



# Timon of **ATHENS**

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

IN A MODERN VERSE TRANSLATION BY

KENNETH CAVANDER

DIRECTED BY

PETER J. KUO

**RESOURCE & ACTIVITY GUIDE**



**A.C.T. TOUR**

[act-sf.org/ACTOut](http://act-sf.org/ACTOut)

# WELCOME!



We're excited to launch this year's A.C.T. OUT Tour production of *Timon of Athens*! Whether you're a student, an educator, or an adult with a love for theater, this guide will provide production insights, questions to consider, and other ways to enhance your experience.

The A.C.T. OUT Tour is presented in partnership with: **PLAY ON**  
SHAKESPEARE

## HISTORY, CONTEXT, & GRATITUDE

A.C.T.'s Education & Community Programs use the tools of theater to inspire empathy, creativity, and positive social change for students, teachers, and community members. Play On Shakespeare is a non-profit company promoting and creating contemporary modern translations of Shakespeare's plays. Together we have created the A.C.T. OUT Tour, reimagining classic tales in and for our local communities, and taking no-frills, bare-bones, engaging, modern performances on a local tour. In 2024, the inaugural tour of *Measure for Measure* was received with great acclaim by public audiences, teachers, and students throughout the Bay Area. We were excited to build on this success with *Julius Caesar* in Spring of 2025. We're thrilled that you're going to experience our third A.C.T. OUT Tour performance, and we hope you enjoy the show.

In 2025, in addition to our performances open to the public, on November 6 & 7 we will host special Student-only Matinee performances in the Rueff at A.C.T.'s Strand Theater. Between November 10 and 21 this production will tour the Bay Area, performing for students and community members in middle schools, high schools, colleges and universities. We will visit many sites in the San Francisco Unified School District, and travel as far as Hayward, Oakland, and San Jose. We are deeply grateful for the teachers, students and administrators who will visit us at A.C.T. or welcome us to their campus, and to all funders, donors, ticket buyers and supporters who enable us to take the show on the road at no cost to the school and community sites where we perform.

## THIS GUIDE

Created for the A.C.T. OUT Tour in October 2025 by the A.C.T. Education and Community Programs team:

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**"Show me a man who spends all his money  
and I'll show you a man without friends."**

**"Is it possible the world has changed so much  
And we who lived in it as it used to be  
Are still alive?"**

- William Shakespeare, *Timon of Athens*, translated by Kenneth Cavander

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## ABOUT OUR PRODUCTION

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The popular *Timon of Athens* is known to give gifts to her friends and hold great feasts, sharing her wealth. But when she runs out of money and the creditors come calling, her friends turn her away. Director Peter J. Kuo uses Shakespeare's fable to explore income disparity and how temporary wealth bestows status on members of communities of color, specifically Asian-Americans—and how quickly that status is revoked once the value of the “model minority” is exhausted.

Never performed in Shakespeare's lifetime, *Timon of Athens* presents an intriguing puzzle for contemporary audiences. The disjointed plot and many gaps in the story have led scholars to believe it was a collaboration between Shakespeare and Thomas Middleton, a younger writer known for his satires, and productions for decades have faced choices about the most effective way to present the play. In this translation, Kenneth Cavander acts as a third playwright in this collaborative process. Wrangling the voices of Shakespeare and Middleton on the page, Cavander unveils poetic lines and phrases that have sat stubbornly in the cobwebs, cutting these voices through the time barrier and into the world as we know it.

The A.C.T. OUT Tour's production of *Timon of Athens* asks the following questions:

How do we recognize true loyalty and friendship versus opportunism?	What should be the role of wealth in a healthy society?	In a time of deep division, how do we find ways to have faith in our fellow human beings?
Should we defy authority to protect our friends, even if they have broken the law?	What does true generosity look like?	How can we best help others without sacrificing our own needs?

### CONSIDER FOR STUDENTS:

- Which themes are familiar to you?
- What assumptions come to mind when you think about these themes?
- What do these themes inspire or help you to imagine?

### CONSIDER FOR EDUCATORS:

- How might these themes connect to existing curriculum or classwork?
- How might these themes support your social-emotional learning goals?
- How can you support your students to safely explore these themes?

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## CONTENT WARNING

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This performance includes mild depictions of violence, references to suicide, and some mature themes, and is recommended for mature middle and high school students and adult audiences.

