

WORKSHEET

for

PRETTY SHREWD

adapted by Clive Duncan

from

William Shakespeare's
THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

by

Andrew Milne-Skinner

Worksheet for *Pretty Shrewd* by Clive Duncan

by Andrew Milne-Skinner

For teachers....

Please regard the various tasks, questions and activities as an *à la carte* menu, not as a fixed buffet! Choice will depend on which parts of the Worksheets will work best with *your* class, the class only *you* know!

As you can see from the section below 'For students', we encourage students to engage with the play, using several – if not all 'Multiple'! – Intelligences.

We as teachers can help students to engage by offering 'scaffolding':

- Arousing attention, generating interest, stimulating desire (to work on...), and encouraging action (eg. role-reading, role-acting) (cf. the 'AIDA' formula from advertising. After all, our job as teachers is to market learning!)
- Facilitating the process of engaging with the personal conflicts and moral dilemmas in the play
- Pausing and predicting; retelling and summarizing
- Responding and reflecting critically
- Exploring feelings and issues beyond the play

For students....

Personal conflicts and moral dilemmas can engage us emotionally and intellectually. The characters in *Pretty Shrewd* experience such conflicts and dilemmas. In reading the play we may empathize, sympathize or even identify with the characters. In studying the play, we undergo a 'living through' experience. We may well relate our own subjective life experience with the objective fictional situation in the play; we may compare our possible solutions to a dilemma with the ones a character chooses. We may even 'become' the character.

In Alan Bennett's play *The History Boys*, the broad-minded, inspirational teacher Hector says to a pupil:

"The best moments in reading are when you come across something – a thought, a feeling, a way of looking at things – which you had thought special and particular to you. Now here it is, set down by someone else, a person you have never met. ... And it is as if a hand has come out, and taken yours."

In *Pretty Shrewd* the author Clive Duncan takes us by the hand on a journey, the journey the characters experience in the play. Some of the thoughts and feelings may well resonate with you yourself.

But rather than simply *reading* the play, try engaging with the play personally by grappling with the conflicts and dilemmas presented. Take possession of the play. Make it *your* play.

The tasks, questions and activities are here to help you engage with the play. Try *tackling* them. After all,

"I hear and I forget; I see and I remember; I do and I come to understand."
(attributed to Confucius)

Do experience the play, engage with the tasks and activities, hopefully in an enjoyable way!

You might like to read the Author's Note first *before* working on the play itself. Alternatively, you could study his comments *afterwards*.

Author's Note

1. For which various reasons has Clive Duncan inverted the 'traditional' gender roles that Shakespeare gives us?
2. To what extent are gender differences inherently natural or socially constructed?
3. Which career choice will *you* make? To what extent are *you* influenced here by social conditioning?
4. List the examples Clive mentions of how women are disadvantaged compared with men. Which other examples can *you* find?
5. As Clive suggests, consider your own views on the opposite sex (or, for that matter, on different sexual orientations).
 - a. Why do you believe what you do?
 - b. How did you get these beliefs?
 - c. Can you defend your beliefs with sound arguments?

1 - Pre-reading activities

1. Looking at the title of the play, what are your immediate associations? What kind of play might you expect? A comedy? Crime story? Political play?
2. Draw a sociogram of the characters in the play, showing their inter-relationships. Use direction arrows, with symbolic motifs (↖ ↗ ☠️ 🍷 etc.), to explain relationships. Label your diagram further while you are reading the play so that you can gradually build up a more detailed sociogram.
3. Draw a stage diagram or ground-plan of Pete's Café. Keep it at your side while you are reading the play. (You could also make a cardboard model of the stage-set.) In this way you can see how position, movement and direction can be symbolic when the play is actually staged.

