

The Tempest

This booklet is a mini-study of the opening scenes of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. You will complete a full study of a Shakespeare play in Year 7. You can complete the tasks in your home study exercise book, on paper or electronically.

Context

The Tempest was written in 1611. At the time great voyages of discovery were undertaken by fearless explorers such as Sir Walter Raleigh and Christopher Columbus to find new lands. The Elizabethans were fascinated with sea voyages that led to the discovery of new lands and peoples. At this time, the world was far different from how we know it now: places such as America and Australia were yet to be discovered by Europeans.



Task 1

- Find out what a *tempest* is. Write a definition in your own words.
- Why would people in 1611 fear a *tempest* – perhaps more so than they would do today?
- Can you use the title of the play to predict what the plot might be about? How might the term *tempest* have a double meaning?

Characters

On the next page is a list of characters in *The Tempest*. We won't meet all of them in our mini-study!



Task 2

- Find out what *usurped* means.
- Make a spider diagram or mind map of the characters. Use lines to show the relationships and links between the characters. Add any details you find out about the characters to your mind map.

Character	Who they are
Prospero	The rightful Duke of Milan, who has been usurped and banished to a small island
Miranda	Prospero's daughter
Ariel	A spirit, who serves as Prospero's servant
Caliban	A deformed, savage, sub-human creature, who is Prospero's slave
Alonso	King of Naples
Ferdinand	Alonso's son
Sebastian	Alonso's brother
Antonio	Prospero's brother, who has usurped him as Duke of Milan
Gonzalo	An honest old councillor
Adrian	A lord
Francisco	A lord
Trinculo	A jester
Stephano	A drunken butler
Ship's master	The person in charge of the ship
Boatswain	The master's servant

Act 1, Scene 1

The play begins with a storm at sea. The crew of the ship desperately struggle against the strength of the storm whilst the passengers – all noblemen – argue with the crew about their efforts to keep their vessel afloat.

Read the scene out loud to yourself or, even better, enlist some helpers and perform an unrehearsed read-through!

SCENE: The sea, with a Ship; afterwards an Island

THE TEMPEST

On a ship at sea; a tempestuous noise of thunder and lightning heard

*[Enter a **SHIPMASTER** and a **BOATSWAIN** severally]*

5 **MASTER:**

Boatswain!

BOATSWAIN:

Here, master: what cheer?

MASTER:

10 Good! Speak to the mariners: fall to't yarely, or
we run ourselves aground: bestir, bestir.

[Exit]

*[Enter **MARINERS**]*

15 **BOATSWAIN:**

Heigh, my hearts! cheerly, cheerly, my hearts!
yare, yare! Take in the topsail. Tend to th' master's
whistle.--Blow till thou burst thy wind, if room enough.

20 *[Enter **ALONSO, SEBASTIAN, ANTONIO, FERDINAND, GONZALO,**
and
OTHERS]*

ALONSO:

Good boatswain, have care. Where's the master?
Play the men.

25 **BOATSWAIN:**
I pray now, keep below.

ANTONIO:
Where is the master, boson?

BOATSWAIN:
30 Do you not hear him? You mar our labour:
keep your cabins: you do assist the storm.

GONZALO:
Nay, good, be patient.

BOATSWAIN:
35 When the sea is. Hence! What cares these
roarers for the name of king? To cabin! silence! Trouble
us not.

GONZALO:
Good, yet remember whom thou hast aboard.

40 **BOATSWAIN:**
None that I more love than myself. You are
counsellor: if you can command these elements to
silence, and work the peace of the present, we will not
hand a rope more. Use your authority: if you cannot, give
45 thanks you have lived so long, and make yourself ready
in your cabin for the mischance of the hour, if it so
hap.--Cheerly, good hearts!--Out of our way, I say.

[Exit]

50 **GONZALO:**
I have great comfort from this fellow. Methinks
he hath no drowning mark upon him: his complexion is
perfect gallows. Stand fast, good Fate, to his hanging!
make the rope of his destiny our cable, for our own doth
55 little advantage! If he be not born to be hang'd, our
case is miserable.