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## A NOTE FROM DIRECTOR PETER J. KUO

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Known as one of Shakespeare's problem plays, *Timon of Athens* resonates with me now more than it did when I was first cast in a production in of it, two decades ago. The story at its core: One person's journey through a city where wealth and power flexes an elevated lifestyle, but once use has been depleted, people and things end up in disposal.

Over these decades, my understanding of identity, value, and loyalty has expanded. And it's through these themes that I view Timon.

Now, as the political threat of cultural homogenization is being pursued, values shift from celebrating diversity to pursuing wealth. Conforming becomes a pathway to safety, and assimilation becomes a goal. In our Athens, among the wealthiest and most powerful, we see those who have created this dominate culture, and those who have succumbed to it. We are given so little backstory of who Shakespeare's Timon is. In our version, I believe an Asian actor in the title role gives reason to the betrayal from Athen's most powerful. It speaks to the history of Asian Immigrants and Asian Americans who adopted the "model minority" myth, melding into dominate culture, often to the point of abuse and disposal. A unique form of erasure, this myth dangles temporary access to power in exchange for whatever commodified resource one can give, as long as they toe the line.

Through this interpretation, we see our Timon, of new money, in the late stages of this cycle, celebrating her friends who leech upon her generosity. Once her resources have been drained, the newfound community which once lifted her up, allows her to tumble to rock bottom, an experience that can transform the most joyous person to madness, doubting every human act in the world.

Hopefully, once we can understand and witness these systems at play, we can start to fight the cycle from continuing. Half the battle is knowing.

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## A NOTE FROM FROM PRODUCER NATALIE GREENE

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While the Bay Area is home to some of the nation's wealthiest individuals, it also has one of the widest income gaps in the country. Indeed, wealth stratification across the United States has become markedly increased over the last 15 years—and concurrent with that trend, Americans' philanthropic giving to nonprofits and charities has sharply declined. This not only exacerbates challenges facing the least financially secure, but—as donation and volunteer work builds stronger communities—it also exacerbates the increasingly palpable social stratification we are reckoning with.

Timon's story starkly contrasts her great fortune with her sudden destitution, demonstrating the fragility of prosperity in a highly unequal society. As we learn that Timon's social status is dependent on her wealth, we see a mirror image of our culture which often conflates financial success with social value and influence. As Timon's "friends" disappear when her money runs out, the mirror reflects the transactional nature of social connections in a money-obsessed culture. The bustling metropolis defined by innovation, ambition, and boundless wealth slowly reveals a system built on superficial, parasitic relationships. As the story plays out onstage and in real time both locally and nationally, we are faced with potent reflections of hypocrisy, flattery, and misanthropy.

Personally, I share some of Timon's initial optimism. I believe that true human connection is the ultimate currency. I like to think that my friends will have my back when I need them. I hope I never face some of the harsh realities that Timon faces in this story; however, I am also working every day to build a strong social fabric for myself and my community.

A.C.T.'s Education & Community Programs impact and engage over 10,000 young people each year. Our programming emphasizes creativity and collaboration while building empathy, connection, and critical thinking across both real and perceived divides. *Timon of Athens*, as a part of our annual A.C.T. OUT Tour, will visit more than a dozen schools, and welcome hundreds of people of all ages to experience the story in our theater. With our audiences we will explore the culture of "giving" and the nature of friendship. When we take the show on the road, we will ask tough questions, and we will listen to what the kids have to say.

Thank you for coming to witness *Timon* and thank you for joining us on the adventure. May this play provoke us not only to see our society for what it is, but to envision what it could be. May our time together be authentic, and may our friendships—and our community—be genuine.

—Natalie Greene, Director of Education & Community Programs

# WHAT'S SHAKING? HISTORICAL

## CONTEXT & MORE

### WHAT'S SHAKING? DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What's the first thing that comes to your mind when you hear you're going to see a play by Shakespeare? Why do you think that?
- What plays by Shakespeare have you seen or heard of? Which ones have you read? What movie adaptations have you seen? What did you think of them?
- Do you have a favorite play, character or quotes by Shakespeare? If so, why is it your favorite?

### SHAKESPEARE—WHO IS THAT?

Activate this as a lecture, a quiz, or (our favorite) a trivia contest!

