

STUDY GUIDE

FOR STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND
ANYBODY ELSE WHO WANTS TO LEARN



THE KING'S SPEECH



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Photo Credits

Images from the play are by Liz Lauren from Chicago Shakespeare's North American Premiere production of David Seidler's *The King's Speech*, directed by Michael Wilson, in The Yard at Chicago Shakespeare, September 12–October 20, 2019.

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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE...

This guide is designed to be used in classrooms, by teachers, or by curious audience members. It includes an array of supporting historical information and deep dives into subject matter related to the show and the story.

Educators will find several group exercises and a graphic organizer for use in the classroom at the end.





THE PLAY

THE PLOT

The King's Speech is the story of Britain's King George VI (the father of the current Queen of England - Elizabeth II) and his struggle to overcome his stuttering.

THE BACKSTORY



Before he became King George VI in 1936 he was Prince Albert (in many monarchies, names change as one's station changes). Because of his stutter, the young Prince Albert dreaded public speaking, but as a member of the royal family, public speaking was unavoidable. As part of his duties as a young prince, he gave a radio speech at the closing of the 1925 Commonwealth Exhibition in London. That speech was heard by millions of people and was apparently difficult not just for him, but for everyone listening due to his profound stuttering. The experience was deeply humiliating. Prince Albert (called Bertie by his family and friends) was treated by many speech therapists, but none were able to help him.

His older brother, Prince Edward (known as David to his friends and family), was next in line to become King of England. When their father, King George V, died in 1936, David was crowned King Edward VIII. David was in love with an American divorcée, Wallis Simpson; she was still married to her second husband when she and David began their affair. This was unheard of at the time, and threatened to cause a massive scandal. But no matter what, David was intent on marrying her. Both the Church of England (England, unlike the USA has no separation of church and state) and the British government, expressed strong opposition to their alliance and eventually King Edward VIII abdicated the throne so there were no obstacles to their marriage. Next in line to be king was Bertie who was immediately crowned

King George VI.

Hitler was on the rise in Europe, political issues both foreign and domestic were affecting the monarchy, the country, Europe and the world. With WWII on their doorstep a strong leader was needed, someone who could communicate to the people, someone who could inspire and reassure, who could step fully into the shoes of their father - it was truly urgent to find help with Bertie's stuttering.

In desperation, Bertie's wife Elizabeth, enlisted the help of Lionel Logue, the self-taught and unconventional speech therapist working out of his London office. Lionel had no license or certification as a speech therapist, unbeknown to Elizabeth and Bertie. Lionel and his wife Myrtle were Australian. They had come to London so Lionel could pursue an acting career, but success in the theater proved hard to come by. To make a living, Lionel opened a speech therapy practice on a street filled with legitimate doctors' offices. This disguised the fact that he had no credentials, though he never claimed to be a doctor.

With Lionel's help, and hours of practice using a variety of techniques, Bertie learned to speak in a way that reduced his impediment to a minor problem. All this work culminated in success, when, in his first major radio speech as King George VI, he delivered a faultless, stutter-free performance. In this speech, heard around the world, he declared war on Nazi Germany.

Furthermore...

It took many, many years from when David Seidler, the author of the play, first wanted to write "The King's Speech" to when he actually did.

What took so long?

IN THIS VIDEO, SEIDLER TELLS THE STORY OF THAT DELAY, IN HIS OWN WORDS.



THE STORY BEHIND THE STORY

DAVID SEIDLER, AUTHOR OF THE KING'S SPEECH

At the onset of WWII, there was a brief period when the British government helped families get out of England to the safety of the United States. There were criteria you had to meet to



qualify for passage: the head of household had to be over military service age and had to be able to support his family in the US without using British funds. Mr. Seidler qualified; he had served in World War I and had an office for his business in NYC - he wouldn't need financial support from the government.

The Seidlers and their young son David crossed the Atlantic in a convoy of three ships. One of those

ships was sunk in an attack by a German submarine; the vessel the Seidler family was on made it safely to the United States. But David, who witnessed the fireball on the horizon and the tension all around him, began to stutter. He was not quite three.

The King of England at the time, George VI, also stuttered.