2 - While-reading activities

Scene 1 – Pete's Café

4. How does Pete feel about Luke at the very start? Why?
5. How does Pete react to Kate's interruption?
6. How would you characterise the relationship between Pete and Kate on the following scale? One that is...
friendly – on good terms – neutral – disrespectful – hostile – hateful
7. From how Kate speaks and acts, what sort of person do you think she is?
8. *LUKE: If you had your way you'd lock Bianca in a cupboard.*
According to this phrase, how would you describe Pete's behaviour towards Bianca?
9. *PETE: It's more than that; do you think I want to run a café for the rest of my life?* What does this statement imply?
10. *LUKE: "Not in Pete's Café – we're back in the 'sixties – the fifteen sixties!"*
Why is this comment so humorous? Find out what the Heimlich manoeuvre is, and enact this part of the scene.
11. In which way does the blowing of the refrigerator fuse act as a metaphor?
12. How does Pete feel when he fully realizes what the relationship between Luke and Bianca really is about?
13. Why does Pete accuse Luke of being a 'traitor'?
14. What do you understand by a 'male chauvinist pig'?
15. Identify and number the 'four easy stages' for getting round someone, for getting someone to see that their behaviour is socially unacceptable. Keep a note of these

'four easy stages' so that you can refer to them as and when Kate uses each of them.

16. What would you normally 'squash flat'?
17. How does Kate challenge Pete about 'having values'?
18. How does Pete respond to Kate on this point?
19. How important are values to you in your life? Discuss.

Scene 2 – Pete's Car

20. Kate replies to Pete's question with a counter-question that has nothing to do with what Pete is asking about. Find the example. Why does she do this? (Check out the meaning of 'uncooperative overlapping' in Deborah Tannen's *You Just Don't Understand - Women and Men in Conversation*).
21. What is Pete implying when he says, "We're going to a folk singing festival – not a lap dancing club."?
22. In which ways does Kate provoke Pete?
23. *KATE: What? Politics?*
PETE: Talking about your... body is not political.
KATE: I think #MeToo would disagree. (...) It's about power.
Explain what Kate is saying here.
24. *KATE: You ogle my body, but you don't want to talk to me. You'll engage physically, but not mentally.*
PETE: Then don't wear revealing clothes!
What are your thoughts on Pete's comment?
25. *KATE: The female's job is to make the male feel comfortable.* Discuss this point of view.
26. Find examples of how "women have been struggling for equality for over hundred years". Research this if necessary.
27. How does Kate get her own way in stopping at the service station?

Scene 3 – Motorway service station

28. Name three of Kate's actions to irritate Pete.
29. *KATE: Peter! You care about me – how sweet.*
What's Kate's tone of voice here?

Scene 4 – The Competition

30. In how far does Pete like to ‘control things’, as Kate says?
31. Why has Kate decided to change the song?

Scene 5 – Pete’s Café

32. Kate mentions *Romeo and Juliet*. Why?
33. Identify how Kate uses stage 3 in this scene.
34. Which line(s) indicate(s) the turning point when Pete is finally polite to Kate?
35. When Kate says, “*Good – because I like you*”, is she being honest or is she still play-acting? Why do you think this?
36. At which point do we see that Kate is actually winning the bet?

Scene 6 – The Final

37. Kate compares their group to ABBA. Why?
38. How does Bianca explain to Kate that Pete has changed? To what extent does Kate believe this?
39. Do you think Kate enjoys hurting Pete to a certain extent? Why or why not?
40. Find a passage in the text that indicates the change that is taking place with Pete.
41. In how far has Pete changed or not? Quote from the text.
42. How is Pete now treating Luke?
43. Find the lines where Kate accuses Pete of a romantic cliché.
44. What has been the one ‘weakness’ in Kate’s four-stage strategy?
45. How does Kate now feel at the end of this scene, now that she has ‘squashed Pete flat’?
46. Why does Pete change the song at the last minute?

Scene 7 – Pete’s Café

47. How does Kate feel when she learns that Pete and Luke have not won the competition?
48. Describe Kate’s emotional reaction to the song Pete has performed in the finals.
49. Explain how roles have been reversed in this final scene.
50. In which ways have both Kate and Pete won the bet?