**Q: When did Shakespeare live?**

A: 1564-1616

**Q: Where did Shakespeare live?**

A: Stratford-upon-Avon and London, England

**Q: How many plays did Shakespeare write?**

A: Thirty-nine plays (including collaborations with John Fletcher and others). He produced an average of two plays a year for almost twenty years.



Stratford-upon-Avon and London, England

**Q: What did Shakespeare's family do?**

A: His father, John Shakespeare, made gloves. His mother, Mary Arden, grew up on a farm.

**Q: Did Shakespeare go to college?**

A: There is no record of him attending university. He attended a Grammar School that was available to all boys within his district, free of charge. He would have studied spoken and written Latin, classical authors, and drama.

**Q: Was Shakespeare just a playwright?**

A: He was also an actor and part of theater management.

**Q: What was Shakespeare's company called?**

A: The Lord Chamberlain's Men, and then the King's Men after James I became their patron.

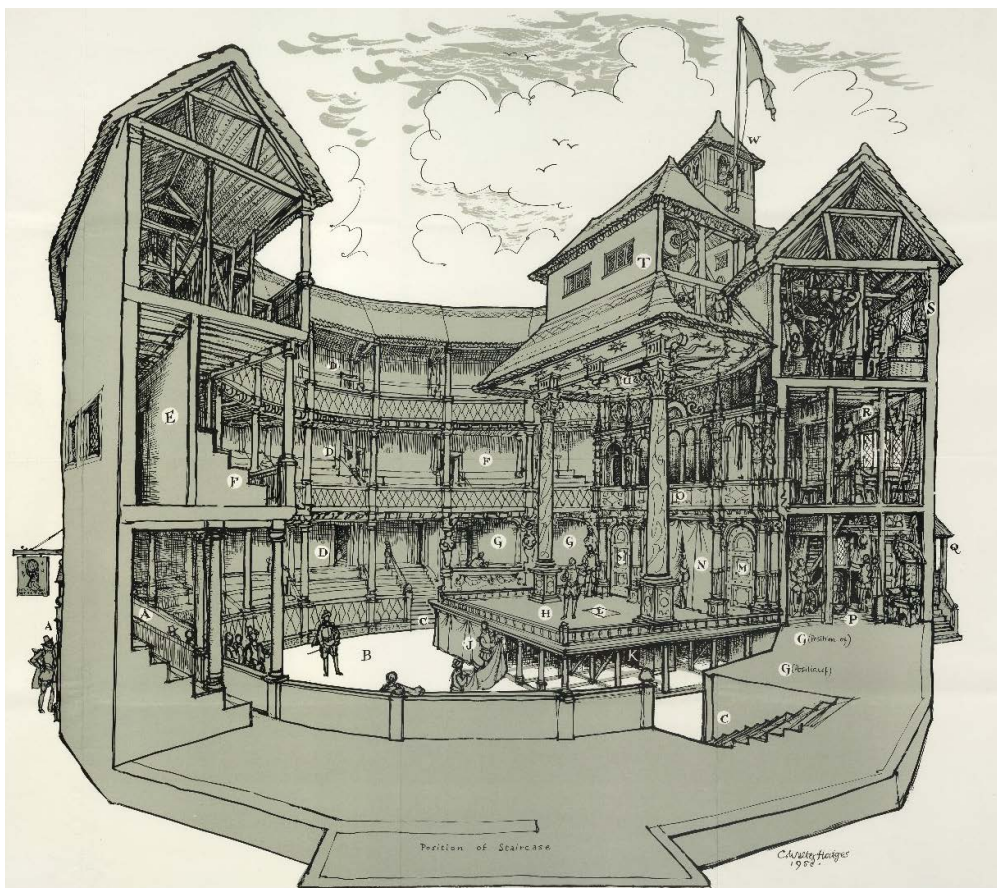


**Q: Did the Lord Chamberlain's Men have their own theater?**

A: Yes, The Globe Theater, an open-air theater with audience on three sides, where for a penny, people (called "groundlings") would stand on the rush-strewn earthen floor to watch the performance. There were seats for those who could pay more. The Globe was owned by several actor-shareholders, including Shakespeare.

**Q: How many words did Shakespeare add to the English language?**

A: Shakespeare is credited with the invention or introduction of over 1,700 words and phrases that are still used in English today. Some of the words and phrases that Shakespeare introduced are bedazzled, critic, eventful, eyeball, good riddance, majestic, and swagger. [You can find more here.](#)



**Discussion question:** What words and phrases have been added to the English language in your lifetime?

**Q: Did Shakespeare write in verse or prose?**

A: Shakespeare wrote in both verse and prose, usually alternating within the same play.