David Seidler's parents encouraged their son to use King George VI as an example of someone who had overcome stuttering. David would listen to the monarch's speeches on the radio. After much work, and unsuccessful therapy, David finally had a breakthrough around the age of 16 and was able to speak fluently.

David Seidler became a successful writer. He always wanted to tell the story of the stuttering king in order to inspire others, as it had inspired him. He wrote "The King's Speech" both as a play and also as a movie. The film was released before the play was produced and won Academy Awards ("Oscars") in 2011 for Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor, and the Oscar for the Best Screenplay was awarded to David Seidler.

Seidler is a lifetime activist for and supporter of stutterers.





THE SCIENCE

WHAT IS STUTTERING?

Stuttering, or stammering as it is sometimes called, is a speech disorder in which the flow of speech is disrupted by involuntary repetitions and elongations of sounds, syllables, words or phrases. The speech of a stutterer also has involuntary silent pauses or blocks in which the person is unable to produce sounds. Stuttering affects about five to ten percent of all children, more often males than females. It can go away by itself or with the help of a speech therapist, but it can also be a lifelong affliction.

Most people start stuttering between two and four years of age; if stuttering is going to go away by itself it usually does so by seven or eight years old. If the person continues stuttering into their teenage years, they will most likely continue to stutter throughout adulthood. Early intervention can help.

“Stuttering may be worse when the person is excited, tired or under stress, or when feeling self-conscious, hurried or pressured. Situations such as speaking in front of a group or even talking on the phone can be particularly difficult for people who stutter.”

***SOURCE: THE MAYO CLINIC**



WHAT CAUSES STUTTERING?

Stuttering falls into two categories:

DEVELOPMENTAL STUTTERING

Developmental Stuttering may be genetic and run in a family, or it may be caused by undeveloped motor coordination. This kind of stuttering sometimes automatically rights itself.

NEUROGENIC STUTTERING

Neurogenic Stuttering is caused by a stroke or other head or neck trauma, so that the brain is physically unable to process and coordinate speech properly.

The exact cause of stuttering remains unknown, though acute or prolonged stress can trigger stuttering.

WHAT DOES STUTTERING CAUSE?

There are related impacts on a person who has a speech impediment. The CDC says that one in every four Americans will find themselves in this category over their lifetime.

While stuttering may be exacerbated by stress, it also causes stress in the stutterer and can lead to additional problems such as:

- Avoiding situations that require speaking
- Frustration in communicating, anxiety
- Loss of success in school or work
- Being teased and/or bullied
- Having low self-esteem

Furthermore...

Most people who stutter speak without stuttering when they talk to themselves, when they sing, or speak in unison with someone else.

About three million Americans stutter.

* Source: Various sources



TYPES OF STUTTERS

There are three main types of stutters:

1. BLOCKS

A long pause before the next word comes out.

1. ELONGATION

Stretching a sound. For example: “cooooooooooler”.

1. REPETITIONS

Involuntarily repeating parts of words. For example: “coo-coo-coo-ler”

** Source: Asha.org American Speech Language Hearing Association*

*There are currently 7,111 distinct
living languages spoken on Earth; some have
fewer than 1,000 living speakers.*

Only 3,995 have a developed writing system.

***VARIOUS SOURCES**





FROM THE SHOW

As we've seen, public speaking was extremely challenging for Bertie even before he became King George VI. While others whisper about his stutter behind his back, and even call him "dim" (or "stupid") Bertie's brother David teases him to his face several times in the play.

DAVID: (teasing with a false stammer)
H-h-hello, B-b-Bertie. B-b-been waiting long?

BERTIE: Three days. Where've you b-b-b...

Lionel, however, has deep empathy and compassion for Bertie's situation. Because of his work, he fully understands what Bertie is going through and is ready to dedicate himself to helping the King speak clearly. This is what he says to his homesick wife Myrtle when trying to convince her to let him stay in England to help Bertie, instead of going home to Australia:

LIONEL: Imagine yourself as a child terrified of your own parents, because every time you speak you disappoint them. Teased. Unable to share a joke with friends. No friends actually. Unable to answer in class, so you're considered dim and ranked last. Trapped in a body that refuses to obey your commands. Myrtle, let me do what I can.



PONDER THIS



1. **Have you ever been teased about something** you couldn't do anything about? What did it feel like? What impact did it have on you?