3 - Post-reading activities

1. Clive Duncan's play *Pretty Shrewd* alludes to the title of Shakespeare's play, namely *The Taming of the Shrew*. **Check the meanings** of both *shrewd* and *shrew*. How do the two words relate?

According to the Concise Oxford English Dictionary:

- shrew:**
- 1) any small, usually insect-eating, mouse-like mammal, with long pointed snout.
 - 2) a bad-tempered or scolding woman
- shrewd:**
- 1) showing astute (=insightful, skilful) powers of judgement; clever and judicious (e.g. a shrewd observer)
 - 2) (archaic) sharp, biting; severe, hard

2. **Fill in the chart below**, putting each of the adjectives from the list in the spaces provided next to the appropriate character. Some adjectives may apply to more than one character. Add any other appropriate adjectives you can think of.

Character	Corresponding adjectives
Pete	
Kate	
Luke	
Bianca	

egoistic
 self-assured
 clever
 manipulative
 chauvinist
 kind
 unreasonable
 sharp
 good-looking
 accommodating
 old-fashioned
 tactical
 uncompromising
 emancipated
 self-absorbed
 provocative

loving
 ambitious
 romantic
 patronising
 strategic
 unreasonable
 naïve
 controlling
 in love
 challenging
 self-confident
 playful
 resourceful
 strict
 offensive
 intelligent

outspoken
 sexy
 scarcely reflective
 arrogant
 stubborn
 shrewish
 joyful
 fresh
 forthright
 conservative
 selfish
 (over-)protective
 economical
 insulting

3. Word thermometer

When Kate speaks to Pete, she uses different tones of voice in a critical way. Label the thermometer from least critical to most critical. The first one (0) is given and serves as an example.



4. _____

3. _____

2. _____

1. _____

0. playful

cynical – playful – ironic – humorous – sarcastic

4. Summarise Kate's tactics.

Which of these might be the most successful tactics when provoking Pete?

(PETE: "Yes, you made us late, almost got us disqualified, dressed like a maniac and changed the song without telling me.")

A Contextualising

Who said this, to whom, and when?

- a) If you're not prepared to pay the price – your values are worthless...
- b) Oh, such a sharp wit. Don't cut yourself with it...
- c) You're driving and you blame me. That proves my point entirely!
- d) Can a leopard change its spots?

- e) She should be allowed to make her own mistakes in life, not have someone do it for her.
- f) Behind my back? You've betrayed me!
- g) That wasn't supposed to happen...
- h) Yeah, but you've got to admit – she's a bit of all right...
- i) You don't know anything about fuses.
- j) But are values worth it if they cost too much?
- k) Shouldn't we be going to bed?
- l) One kiss doth not a couple make!

B Characterizing

1. Review critically your **sociogram** that shows the interrelationships between the various characters.
2. **Personality profile** of Pete
 - a) In which ways does Pete's personality change? Find specific examples.
 - b) Draw a graph that represents the change that Pete undergoes. The horizontal axis documents the scene-by-scene development, while the vertical axis can show the key turning points.
3. **Past habits – present state**
Compare what Pete *used to be* like before with what Pete *has become now*.

Pete before	Pete now
selfish	considerate and supportive

strict and conservative	flexible and liberal
insulting	respectful
only interested in his own advantage /	caring of others
benefit	...
...	

Example: Pete used to be selfish, but now he has become considerate and supportive.

C Analysing drama

1. Drama terms

Choose the correct definition from the list (A–K) for each drama term (1-9). There is one extra definition that you should not use. Write the letter of the definition next to the corresponding drama term. The first one (0) is given and serves as an example.