**Q: What is the difference between them?**

A: Prose is any written work that follows a basic grammatical structure (words and phrases arranged into sentences and paragraphs.) Verse is language arranged with a metric rhythm.

**Prose sample from *Timon of Athens*:**

APEMANTUS

I don't give a damn for your roast beef. I'd rather it choked me before I fawned on you. Heavens above, Timon dies a death by a thousand nibbles and she doesn't see it. It pains me to watch them all dip their food in a woman's blood - and the insane thing is she cheers them on. I am amazed that people trust each other. They should set dinner tables without knives and so economize on both meat and lives. There's good reason for it ... The fellow who sits next to you, breaks bread with you, drinks your health from the same glass as you - he's most likely the first in line to slit your throat. If I were wealthy, I'd be afraid to take a drink. Fat cats should drink with throats securely armed.

**Verse sample from *Timon of Athens*:**

TIMON

Art is welcome. One might say a portrait  
Depicts a person as they truly are,  
For in our dealings with each other we betray  
Our better natures, and become all pretense.  
These figures, captured on canvas, are just  
What they appear to be, no more, no less ...  
I like your work, and you'll find out how much ...  
Wait with the others till you hear further from me.

**Potential Assignment:** When you see *Timons of Athens*, listen to the language to figure out when the characters are speaking verse and when they are speaking prose. Why does it shift? Are there characters who only speak in one or the other?

**Q: What kind of verse did Shakespeare use?**

A: Shakespeare wrote in iambic pentameter. Most English-language poetry is measured in feet that consist of 2 beats. An iamb is a foot of poetry that has an unstressed beat followed by a stressed beat. Ba-BUM. Pentameter refers to a line of poetry that is 5 feet long, which equals 10 beats. A regular line of iambic pentameter is Ba-BUM Ba-BUM Ba-BUM Ba-BUM Ba-BUM, which can be compared with the regular rhythm of a beating human heart.

**Iambic Pentameter sample from *Timon of Athens*:** These lines, in the original iambic pentameter, include a familiar phrase. Find the rhythm while reading them aloud or in your mind, by beating a heartbeat on your chest with your hand:

FLAVIUS

Wherever we shall meet, for Timon's sake  
Let's yet be fellows. Let's shake our heads and say,  
As 'twere a knell unto our master's fortunes,  
"We have seen better days." (He offers them money.) Let each take some.  
Nay, put out all your hands. Not one word more.  
Thus part we rich in sorrow, parting poor.

**Potential Assignment:** Write two or more lines in iambic pentameter. Then perform the lines for the class, or "direct an actor" (have a peer read the lines, and coach them on how they lines should be performed).



# CHARACTER AND SYNOPSIS GAME

## STEP 1: PREPARE SOUNDS AND GESTURES FOR EACH CHARACTER

Print or write the following character names on one side of an index card or piece of paper, and the brief descriptions on the other. Give each participant a card, and ask them to come up with a sound and a gesture for their character based on what it says about them. The sound can be a single word or just a sound, but it should not be a phrase. If you have extra students, a pair of shyer students can team up!

<b>TIMON OF ATHENS</b>	<b>WEALTHY AND GENEROUS ATHENIAN, LATER LOSES ALL THEIR MONEY</b>
<b>FLAVIUS</b>	<b>LOYAL STEWARD OF TIMON</b>
<b>APEMANTUS</b>	<b>MISANTHROPIC ACQUAINTANCE OF TIMON WHO DISTRUSTS WEALTH AND POWER</b>
<b>ALCIBIADES</b>	<b>MILITARY LEADER WHO TURNS AGAINST THE CORRUPT STATE</b>
<b>POET</b>	<b>A FLATTERER OF TIMON</b>
<b>PAINTER</b>	<b>A FLATTERER OF TIMON</b>
<b>JEWELER</b>	<b>A FLATTERER OF TIMON</b>
<b>LUCILIUS</b>	<b>TIMON'S SERVANT</b>
<b>VENTIDIUS</b>	<b>AN ATHENIAN NOBLEMAN HELPED BY TIMON</b>
<b>SENATORS</b>	<b>CORRUPT GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS</b>
<b>CAPHIS, VARRO, &amp; ISIDORE</b>	<b>SERVANTS OF TIMON'S CREDITORS</b>
<b>SEMPRONIUS, LUCULLUS &amp; LUCIUS</b>	<b>FALSE FRIENDS OF TIMON</b>
<b>FLAMINIUS &amp; SERVILIUS</b>	<b>LOYAL SERVANTS OF TIMON</b>
<b>SOLDIERS</b>	<b>IN ALCIBIADES' ARMY</b>

