**Power and Authority**

**Who are in positions of power in the play?**

* In the beginning King Lear holds all the power as King but then he divides his kingdom and gives it away to his daughters Goneril and Regan

*“Meantime we shall express our darker purpose.  
Give me the map there. Know that we have divided  
In three our kingdom” (Act one, scene one, lines 38-42)*

* As Earl of Gloucester, Gloucester holds the power in his family and it is due to be passed down to his legitimate son Edgar but Edmund betrays him family to take this power for himself.

*“Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land”(Act one, scene two, line 16)*

**What expectations come with power?**

* With power comes respect, as well as responsibility
* King Lear gives away his power (his title) to his daughters Regan and Goneril as a reward for their demonstration of love towards him.
* He hopes to give away the responsibilities of being a king but still wishes to retain the respect that the title gives him and other perks of his position.
* “*Since now we will divest us both of rule, Interest of territory, cares of state) [act 1, scene 1, line 50)*
* *"To shake all cares and business from our age Conferring them on younger strengths while we Unburdened crawl to death" (act 1, scene1 line 40)*

**Can power be a corrupting influence?**

* **Lear:** becomes over-proud, increasing his flaw. He was initially vain and insecure and used his power of inheritance to demand flattering statements of praise and love from his daughters.

*“Which of you shall we say doth love us most, that we our largest bounty may extend” (Act one, Scene one; lines 56-57)*

*“Only we shall retain the name, and all th’ additions to a king” (Act one, Scene one, lines 136-137)*

* **Edmund:** He frames his brother and blinds his father all in an attempt to inherit his father’s power. Still this is not enough as he goes after both Goneril and Regan in an attempt to become king of England

*“Let me, if not by birth, have lands by wit; All with me’s meet that I can fashion fit”(Act one, Scene two, Lines 190-191)*

* **Goneril and Regan:** both deceive their father by telling him they love him more than they do just so they can get a bigger cut of his kingdom and therefore more power.

*Goneril says she “Love [him] more than words can wield the matter” (Act one, Scene one, Line 60)*

*Regan says ‘[Goneril] comes too short, that [she profess [herself] and enemy of all other joys” (Act one, Scene one, Lines 79-80)*

* For Goneril, Regan and Edmund, once they have their power, they become treacherous and manipulate even further in order to keep that power.

**What consequences are there when power is misused?**

* Death, jealously, tragedy
* King Lear uses his power and authority to test the love of his daughters and thus dividing his kingdom based upon their results of that test.
* *“which of you shall we say doth love us most, that we our largest bounty may extend." (act 1 scene 1, line 52)*
* By Lear giving away his authority, he destroys the authority in Britain, which in the end causes Lear and Cordelia to be traitors and enemies of England
* *“some officers take them away" (act 5, scene 3 line 1)*
* The death includes Cornwall, Oswald, Gloucester, Regan, Goneril, Edmund, Cordelia and Lear.
* Edmund the bastard son of Gloucester fools Goneril and Regan; he is seeking the throne and any power that he can obtain.
* By fooling them they are jealous of each other, and as a result Goneril poisons Regan. The misuse of power by the two sisters resulted in their jealously and eventually their death.
* *“The one the other poisoned for my sake, and after slew herself." (Act 5, scene 3 line 241)*