0	Climax	<i>A</i>
1	Conflict	
2	Dénouement	
3	Dramatic irony	
4	Exposition	
5	Falling action	
6	Foreshadowing	

7	Motif	
8	Rising action	
9	Turning point	

A	Highest point of tension of play
B	A character does not perceive what his fate holds in store, but the audience knows better
C	Point when an important change takes place (crisis)
D	Action following the climax
E	Struggle between opposing forces or characters
F	Action after the exposition, leading to the climax
G	Introduction, setting the action going, suggesting the theme, introducing the main characters, sketching the setting, arousing suspense
H	Last part after climax, in which the conflict is resolved (resolution)
I	Verbal and dramatic hints suggesting what is to come later
J	A single element (phrase, image, device, incident) frequently repeated to emphasize some aspect of the theme
K	an appendix (usually a concluding address) to a play

The play reflects a classic structure: rising action – turning point – falling action. Draw a graph showing the rise/fall movement. Mark the various turning points.

2. Drama activities

You might like to try and adapt some of these activities in working with *Pretty Shrewd*.

A session can involve the following stages: a physical warm-up; building self-confidence and mutual trust; a vocal warm-up; imaging characters; projecting beyond a scene by improvising; rehearsal.

Role-on-the-wall: on paper, a large or life-size outline of a character's body; students add comments and 'post-its' about the feelings and attitudes of the character. (This is a collaborative way of generating information and ideas about a character through written contributions to the drawing.)

In the Spotlight: 'hot-seating' a character in the centre of a circle and posing questions.

Role-play: Students act out small scenes using role cards they have produced based on a close reading of the text.

Acting a play script, with the following phases: presentation, discussion and interpretation, rehearsal, performance, evaluation

Making a tableau: students take up different positions and 'freeze' in a chosen scene, forming a still image. Teacher uses 'thought-tracking': by tapping the character on the shoulder: 'What are you thinking about at this moment?', 'How did you get to this thought?' They then unfreeze the tableau, interpret the snapshot, and bring it to life by continuing the scene with improvised dialogue. After trying this out, they then compare their improvisation with the original playscript.

D Writing

1. Write a newspaper article reporting on the semi-final of the folk festival.
2. Write a review of the performance of the play by Vienna's English Theatre.

E Discussing

1. Discuss critically the main themes and ideas behind the play.
(e.g. trust, betrayal, moral principles, awareness of gender issues and stereotyping, female emancipation, etc.)
 - a. Now, working in pairs, produce a structured mind-map that shows how the main themes and ideas behind the play inter-relate. Wherever possible, offer examples for the themes and ideas (e.g. betrayal: Pete feels let down by Luke and Bianca).
2. Humour: examples of irony, sarcasm, cynicism and understatement. Discuss where the humour lies in each of these examples.
 - i. *BIANCA: This is 2026!*
LUKE: Not in Pete's Café – we're back in the 'sixties – the fifteen sixties!
 - ii. *PETE: I've got a fridge to fix – then we'll talk.*

KATE: Who needs a fridge when you're around?

iii. *PETE: And I shall call you... dumb!*

KATE: Oh, such a sharp wit. Don't cut yourself with it...

iv. *PETE: It's a long drive to Birmingham – can we not talk...*

(They drive. Pete looks at Kate's legs – she catches him out.)

KATE: Can we have some music on?

(She fiddles with the car radio.)

PETE: It doesn't work.

(They drive.)

KATE: Brrr! Can we have the heating on?

(She fiddles with the heating controls.)

PETE: It doesn't work.

(They drive. Pete looks at Kate's legs – she catches him out.)

KATE: How about some intelligent conversation? Don't tell me – it doesn't work!

v. *KATE: But I need to pee.*

PETE: What?

KATE: Urinate. It's a biological function. Most people do it, don't you?

vi. *PETE: Shouldn't we be going to bed?*

KATE: We hardly know each other! I don't even kiss on a first date...

3. In which ways can the story be seen as a reworking of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*?

*PETRUCHIO: "This is a way to kill a wife with kindness,
And thus I'll curb her mad and headstrong humour.
He that knows better how to tame a shrew,
Not let him speak."*

(Act IV, Scene 2, 194-196)

In *Pretty Shrewd*, who 'kills' whom with what?

4. 'One kiss doth not a couple make'. Brainstorm on superficial and deep relationships.

Wishing you success while working on the play. Enjoy it when you see it in performance!

Andrew Milne-Skinner