## STEP 2: Prepare sounds and gestures for each location

As a group, decide on a sound and gesture for each of the following locations:

**Timon's house**

**Athens**

**The Senate**

**The Wilderness**

## STEP 3: Play the game!

Explain that you're going to read the following synopsis out loud, and that every time you read a name or a place, they should make their sound and do their gesture. For the places, EVERYONE should make the sound and gesture together. Read the synopsis below, and encourage participation!

## STEP 4: Debrief

Afterwards, ask them about the experience. Did their sounds and gestures change at all as they learned more about what was happening to the characters? Did they find themselves acting and reacting to other characters based on their relationship in the story? What were their favorite parts? What surprised them?

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## SYNOPSIS OF *TIMON OF ATHENS*

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(Note that this synopsis reflects the casting of the tour and uses pronouns accordingly.)

At the beginning of the play, admirers gather outside **Timon's House**. The **Painter**, **Poet**, and **Jeweler** all share their plans to flatter **Timon** with their artwork - and be rewarded generously. When **Timon** arrives, she spends lavishly in freeing her friend **Ventidius** from prison, financing the marriage of her servant **Lucillius**, and patronizing the artists. She invites the crowd to a banquet at her **house**. The cynical philosopher **Apemantus** joins the party and reviles **Timon's** other guests, predicting that they only love her for her money and will abandon her.

At the banquet, **Timon** displays her bounty by refusing repayment of her loan to **Ventidius** and by giving her guests elaborate gifts. **Apemantus** rails against the other guests' flattery while **Timon's** steward **Flavius** tells the audience that **Timon** is spending money she no longer possesses. The army captain **Alcibiades** is in attendance but appears distracted.

Shortly after, a **Senator**, predicting the end of **Timon's** days of glory, sends his servant **Caphis** to collect overdue loans. **Caphis**, along with other creditors' servants **Varro** and **Isidore**, confront **Timon**, demanding immediate repayment of loans. Learning from **Flavius** that she is bankrupt, **Timon** dispatches her own servants to seek large sums of money from her friends.

Three of **Timon's** servants visit his supposed friends and ask for money. **Flaminius** approaches **Lucullus** and is denied. **Servilius** approaches **Lucius** and is refused. **Flavius** approaches **Sempronius** and is turned away.

The servants of **Timon's** creditors gather at her **house**. She confronts them in a rage and, after they are gone, orders **Flavius** once again to invite all her friends to dinner.

At the **Senate**, **Alcibiades** pleads in vain before the Athenian **Senators** for the life of one of her **Soldiers**. We learn that this **Soldier** wounded an officer who attempted to detain him. Frustrated at being denied, **Alcibiades** provokes the **Senators**, who banish her from **Athens**.

**Timon's** supposed friends arrive at her **house** expecting another lavish banquet, but this time she serves them only lukewarm water and stones and drives them away. She then abandons **Athens** and heads into the **wilderness**, cursing the entire human race.

Back at **Timon's house**, **Flavius** shares her remaining money with her fellow servants as they disperse and shares her plan to follow **Timon** and continue to serve her faithfully.

In the **wilderness**, **Timon**, digging for roots to eat, finds gold. She is visited by **Alcibiades** and her **soldiers**, to whom she gives gold for the purpose of advancing the destruction of **Athens**. She is then visited by **Apemantus**, who accuses her of imitating him.

Word spreads that **Timon** is wealthy again, and the **Poet** and the **Painter** arrive ready to flatter her with their latest creations. **Timon** insults their hypocrisy and throws stones at them. Finally

**Flavius** arrives, and **Timon** is amazed at **Flavius'** continued devotion and wonders if she has found one good person in the world. She gives **Flavius** her remaining gold and sends her away, telling her to avoid all other humans.

