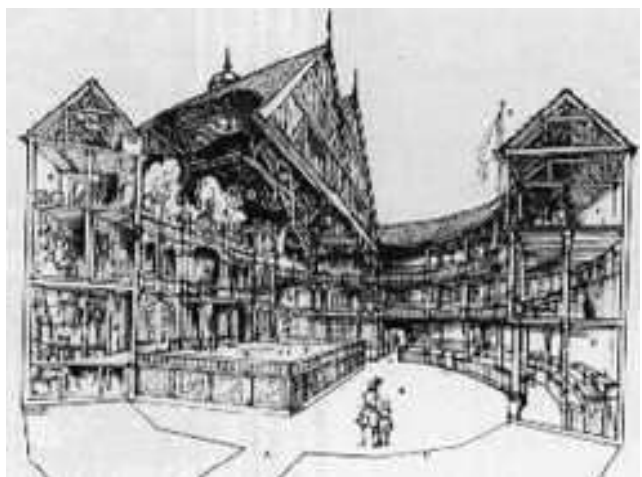


In Shakespeare's day theatre was the most popular form of entertainment. The theatre district was located in Bankside, just outside of London across the Thames. Bankside was a seedy part of town known for its taverns, brothels, gambling houses, and bear baiting arenas. Playhouses were built to accommodate an audience of almost 3,000 people sitting in boxes, benches on the stage, or standing in the pit directly in front of the actors. As there was no electricity for lighting, performances started at 2:00pm to make the most of daylight.

All classes came to the theatre; in one audience you could see nobleman, court dandies, and young apprentices. To pack the audiences, playhouses undersold all other popular entertainment—which included bear baiting arenas. A day at the Elizabethan theatre cost just one penny—

equivalent to the price of a movie ticket today. For twopence or threepence more a patron could purchase a seat in the gallery and rent a cushion.

In a typical season a theatre company might play six days a week, forty-nine weeks a year, and perform more than forty plays, over half of them brand new. Shakespeare's company, The Lord Chamberlain's Men (renamed The King's Men after James I took the throne), was considered the most talented company of the time. Acting was not a well-respected profession at this time, and women were not allowed to perform on stage; boys performed all female parts, including Juliet and the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*. In a day when acting paid enough for the average actor to just get by, the Lord Chamberlain's Men did so well one or two company members became prosperous middle-class citizens. Shakespeare was writing for the stage in a time where theatre was a fast-paced popular form of entertainment attended by courtiers and whores, lawyers and cutpurses, tradesmen, and servants.



# VERSE AND PROSE

## Iambic Pentameter

Shakespeare wrote much of his dialogue in a form of poetry, following the rules regarding rhythm and meter that were commonly used in his time. The form he used is called iambic pentameter [call out]. “Iambic” means a line of iambs; iambs are two syllables together, the first one is unstressed and the second is stressed. For instance, say the word ‘today’—notice how the ‘day’ seems stronger than the ‘to’? Try reversing the stresses and see how it sounds. “Pentameter” refers to the number of iambs in the line. Penta is the Greek word for five—think about the Pentagon and how many sides it has—so there are five iambs in each line.

So iambic pentameter feels like a heartbeat: Short, **Long**; Short, **Long**; Short, **Long**; Short, **Long**; Short, **Long**. An actor uses scansion to interpret the meter of a piece of verse. It can tell the reader, the actor, and the audience important information about the character.

### ROMEO

But **soft**, what **light** through **yonder window breaks**?

Actors use the notation “U” for unstressed syllables and “ / ” for stressed:

U / U / U / U / U /  
But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?

Actors use the meter as a clue to discover what Shakespeare's characters are feeling. The stressed words are usually the most important (or “operative”) words in a verse line. But sometimes the iambic pentameter lines are “irregular” (meaning they don’t have 10 unstressed and stressed syllables) giving the actor another clue. For example, from *Hamlet*:

### HAMLET

To be, or not to be: that is the question,

U / U / U / U / U / U  
To **be**, or **not** to **be**: that **is** the **question**,

Shakespeare could easily have had the line end with “quest” instead of “question” making it a regular line of verse. However, to show Hamlet’s state of questioning and imbalance Shakespeare gives the actor a line with an extra beat—11 syllables—to emphasize how he is feeling. This is called a feminine ending (because it ends unstressed and is therefore weaker). An actor might also choose to flip the stresses after the full stop in the center of the line (called a caesura), creating a trochee (a stressed/unstressed foot).

## Prose

Shakespeare wrote his plays using two styles—verse and prose. Verse, the style used most by Shakespeare, is text written with a meter or rhythm. Prose is text written without meter or rhythm. Prose is a more common form of speech, sounds more natural, and does not follow the rules or form of poetry. Prose is most often found in the comedies where servants or lower classes (or character's talking about “lewd” subjects) speak in prose. Shakespeare often uses the switch from verse to prose (or back) to indicate a change in emotion or mood within a scene. In *Measure for Measure* Lucio switches from prose to verse and back again in the scene where he tells Isabella about the plight of her brother. Shakespeare’s shift from Prose to Verse (and verse to prose) provides a new and different way to convey not only wit and humor but also great depth of feeling and character.

# BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE

Before watching the production, have students reflect on the following questions, either in a large group, small group, or individually in a journal.

## 1. The Things We Do for Love

This play deals with many types of love, including familial love, benevolent love, Christian love, relationship love, and lust. Isabella must decide what to do when she is asked to prioritize one over the other. When these come into conflict with each other in your life, what do you do?

## 2. The Quality of Mercy

In this play, Isabella is asked to give up her post as a novice nun and go against her religion to save her brother's life. What sacrifices have you been asked to make in your life? What would you give up to help someone you love?