2. **Have you ever teased someone else?** Does teasing always hurt people's feelings, even if they don't show it?

3. **How would you distinguish** gentle teasing from hurtful teasing? Does "Intention" play a role in the effects of teasing?

4. **The word "fluent" is often used** referring to language ("She speaks fluent French."). What does it mean to have "reading fluency"? Can you think of other contexts in which the word "fluent" is used?

Furthermore...

Many people who start out with speech impediments go on to have careers that rely on their ability to speak clearly under pressure. Here are some famous people (besides King George VI) who stuttered: Bruce Willis (actor), Samuel Jackson (actor), Marilyn Monroe (actress), Joe Biden (Vice President of the United States), Carly Simon (singer, songwriter), Bill Withers (singer, songwriter), Aristotle (philosopher).





VOICE

VOICE AND ITS MEANINGS

We seldom think about our own voices – we just talk. One's speaking voice can indicate one's power, both in terms of physical strength and class or social status. A person's voice may affect their relationships, their job, their influence, and their self-esteem.

The word "voice" can imply deeper meaning than just the sounds we make when we speak. There are several other meanings for this word.

Finding one's "voice" means that one has found one's power, one's stride, has come into one's own.

"Voice" in the literary sense can also be used to refer to the tone of a piece of writing, the mood portrayed, the expression of a specific attitude or opinion, or the power/effectiveness of the communication of an individual or group.

Writers understand that they not only have their own unique voice, but they must also give each and every character their own individual voice, which distinguishes that character from all the others. In writing (just as in life), every voice is unique - for the author it's the defining style and syntax that make his or her work identifiably theirs. For the characters they create, it's the same idea - the "voice" of a character is created in the expression of the specific ideas, mannerisms, history and actions that define that character. The style in which they're written makes each character's voice clear to the reader or audience.



FROM THE SHOW



In the following scene between Lionel and Bertie, Lionel explains how and why he became a speech therapist. We could say that becoming a speech therapist was how Lionel found *his* voice, his purpose.

LIONEL: When the war came, the first casualties limped home, broken in bone and spirit. Poor buggers. 'Lionel, you're a good talker, see if you can help these sods.' The shell-shocked were the saddest. Most stuttered. Far worse than you. Muscle therapy helped, but I found I had to go deeper, as you might well imagine.

BERTIE: I know nothing of those poor men!

LIONEL: I think you do. They had cried out in terror, and no one had listened. So they'd lost faith in their voice. My job was to make them shout in anger: ***"I have the right to be heard!"***

And in the following pivotal scene, Lionel actually goads Bertie to shout exactly that, and in doing so, the King finds his voice, his power. The scene takes place in Westminster Abbey and Bertie is pointing out in horror that Lionel has inappropriately seated himself on a sacred national artifact. It's the Coronation chair where only royalty is "allowed to sit".



BERTIE: That's the Stone of Scone, the Stone of Destiny that was once Jacob's pillow!

LIONEL: You believe such bollocks. I don't care how many royal backsides have sat on it, it's a building block with handles attached. You're just like me, an actor with tawdry stage props you choose to believe are real.

BERTIE: Listen to me... !

LIONEL: Listen to you?! By what right?

BERTIE: Divine right, if you must! I'm your King!!!

LIONEL: Noooo you're not! Told me so yourself. Said you didn't want it. So why should I listen to a poor stammering bloke who can't put one word after another? Why waste my time listening to you?

BERTIE: Because I have a right to be heard!

LIONEL: Heard as what?!

BERTIE: A MAN! I HAVE A VOICE!

LIONEL: (quietly)
Yes you do. Bertie, you'll make a bloody good king.

Prejudice against actors and entertainers in general was a widespread societal prejudice, especially amongst the upper classes.

Lionel is not only an ordinary person and an actor, he's also an Australian. Australia was a British colony and Australians were looked down upon by the Brits.



PONDER THIS



1. **Think about your own speaking voice**, how you express your feelings, dreams, wants and needs. Think about how your voice empowers you.

2. **Notice how you respond to other's speaking voices, the way** some are soothing, inviting, warm and how some you find harsh, irritating. What is it about them that makes you feel this way?

3. **The voice is one of the actor's most precious tools.** When next you go to a play or watch a movie, notice the range of emotion in the actor's voice, the nuances of meaning and feeling that an actor can convey with their voice alone.

