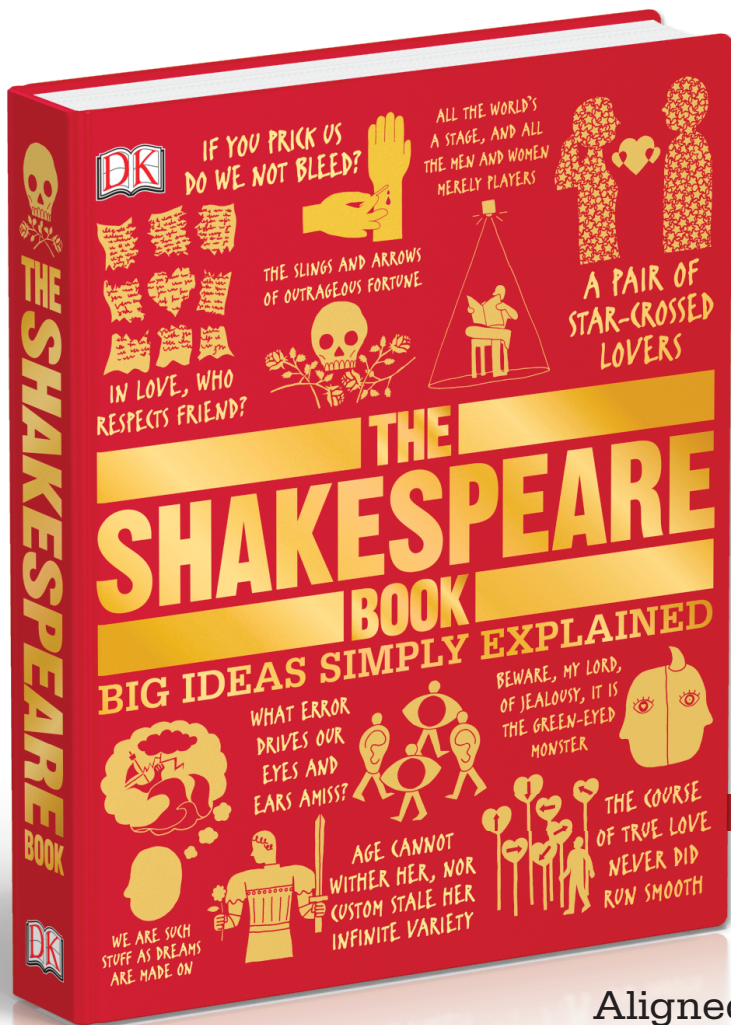


# THE SHAKESPEARE BOOK

BIG IDEAS SIMPLY EXPLAINED



THE **VISUAL** GUIDE  
TO UNDERSTANDING  
SHAKESPEARE

## TEACHER'S GUIDE

Aligned with the Common Core standards  
by Kathleen Odean



A WORLD OF IDEAS:  
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*The Shakespeare Book* brings together a wealth of information on the plays and poetry of William Shakespeare, beautifully illustrated with numerous photographs from film and theater productions. This comprehensive volume offers many connections with the Common Core State Standards, which include literature standards that specifically refer to Shakespeare. His plays and poetry are the kind of rich, complex texts that warrant the close reading required by the standards.

*The Shakespeare Book* provides a perfect jumping-off point for further analysis of Shakespeare's writing as well as a handy resource for finding films to enrich students' understanding of the plays.

The book opens with an overview of Shakespeare's life and work, followed by three major sections on his years as a writer. Each chronological section starts with a biographical sketch of those years, couched in historical context, with a timeline that lays out events in Shakespeare's life along with important political and social highlights of the time.

Within the major sections, each play from that era has a timeline and substantial synopsis with a discussion of the play's impact. Sidebars summarize characters, themes, and setting, and describe sources Shakespeare used. For most of the works, a "Legacy" sidebar lists responses, adaptations, and productions of the play. Shakespeare's poetry also gets its due, with several pages on each of his long narrative poems and ten pages on the sonnets, with some of the poems printed in full.

Whether students are studying the plays and poems in class or reading them independently, *The Shakespeare Book* is an invaluable companion and guide to the work of the greatest playwright of all time.

“  
**'TIS  
HATCHED  
AND SHALL  
BE SO**  
”

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

### Themes in Shakespeare's Plays

*Reading Anchor Standards 2;*  
*Writing Anchor Standards 2, 4 & 5*

For each play, *The Shakespeare Book* describes several themes such as loyalty, love, jealousy, revenge, and so on.

#### **Activity Idea:**

Have students choose a theme before reading the play and jot down examples as they read, noting the act, scene, and line numbers. After reading, have them write an expository essay in which they analyze the development of the theme and summarize the key supporting details and ideas. Students who chose the same theme can then meet in small groups and compare their examples and conclusions.