Two Athenian **Senators** arrive and plead in vain with **Timon** to return to **Athens** and rescue it from **Alcibiades** and her army. **Timon** refuses, remembering **Athens** with some fondness, but announcing her intention to die alone in the **wilderness**.

In **Athens**, a victorious **Alcibiades** listens to the apologies of the **Senators** and agrees to the conditions they set. One of **Alcibiades'** **Soldiers** presents a wax impression of **Timon's** epitaph, which he has found in the **wilderness**, revealing that Timon is dead. **Alcibiades** reads it aloud, seeks to honor **Timon's** generosity, and promises peace to **Athens**.

**OPTIONAL DEBRIEF DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

- How was that? What parts stood out to you?
- What parts of the story do you still have questions about?
- What were your favorite things? What are you most looking forward to when you see the show?



# ANTICIPATION GUIDE - INSTRUCTIONS

This lesson was developed by Amanda Giguere from the **Colorado Shakespeare Festival** (CSF), and is reprinted here with permission and gratitude. CSF partners with CU Boulder's Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence and the Department of Theatre & Dance to create an interdisciplinary program that increases awareness of **Shakespeare and violence prevention**.

RATIONALE:	OBJECTIVE:	INSTRUCTIONS:
This mini-lesson will introduce students to some key themes from our production of <i>Timon of Athens</i> .	Students will be able to discuss and defend their opinions about key themes and ideas related to <i>Timon of Athens</i> and use personal experience to relate the classic story to creating positive change in their own school climate.	Use this study guide to introduce the plot points and key themes and ideas of <i>Timon of Athens</i> to your students. Choose between activating the guide through writing & discussion or through embodied exploration, as outlined below.

## WRITTEN WORK WITH THE ANTICIPATION GUIDE:

- Put students in small groups and hand out the Anticipation Guide, which asks students to defend their opinion about key ideas related to *Timon of Athens*. Explain that there are no right or wrong answers and they should fully discuss each statement with their group before writing down their answer.
- Remind them that it is okay if their answers do not match the others in their group.
- After each group has completed their work, lead a class discussion about answers that differed in groups.
- Ask students to remember their answers as they watch the play. After the play, continue the discussion and ask if any opinions have changed.

## EMBODIED WORK WITH THE ANTICIPATION GUIDE:

Use the content in the Anticipation Guide for a CONTINUUM ACTIVITY (inspired by Cornerstone Theater Company):

- Find an open area with room for students to line up side by side along an invisible line. One end of that line represents agreeing with the statement or view presented, while the other end represents disagreement. Ask students to find a place along the line that represents their personal point of view, somewhere between the two opposing viewpoints.
  - You might first try a low- to no-stakes practice round, just as: "I think pineapple belongs on pizza" or "I love to stay up late at night"
- Read one of the statements from the Anticipation Guide, and encourage students to physically place themselves on the spectrum of agree/disagree. A countdown can be helpful, for decision-making and behavior management (e.g. "You have 15 seconds" then after around 10, say "5-4-3-2-1").
- Ask for volunteers to explain why they placed themselves there on the continuum, or encourage pair shares with people either close to or far from them on the continuum.

PRO TIP: The Anticipation statements might bring up strong feelings or reveal vastly different opinions amongst peers and friends. Prepare students to be brave, honest and kind. Consider sandwiching it between a warm up and a cool down, OR, start with this activity, and follow it up with the Synopsis game (above).

## ANTICIPATION GUIDE - STATEMENTS

STATEMENT	AGREE	DISAGREE	EXPLAIN YOUR ANSWER WITH AN EXAMPLE
Generosity is always rewarded in the end.			
If someone gives you a gift, you owe them a gift in return.			
It's fine to treat people better when you need something from them.			
It's important to be as generous as you can, even if you're running out of money.			
A good person defends their friends even if what they do might be wrong.			
It is better to assume the worst about people than to assume the best.			
A person who has a lot of money deserved more respect than someone who has less.			
War is justifiable when it's in support of justice.			



# WHAT IS A “TRANSLATION” OF SHAKESPEARE?

**STEP 1:** [Watch this video created by Play On Shakespeare](#) (2 min. 4 sec.)

**STEP 2:** Read two versions of the same part of *Julius Caesar* out loud. First read the original Shakespeare, then read the translation by Shishir Kurup (see the text side-by-side on the page below).