Furthermore...

Do people stutter in every language?

Because stuttering is a speech disorder, not a language disorder, it's theorized that stuttering can occur in any language, though this has not been explicitly proven.





DO TOGETHER EXERCISES

PIN THE TAIL ON THE SPEAKER

Your voice is like your fingerprint - uniquely yours. What characteristics of one's voice distinguish this uniqueness? What characteristics are universal? What can we tell about a person just by listening to their voice?

INSTRUCTIONS

In a group where people know each other (a classroom is ideal), have everyone close their eyes. The leader then picks one person by tapping them gently on the shoulder. They open their eyes and very quietly walk to a different location in the room, and speak. (They can say whatever comes to mind or you can provide them with set text.) With eyes still closed, others in the group try to identify the speaker by their voice alone. Other than discerning gender (which isn't always clear) was it easy, hard, to identify who was speaking, somewhere in between? Is it easier to identify some speakers as opposed to others? Why?

RED BANDANA

(Group or solo)
Emphasis matters.

The meanings in our speech are not just in the words themselves, but also in the tone and stresses. Language conveys emotion and context, as well as information.

INSTRUCTIONS

Say the sentence: "I never said you stole my red bandana." out loud. Repeat the sentence emphasizing a different word each time you say it. For example: "I *never* said you stole my red bandana." then "I never *said* you stole my red bandana." etc. until you have emphasized all the words in the sentence. Depending on which word you emphasize (stress), the meaning of the sentence changes. Elaborate on the new meaning based on your emphasis.



TOPICS



HISTORY, GOVERNMENT, CONTEXT, AND THEMES





GOVERNMENT

WHAT IS A MONARCH?

A monarch is the head of state of a particular form of government, which, today, often coexists with other more modern forms of government. Modern monarchies are often seen as vestiges of another time, mostly defined by ceremonial duties rather than the day to day work of governing. Sometimes they're the subject of tension in nations where one segment of the population appreciates the existence of the royal family and another segment of the population isn't so keen on keeping this old system around. However, sometimes monarchies still hold a good deal of both ceremonial and symbolic power, as well as operational power in countries that have them.

In a monarchy, power is passed through bloodlines. The throne of England is inherited by the first born child of the king or queen. If for some reason that child is unable or unwilling to serve in that role, the next in line becomes the king or queen. The Monarch of England is largely ceremonial with little political power.



CAPTION

England's form of government was once an absolute monarchy but has been a republic for hundreds of years. However, like Sweden and Denmark and a few other countries, England still maintains its Royal Family.

A republic is: "A form of government in which a state is ruled by representatives of its citizens. Modern republics are founded on the idea that sovereignty rests with the people, though who is included and excluded from the category of "the people" has varied across history."

THE MODERN BRITISH MONARCHY

Queen Elizabeth II is the Queen of England today. She is England's monarch, but she is not the ruler of England. The British republic is known as a Constitutional Monarchy. It is a democracy, governed according to the laws passed by the Parliament, which is similar in structure to the US Congress.



PARLIAMENT

Parliament has three parts, consisting of the sovereign (the queen or king), the House of Lords, and the House of Commons. The members of Parliament are elected by the citizens of England, as opposed to getting their positions through heredity.

The two houses make up the primary chamber of Parliament. The two houses meet in the Palace of Westminster in the City of Westminster, one of the inner boroughs of the capital city of London.

Queen Elizabeth II, is Bertie's first-born child and is currently 93 years old. Her first-born child, Prince Charles, will inherit the throne and become King George VII when she dies; he is currently 70 years old.



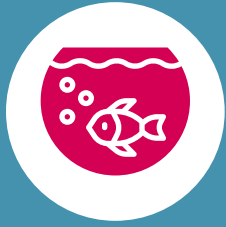
OTHER MONARCHIES

There are countries today that have an Absolute Monarchy such as Saudi Arabia. In Absolute Monarchies the monarch has absolute power and rules the country completely. The King of Saudi Arabia is Mohammed bin Salman. He was born in 1935. His son is the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia and will become king when his father dies. His name is also Mohammed bin Salman but he's known as "MBS". He already wields tremendous power over his country, even though he's not king yet. (His father has delegated many important responsibilities to his son, the prince.)