### Researching Time & Place

*Writing Anchor Standards 7 & 8; Speaking & Listening Anchor Standard 5*

Shakespeare's plays encompass a rich variety of geographical settings from England to Italy, as well as different time periods. *The Shakespeare Book* summarizes the setting for each play and discusses it briefly in the synopsis.

#### **Activity Idea:**

Have individuals or pairs of students use the book as a launch point for a research project on a play's setting, using both print and digital sources. The research can encompass customs such as arranged marriages and social mores such as anti-Semitism or the lack of women's rights. It also can address how Shakespeare altered real places to suit his story. The product should be a multimedia presentation for the rest of the class that conveys findings on the setting in a combination of speech, text, images, and audio elements.

### Transforming a Source

*Reading Anchor Standards 5 & 9*

A basic principle of Common Core is the importance of comparing and contrasting as a form of analysis. One of the 9th and 10th grade standards for reading, which refers specifically to Shakespeare, requires students to "analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work."

For each play, *The Shakespeare Book* provides a useful "Sources" section, which lists earlier plays and other literary works that influenced Shakespeare.

#### **Activity Idea:**

Have students choose one of these sources, research it, and write a paper explaining its contribution to the Shakespeare play.

# THE SHAKESPEARE BOOK

## TEACHER'S GUIDE

### Reciting Shakespeare

*Speaking & Listening Anchor Standards 1, 3 & 6*

Reciting Shakespeare is a time-honored way to study his work and appreciate its complexity.

#### Activity Idea:

Have students collaborate in small groups, with each student preparing a different monologue or sonnet for recitation to the class. A good source for monologues are the pull-out quotes in *The Shakespeare Book* that direct readers to some of the most famous and powerful passages. After they've chosen a passage, each student should read it closely to gain understanding. They should practice reciting it in the small group, giving each other feedback, before sharing it with the class. For those who want to take the exercise further, the English-Speaking Union sponsors a National Shakespeare Competition ([www.esuus.org/esu/programs/shakespeare\\_competition](http://www.esuus.org/esu/programs/shakespeare_competition)) at school, community, and national levels that entails reciting Shakespeare's work.

### Shakespeare's Sonnets

*Writing Anchor Standards 5 & 10*

Few poems are as well-known and often quoted as Shakespeare's sonnets.

#### Activity Idea:

Have students review the section in *The Shakespeare Book* on the sonnets, which speaks to their history, style, and content. Have them read the sonnets provided as examples and seek out more examples elsewhere. As a class, have students share their favorites and then discuss the structure and themes of the sonnets, as set out in the book (pp. 216–217). They should then use Shakespeare's structure and rhyme scheme to write their own sonnets. They can share their drafts for peer comments in pairs or small groups, and incorporate the criticism in creating their final poem.



### Read the Play, See the Movie

*Reading Anchor Standard 7*

Long after his time, Shakespeare continues to be a dominant force in the arts. Each play in the *The Shakespeare Book* features a "Legacy" sidebar that cites productions of the play since Shakespeare's day, including films. This list lends itself to the Common Core reading standard 7 for 11th and 12th grade, which requires evaluating a Shakespeare play in a live or recorded production. This can include works based heavily on a play, like *West Side Story's* adaptation from *Romeo and Juliet*.

#### Activity Idea:

Have your class watch one of the listed film versions of a play they are studying and hold a discussion analyzing its interpretation.

“MAN, PROUD MAN,  
DRESSED IN A LITTLE  
BRIEF AUTHORITY”

MEASURE FOR MEASURE

### Plotting Time, Comparing Characters

*Reading Anchor Standards 3 & 7*

Each play in *The Shakespeare Book* features a plot timeline, which displays characters and actions in chronological order and is labeled with act and scene numbers. Other graphic organizers in the book include relationship trees among characters. Useful tools such as these can serve as models for note taking when students read other plays.

#### Activity Idea:

Have students create another simple but effective graphic organizer to help them compare two characters, either from the same play or different plays (see below). Students should fill in the chart by putting similarities between characters in the large top section and differences between characters in the two columns below.

SIMILARITIES:	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
CHARACTER NAME	CHARACTER NAME
DIFFERENCES:	

#### About this teacher's guide:

*The Shakespeare Book* teacher's guide was created by Kathleen Odean. Kathleen, who chaired the 2002 Newbery Award Committee, was a school librarian for 17 years and now gives workshops for educators on new young adult books and the Common Core.

#### About the Big Ideas series:

Big Ideas Simply Explained series uses creative design and innovative graphics, along with straightforward and engaging writing, to make complex subjects easier to understand. These award-winning books provide just the information needed for students, families, or anyone interested in concise, thought-provoking refreshers on a single subject.

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