[Exeunt]

[Re-enter BOATSWAIN]

60 **BOATSWAIN:**
Down with the topmast! yare! lower, lower!

Bring her to try wi' th' maincourse. [A cry within] A plague upon this howling! They are louder than the weather or our office.--

65

*[Re-enter **SEBASTIAN**, **ANTONIO**, and **GONZALO**]*

Yet again! What do you here? Shall we give o'er, and drown? Have you a mind to sink?

70

SEBASTIAN:

A pox o' your throat, you bawling, blasphemous, incharitable dog!

BOATSWAIN:

Work you, then.

75

ANTONIO:

Hang, cur, hang! you whoreson, insolent noisemaker, we are less afraid to be drowned than thou art.

GONZALO:

80

I'll warrant him for drowning, though the ship were no stronger than a nutshell, and as leaky as an unstanch'd wench.

BOATSWAIN:

Lay her a-hold, a-hold! set her two courses: off to sea again: lay her off.

85

*[Enter **MARINERS**, Wet]*

MARINERS:

All lost! to prayers, to prayers! all lost!

[Exeunt]

90

BOATSWAIN:

What, must our mouths be cold?

GONZALO:

The King and Prince at prayers! let us assist them, For our case is as theirs.

95

SEBASTIAN:

I am out of patience.

ANTONIO:

We are merely cheated of our lives by drunkards.--
This wide-chapp'd rascal--would thou might'st lie drowning
The washing of ten tides!

GONZALO:

He'll be hang'd yet,
Though every drop of water swear against it,
And gape at wid'st to glut him.

[A confused noise within:--'Mercy on us!'--
'We split, we split!'--'Farewell, my wife and children!'--
'Farewell, brother!'--'We split, we split, we split!'--]

ANTONIO:

Let's all sink wi' the King.

[Exit]

SEBASTIAN:

Let's take leave of him.

[Exit]

GONZALO:

Now would I give a thousand furlongs of sea for
an acre of barren ground; long heath, brown furze, any
thing. The wills above be done! but I would fain die
dry death.

[Exit]





Task 3

- What words and phrases does Shakespeare use to show the strength of the storm? You could note down these phrases, create another spider diagram, or print off the script and colour-code it.
- What words and phrases does Shakespeare use to show the fear of the crew and passengers? You could note down these phrases, create another spider diagram, or colour-code.
- What is the Boatswain complaining about? (lines 30-37)
- Why does Gonzalo believe the ship will not be wrecked? (lines 50-56)
- Look at Sebastian and Antonio's reactions to the storm and compare them to Gonzalo's. How are they different? How does Shakespeare show this?
- How does Shakespeare create tension and drama in this opening scene? Give specific examples if you can.

Language and style

We learn that Prospero used his magical powers to conjure the storm, so that he could confront his brother about what he had done.



Task 4

- Compose a spell that Prospero could have used to conjure the storm. Try and make it rhyme if you can. Look at the example below to help you.

*I bang my magic staff upon the floor
My fingers snap and lightning flashes more
I breathe, and look, the wailing winds do blow
Bringing ice and hail and rain and snow.*

Aim to write between 10 and 12 lines.

Challenge version: research *iambic pentameter*. Can you use this structure in your spell to make it authentically Shakespearian?

Setting

The storm causes the ship to run aground on the small island that Prospero and his daughter Miranda were banished to.



Task 5

- Can you think of any other books, films or TV programmes that are set on small islands?
- Why are small islands such effective settings for films and literature? Think about how the setting might affect the characters and their relationships.



Task 6

- Design a small island that will serve as a setting for a book, film or TV series. Draw a map or bird's-eye view of your island.
- Now write a description of the island (1 side of A4 or 2 pages in an A5 exercise book). Think carefully about the vocabulary you use – will you use *positive* vocabulary to describe a safe, welcoming, 'friendly' island, or *negative* vocabulary to create a sense of inhospitality and danger?

Narrative



Task 7

- Write a playscript that tells the story of something that happens on the island you designed. Don't forget to include a list of characters and relevant stage directions, and to create drama, tension and excitement for your audience. You should aim to write about 2 sides of A4 (4 pages of an A5 exercise book).