Furthermore...

Queen Elizabeth II became the longest-reigning British Monarch on September 9, 2015. On February 6, 2017 she became the first British Monarch to celebrate a Sapphire Jubilee, a huge public celebration commemorating 65 years on the throne.





CONTEXT

WHAT IS CONTEXT?

The circumstances that form the setting for an event, statement, or idea, and in terms of which it can be fully understood and assessed. It's the situation in which something happens, the underlying/surrounding circumstances that help to explain the situation.

When we analyze literature we break down the story into plot, characters and setting. That is very useful, but the context gives us a kind of bird's-eye view of the whole and allows us to see how those three factors function and relate to each other. While looking at character, plot and setting may answer our "who, what, when, where" questions, context often answers "why". It gives us insight into the motivations, circumstances, and connections, a more holistic picture.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In August, 1914, King George V declared war against the Central Power, including Germany and, along with allies France, Russia, Italy and the United States, England entered into WWI. It was the first global war and ended in 1918 with an allied victory over Germany and the Central Powers. However, the slaughter, carnage and destruction of WWI had never been seen before on earth. In those four years sixteen million people were killed, including seven million civilian casualties.

Hitler and the Nazis were obsessed with racial purity. They believed that white people were superior to all others. He and his Nazi party wanted to build a "Master Race". On July 14th 1933, Hitler's Third Reich instituted the "Law for the Prevention of Progeny with Hereditary Diseases." The justification was that disabilities were inherited. This law called for the sterilization of all persons who suffered from mental illness, learning disabilities, physical deformity, epilepsy, blindness, deafness, and severe alcoholism. The German government stepped up its propaganda against the disabled, regularly labeling them "life unworthy of life" or "useless eaters" and highlighting them as a burden on society.

"Learning disabilities"?! "Blindness"?! Wonder what the Nazi's thought about stutterers!



Bertie was 19 years old in 1914 when his father declared war on Germany and World War I began. As a young adult in the royal family he not only experienced all the political ins and outs that led to that war, but he experienced the war itself. London was a primary bombing target killing 5,000 civilians.

In January of 1936 King George V died and his first-born son, David, became King Edward VIII.



David gave up the throne after being king for less than a year. The primary reason was his love for, and intention to marry, Wallis Simpson, an American divorcee who was still married to her second husband. She was not considered a fit match for the King of England for several strong reasons. She was not a royal, she was American, she was twice married before. She further alienated everyone by having David cut down all the old trees (to improve a view) on a royal property. And to top it off, Wallis Simpson was friendly with the Nazis and shared their ideology. In fact, David and Wallis Simpson went to Germany as the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, and met and dined with Hitler himself in October, 1937, just a few months after David abdicated. Fascism was on the rise and Wallis Simpson had a profound influence on David.

Remember that WWI only ended 21 years prior to WWII beginning, well within most Europeans' memory. World War II had been rumbling for much of that time; Germany was proving to be the enemy again. Hitler blamed the harsh Versailles treaty (that ended WWI) for Germany's economic ills. In fact, there was a global economic decline in the nineteen thirties, including in the U.S. where the economy hit bottom in 1933.

Furthermore...

King Edwards VIII (David's) coronation was due to take place at Westminster Abbey on May 12, 1937. Preparations had already begun and souvenirs were on sale when he abdicated on December 11, 1936.



FROM THE SHOW

Here's David talking to Bertie about Hitler and the Third Reich:

DAVID: He's much maligned. By the Jews, according to Wallis. And she's awfully clever about politics.

BERTIE: David, we're a German family, we must distance ourselves from this monster!

DAVID: Don't be so predictable. The German people are far better off under Hitler. No Jews, no Communists. That's why everyone backs down when it comes to the Fuhrer. Just as everyone will back down concerning Wally and myself. It's an act of will, Wallis says. You'll see...

The British government, the public, and the Church of England all condemned David's decision to marry the American divorcée.

BALDWIN: Perhaps we need a new King?

WINSTON CHURCHILL: Now I am doubly shocked.

BALDWIN: His Grace isn't.

COSMO LANG: My function requires me to appear



serene at all times.

BALDWIN: That may be difficult to maintain.

