



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative  
2008 Volume I: Approaches to Teaching Shakespeare

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## **Shakespeare's Characters: A Visual Analysis**

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The students will read *Macbeth*, *Othello*, and *The Taming of the Shrew* by William Shakespeare and choose from the major characters in each of the plays to create six visual analyses. The plays will be assigned for reading outside of class while some close readings will be done in class.

The visual portraits of specific characters from each of the plays will be an analysis of the characters with emphasis on physical attributes, symbols relating to the character, motivation, important lines, internal and external perspective, and figurative language used to develop the character. The elements of the analysis will be represented on the body with placement of the symbolic and textual attributes in the appropriate places on the figure itself.

The main objective of this unit is to analyze characters in Shakespeare's plays. To this end, the students will need to recognize and analyze methods of characterization as they relate to the meaning of the work as a whole. We will apply close reading analysis skills. The final assessment will be a formal essay analyzing three characters from *Othello*, *Macbeth* and *The Taming of the Shrew*.

(Developed for English, grades 11-12; recommended for English, grades 9-12)

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