## STEP 3: Discussion Questions

- What are 3 differences between the passages?
- Which one makes more sense to you? Why?
- How would you “translate” Shakespeare?

## STEP 4: Writing Assignment

In small groups, pick 2-4 lines from the original Shakespeare. Then, individually each student rewrites those lines in their own words. After writing, students share and compare their “translation” of the same lines: discuss why they chose to re-write the lines as they did, what each “translation” has in common and the ways they differ.

**OPTIONAL NEXT STEPS:** Students collaborate to combine their writing, using the most effective or interesting versions, and consolidating into one co-written “translation” per group. AND/OR, groups perform their “translations” for the class, with full theatrical energy!

Timon (Act IV, Sc 1) Original Shakespeare:	Timon (Act IV, Sc 1) Translation by Kenneth Cavander:
<p>Let me look back upon thee. O thou wall That girdles in those wolves, dive in the earth And fence not Athens! Obedience fail in children! Slaves and fools, Pluck the grave wrinkled Senate from the bench And minister in their steads! Bankrupts, hold fast! Rather than render back, out with your knives And cut your trusters' throats! Bound servants, steal! Large-handed robbers your grave masters are, And pill by law. Maid, to thy master's bed! Thy mistress is o' th' brothel. Son of sixteen, Pluck the lined crutch from thy old limping sire; With it beat out his brains! Piety and fear, Religion to the gods, peace, justice, truth, Domestic awe, night rest, and neighborhood, Instruction, manners, mysteries, and trades, Degrees, observances, customs, and laws, Decline to your confounding contraries, And yet confusion live! Plagues incident to men, Your potent and infectious fevers heap On Athens, ripe for stroke! Breath infect breath, That their society, as their friendship, may Be merely poison! Nothing I'll bear from thee But nakedness, thou detestable town! Take thou that too, with multiplying bans! Timon will to the woods, where he shall find Th' unkindest beast more kinder than mankind. The gods confound—hear me, you good gods all!— Th' Athenians both within and out that wall, And grant, as Timon grows, his hate may grow To the whole race of mankind, high and low! Amen.</p>	<p>One last look back...Oh you battlements, protecting Those wolves, dive into the earth, encircle Athens no more ...! Children, rebel ... Servants and clowns, Kick the grizzled old senators out of their offices And legislate in their place ... Bankrupt? Keep your money, and if your creditors demand Payment, pick up a knife and cut their throats. Workers, steal - your bosses are crooks In fine suits, gangsters raking in their loot, Legalized pirates. Servant girl, hop In your master's bed - his wife Is in the local cathouse turning tricks. Sixteen-year old son, grab the padded crutch From your limping old dad and with it beat out His brains ... Traditions, customs, laws - go dissolve yourselves Into chaos, become your opposites, And let confusion thrive! Come, every virus that we humans host, Invade their bodies, spread your contagion Throughout the populace! Let every man's breath pollute his neighbor's, Their company, like their friendship, turned to poison. I'll take nothing from your detestable town. Naked I'll go - and this too ... (stripping off an item of clothing) Take it, keep it! Timon is bound for wild country where he'll find The most ravening beast kinder than mankind. May the gods destroy - are you listening, all you Good divinities? - destroy utterly Athenians Wherever they are, and grant that for every day That Timon lives his hate may live too, ever Stronger, more potent, for the entire human race! Amen.</p>

## AFTER THE SHOW

Revisit parts of this guide that you didn't use before, including readings, videos & links, as well as activities and discussion prompts. **Use some of the questions below for reflection, writing, or discussion:**