WINSTON CHURCHILL: The King is our king! You cannot remove him.

BALDWIN: But should he refuse to listen to the advice of His Government he may have to remove himself.

WINSTON CHURCHILL: Abdication? Never has that happened in the history of this great land.

COSMO LANG: Always a first time.

BALDWIN: A shocking concept, Winston, but one we might need to accept.

COSMO LANG: You, more than others, realize we'll soon be under siege from the forces of darkness. Who would you suggest to rally the troops, the nation, the Empire, the world?

WINSTON CHURCHILL: Our rightful King! Would you prefer a man who cannot speak? Hitler mesmerizes millions, whilst the Duke of York cannot successfully order fish and chips.

We learn of yet another reason that may have pressured David to abdicate. Remember, the continuation of the monarchy depends on the king or queen having children.

WINSTON CHURCHILL: Has it occurred to you, as it has just occurred to me, that a Monarch with a gland problem, who realizes he cannot produce issue, might not wish to be King...? knowing his lack of issue may well become a major issue indeed.

COSMO LANG: A dazzling concept...beautifully phrased.

David gave a radio speech on December 11th, 1936. "I have found it impossible to carry on the heavy burden of responsibility and to discharge the duties of king, as I would wish to do, without the help and support of the woman I love." On December 12th, 1936 Bertie was proclaimed King George VI.





THEMES

The central focus of “The King’s Speech” is Bertie’s struggle to cope with, and control his stuttering. But there are other important themes.

FREEDOM

The juxtaposition of Lionel and Bertie illuminates the theme of personal freedom in this play. As an ordinary person, Lionel is free to come and go as he pleases, while Bertie is recognized everywhere. Lionel has been free to follow his dreams, to pursue an acting career, while Bertie has been born into a very constricted role that he must play. Lionel is free to break the rules and teach speech even though there was no opportunity to become certified where he lived. Lionel is free to meet people and make friends anywhere and everywhere. Bertie can’t do that. Lionel’s work is useful; he helps people. Bertie’s life is proscribed from birth, although it turns out he becomes an excellent king in very difficult times.

EQUALITY

Another theme vivified in these juxtapositions is equality. Although their stations in life, in society, are vastly different, Bertie and Lionel discover each other as human beings; privilege ceases to be a factor in their relationship. This happens primarily because neither Lionel nor Myrtle are cowed by Bertie and Elizabeth’s status. They do not treat royalty as if they were “better than” themselves or anyone else. And eventually Bertie and Elizabeth begin to find comfort in their being seen as equals.

WOMEN’S POWER

Have you heard the expression, “Behind every great man there’s a great woman.”? It didn’t come into common parlance until the 1940s, but it certainly describes Lionel’s wife Myrtle, and Bertie’s wife Elizabeth. They are both enormously supportive of their husband’s needs and wishes. But they are not just props in the story. Because David Seidler has created them as fully formed characters with unique voices, we know what they think and how they feel. We see their wisdom and caring as well as their opinions and how they exercise their influence and power.



POWER IN THE PLAY

In “The King’s Speech” the characters are all aware of their positions in the social and political structure and the nuances and fragility of power. In reality, power is not always as it seems; it is fluid, and depends on many factors other than title and role. For example, on paper Bertie, as King, has far more power than Lionel, his subject. But in reality, Lionel’s skills empower him to save Bertie. He may be from a lower station, but his skills give him the power to teach the king to speak fluently.

TECHNOLOGY - THE RADIO

The radio, with its ability to communicate to millions of people in real time, changed the world. It was the first technology of its kind, long before television was a common household item, long before personal computers, and long before the internet.

Radio came into common household use in England a relatively short time before the broadcast of Bertie’s disastrous, stutter-studded speech in 1925. A radio receiver uses circuits to pick out the frequency we want to hear from all those which are picked up by the antenna. Just like with a tuning fork, the resonant frequency of the receiver’s tuned circuit is adjusted by the user to the frequency of the desired station or “frequency”; a process known as “tuning”. The tuned circuit oscillates in time with the radio signal, which passes the signal on to the rest of the receiver.



Furthermore...

The U.S. was given the letters W, K, N, and A to identify their stations. The letters ‘N’ and ‘A’ were given to military stations, but ‘K’ and ‘W’ were assigned for commercial use. Radio stations east of the Mississippi River started their station with ‘W’, and stations west of the Mississippi started with ‘K’.



