



# YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative  
2009 Volume III: Shakespeare and Human Character

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## Getting to Know Shakespeare's Characters

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by Barbara Prillaman

In this unit, students will focus on what we have learned in the past about a character's identity and apply it to the new information that we will acquire in the proposed unit, giving them a strong foundation for comprehending Shakespeare's works as well as the art of characterization. The focus will be on developing the important ability to analyze characters in literature. Students will be required to analyze some of the most famous and complex characters in three of Shakespeare's plays - *Hamlet*, *Julius Caesar*, and *King Lear*. Analyzing characters and the role they play in developing a plot helps to provide insight in to and better understand the stories one reads. An analysis should involve a detailed examination of all aspects of the character, including but not limited to: traits, features, and, motivation. This analysis will be aided by a special graphic organizer that was created for this unit.

(Developed for English Language Learners, English Language Arts, grades 6-8 combined class; recommended for English Language Learners and Struggling Readings, Middle and High School grades)

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