## 3. An Eye for An Eye?

One ruler in this play is intent on dispensing punishment when people break the law, while the other gives out sentences that better fit the crime. How do we deal with punishment in our criminal justice system? If you were in charge, what would you change?

## 4. Setting the Scene: Staging Act 1 Scene 1

When exploring Act 1 Scene 1 up on our feet in rehearsals, the company played with various ideas in order to decide on the extent of the social hierarchy in the scene, which sets the tone for the whole production. You could try similar ideas in your virtual classroom:

- Divide your class into groups of three. Give each student the text of Act 1 Scene 1. Ask students to cast themselves as Duke Vincentio, Lord Angelo, and Lord Escalus, and then read through the scene.
- Ask students to pick out one thing that Lord Angelo says about himself, and one thing which someone else says about him in the scene.
- Ask students to imagine that two photographs are taken of Lord Angelo. In the first photograph, he is seen as others see him. Give students a few minutes to create that photograph of Lord Angelo as a freeze frame, using the quote they have chosen as inspiration.
- Now explain that in the second photograph, Lord Angelo is seen as he sees himself. Again, give students a few minutes to create that photograph as a freeze frame, using the quote they have chosen as inspiration.
- Ask students to present their photos, using the chosen quote as a title.
- Explain that there is no right or wrong way of interpreting the character, and that close investigation of the text is the way in which all theater companies makes choices about the characters, just as they have done.
- Ask students to do the same for Duke Vincentio and Lord Escalus.

# AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

## 1. #MeToo

Ask students to read the following article about the relationship between *Measure for Measure* in Shakespeare's time and our own. If possible, divide students into groups to discuss the article and the play? What aspects of the play did they find most problematic? How did the author of the article compare the actions of the fictitious characters in the play to people living and sexually harassing women today? Do students believe the assertion that "*Measure for Measure* shows us how we lie to ourselves about our actions"?

<https://www.vox.com/culture/2017/11/15/16644938/shakespeare-measure-for-measure-weinstein-sexual-harassment-play-theater>

## 2. Your False O'erweighs My True

Ask students to write a response to the follow essay prompt (adapted from the 1991 AP Exam): Many plays and novels use contrasting places (for example, two countries, two cities or towns, two houses, or the land and the sea) to represent opposing forces or ideas that are central to the meaning of the work. How, in *Measure for Measure*, does Shakespeare contrast two such people, Angelo and Isabella? Discuss how their situations differ, how their response to their role in society differ, how the language each uses in the play differs, and how their contrast contributes to the meaning of Shakespeare's work.

## 5. The Disguises We Wear

In this play, characters' identities – the "Good Duke," the "Chaste Nun," and the "Loving Brother" - are called into question. Think about the identity labels you have had. Have you questioned these throughout your life so far? For example, might getting a bad grade make you question your identity as a "Good student"?

## 3. All the World's a Stage

Ask students to review a summary of each of the five acts of *Measure for Measure*. Ask students to work independently or in small groups to create a three-minute version of each act, using only Shakespeare's words. Choose carefully the lines from each act that carry the most important information and advance the story. Then, record and edit together the five three-minute versions. When all students are done, you will have several 15-minute versions of *M4M*. Afterwards, discuss both the process of adaptation and how each abridgement compared to the full-length performance.

## 6. Suit the Action to the Word

The director and design team for TAM's *Measure for Measure* had a concept, or artistic vision, for this production. Have students write a review of *Measure for Measure* describing what they thought the story of the play was, and how the set and costumes helped to tell the story. In their reviews, students should select a particular scene that exemplifies their opinions. Share the reviews in class and discuss the similarities or differences of opinion. Collect all the reviews and send to the Theater at Monmouth Education Department.

# RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

## Books on Shakespeare and *Measure for Measure*

- Asimov, Isaac. *Asimov's Guide to Shakespeare*. Doubleday, 1978
- Cahn, Victor L. *The Plays of Shakespeare: A Thematic Guide*. Greenwood Press, 2001
- McDonald, Russ. *The Bedford Companion to Shakespeare*, St. Martin's Press, 1996
- Pritchard, R.E. *Shakespeare's England*. Sutton Publishing Limited, 1999
- Bradley, Lynne. *Adapting Measure for Measure for the Stage*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2010
- Halio, Jay L., editor. *Critical Insights: Measure for Measure*. Pasadena, CA.: Salem Press, 2012

## Useful Historical Context

- 1599: *A year in the life of William Shakespeare* by James Shapiro. Faber, 2005
- *Shakespeare, the Biography* by Peter Ackroyd. Chatto and Windus, 2005
- *In Search of Shakespeare* by Michael Wood. BBC Books, 2003
- *Still Harping on Daughters: Women and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare* by Lisa Jardine. Brighton: Harvester, 1983
- *The Woman's Part: Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare* by Lenz, Greene and Neely. University of Illinois, 1984

## Books on Teaching Shakespeare

- Doyle, John and Ray Lischner. *Shakespeare for Dummies: A Reference for the Rest of Us!* New York: Hungry Minds, Inc. 1999.
- Mowat, Barbara and Paul Werstine. Folger Shakespeare Library. *Measure for Measure*. New York: Washington Square Press. 1997.
- Gibson, Rex. *Teaching Shakespeare*. Cambridge University Press, 1998

## Websites

- PBS's *In Search of Shakespeare* <http://www.pbs.org/shakespeare/educators/>
- Folger Shakespeare Library <http://www.folger.edu>
- MIT Shakespeare: Complete Works, <http://the-tech.mit.edu/Shakespeare/>

## Common Core Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy addressed in the Guide: Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening

- Comprehension and Collaboration
  - Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas, and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
  - Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
  - Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.
- Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas
  - Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
  - Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.
  - Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.