PONDER THIS



1. **Reflect, observe and discuss** these themes in your own culture and society: Personal Freedom, Equality, Class distinctions, Technology and any other themes you find in “The King’s Speech”.

2. **In what ways do Bertie and Lionel show respect** and compassion for one another transcending class? Cite evidence from the play.

3. **Discuss or write a description of Elizabeth and of Myrtle** showing their personal characteristics.

4. **Make a list of communication technologies, like the pencil,** the telephone, television, computers, smart phones, and discuss/write how their common use changed civilization.

5. **Make a list of inventions. Start with the wheel** and consider things like the combustion engine, eye glasses, the stove, cars, weaponry, and discuss/write about how they’ve changed the world.



CHARACTERS



BREAKDOWN OF CHARACTERS



WHO IS WHO?

THE CHARACTERS

Some of these are “minor” characters in that they have fewer scenes than the main characters, but they are essential to our understanding of the motivations, context and meanings of the play.

Bear in mind that in England, to this day, there is no separation of powers between Church and State. England has an established Church, some of whose bishops sit in Parliament.

BERTIE



Prince Albert ("Bertie") was the second born child of King George V. He became King George the VI when his older brother, Edward VIII abdicated the throne. He stuttered.

ELIZABETH



Bertie's wife.

LIONEL LOGUE



The King's speech therapist.



MYRTLE



Lionel's wife.

DAVID



(Prince Edward): The eldest child of King George V who became King Edward VIII upon his father's death. He abdicates the throne in order to marry Wallis Simpson. They become the Duke and Duchess of Windsor.

SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL



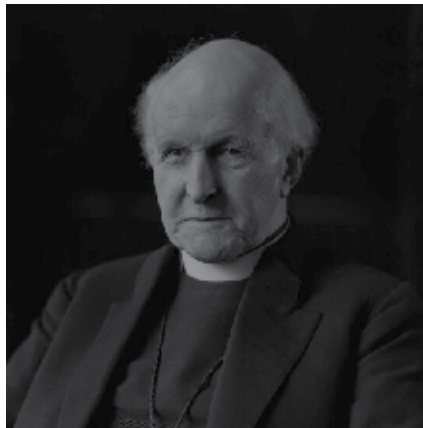
At the time of this play his position in the British government was Chancellor of the Exchequer. He was Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1940 to 1945, when he led Great Britain to victory in the Second World War.

STANLEY BALDWIN



He was the Prime Minister of England during "The King's Speech" and oversaw the abdication of David.

COSMO LANG



He was the Archbishop of Canterbury and took a strong moral stance that David had to abdicate the throne.

Photo: by Bassano Ltd whole-plate film negative 27 February 1936 © National Portrait Gallery, London

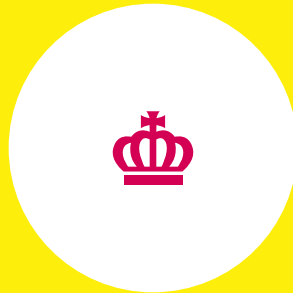
WALLIS SIMPSON



The intention of David to marry her leads, in large part, to his abdication.



FOR THE CLASSROOM



PARTS TO WHOLE GRAPHIC ORGANIZER



PARTS TO WHOLE



#1

CRITICAL THINKING GRAPHIC ORGANIZER

CHARACTERS IN "THE KING'S SPEECH"

BERTIE

LIONEL

ELIZABETH

MYRTLE

DAVID

What would happen to the whole if these parts were missing?

BERTIE

LIONEL

ELIZABETH

MYRTLE

DAVID

What is the function of each part?

BERTIE

LIONEL

ELIZABETH

MYRTLE

DAVID

What is the relationship between the parts and the whole?



CRITICAL THINKING

GRAPHIC ORGANIZER

PARTS TO WHOLE

#2



CHARACTERS IN "THE KING'S SPEECH"

COSMO	CHURCHILL	BALDWIN	SIMPSON
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What would happen to the whole if these parts were missing?

COSMO	CHURCHILL	BALDWIN	SIMPSON

What is the function of each part?

COSMO	CHURCHILL	BALDWIN	SIMPSON

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