- Why produce *Timon of Athens*, and why now? Did you feel the play connected with things happening in the world today? Or did it resonate with you personally? Why or why not?
- *Timon of Athens* is a play in which the title character is hard to root for. What is the value of watching a play in which the “hero” makes mistakes? Do you learn more from a play in which characters fail and make mistakes, or in which characters are consistently heroic?
- What were the warning signs that Timon's generosity would not be repaid or able to last? What characters and situations foreshadowed the action later in the play?
- Director Peter J. Kuo directed this play from the perspective of the Asian-American experience, in which Asian immigrants and their descendents are often treated well in the dominant culture as long as they exhibit what is called “model minority” behavior or support the existing culture. Does this come across in the production? What about the casting and character interactions supported this idea?
- Think about the character of Apemantus. What might have caused this character to be cynical and not have faith in people's intentions?
- In the Greek legend *Timon of Athens* is based on, Timon is famously “misanthropic.” What does this word mean? Do you ever feel misanthropic? What helps restore your faith in human beings?
- *Timon of Athens* is full of some of Shakespeare's best insults. Were there some that stood out to you?
- What were some examples of positive, supportive relationships in the play?
- What were some examples of negative, unsupportive relationships?
- Flavius is an example of a common archetype in Shakespeare's plays - the loyal, trustworthy servant. What did you think of her behavior? What do you hope happens to her after the action of the play?
- In many of Shakespeare's plays, he expresses concern about the death penalty as a punishment, often arguing that it's important to understand the circumstances around a crime. What do you think about the actions of the soldier who retaliated against the officer? Did he deserve the death penalty?
- If someone gives you a gift, how can you show gratitude? If you give someone else a gift, what might you expect of them? Explore the idea of reciprocity, particularly in Native cultures. How can exchanging gifts help build relationships?
- What can we learn from Timon about managing money? How can we be generous while still taking care of our own needs?
- What is Alcibiades' big decision at the end of the play? Do you agree with what he decides? What do you hope for the future of Athens after the events of the play?
- Do you think Timon should have died at the end of the play? What alternatives did she have?

# PREVENTING YOUTH SUICIDE

It appears that at the end of the play, Timon decides that she hates the world so much, her only recourse is death. Shakespeare's text does not explicitly say Timon commits suicide, but it is implied. Shakespeare never makes light of suicide, but shows empathy for those considering it, such as when he famously explores suicidal thoughts in Hamlet's "To be or not to be" speech.

Contact the **988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline** if you are experiencing mental health-related distress or are worried about a loved one who may need crisis support. Call or text 988 or chat at [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org) to connect with a trained counselor. 988 is confidential, free, and available 24/7/365. Visit [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org) for more information.

[Check out these resources](#) to help you recognize the warning signs of suicide, tools and support to help you cope, and ways to get help. We also recommend these additional [Mental Health Resources for Youth](#) from the California Department of Health and Human Services.

## BRIEF FACTS AND TIPS

- 1. Youth suicide is a serious problem.** Suicide is the leading cause of death among school age youth. In 2015, approximately 18% of 9th to 12th graders seriously considered suicide with 9% having made an attempt one or more times.
- 2. Suicide is preventable.** Youth who are contemplating suicide typically give warning signs of their distress. Most important is to never take these warning signs lightly or promise to keep them secret.
- 3. Suicide Risk Factors.** Certain characteristics are associated with increased suicide risk include:
  - Previous suicide attempt(s)
  - Isolation and aloneness
  - Non-suicidal self-injury (e.g., cutting)
  - Mental illness including depression, conduct disorders, and substance abuse
  - Family stress/dysfunction
  - Family history of suicide
  - Environmental risks, including presence of a firearm in the home
  - Situational crises (e.g., the presence of a gun in the home, bullying and harassment, serious disciplinary action, death of a loved one, physical or sexual abuse, breakup of a relationship/friendship, family violence, suicide of a peer)
- 4. Suicide Warning Signs.** Most suicidal youth demonstrate observable behaviors signalling suicidal thinking:
  - Suicidal threats in the form of direct (e.g., "I am going to kill myself") and indirect (e.g., "I wish I could fall asleep and never wake up again") statements
  - Suicide notes and plans (including online postings)

- Making final arrangements (e.g., giving away prized possessions)
- Preoccupation with death
- Changes in behavior, appearance, thoughts, and/or feelings.

- 5. There are protective factors that can lessen the effects of risk factors.** These can include family and peer support, school and community connectedness, healthy problem-solving skills, and easy access to effective medical and mental health services.
- 6. Schools have an important role in preventing youth suicide.** Children and youth spend the majority of their day in school where caring and trained adults are available to help them. Schools need trained mental health staff and clear procedures for identifying and intervening with students at risk for suicidal behavior.
- 7. The entire school staff should work to create an environment where students feel safe.** School mental health and crisis team members are responsible for conducting suicide risk assessment, warn/inform parents, provide recommendations and referrals to community services, and often provide follow up counseling and support at school.
- 8. Collaboration between schools and community providers is critical.** Establishing partnerships with local community mental health agencies helps connect students to needed services in a timely manner and helps smooth re-entry to school.
- 9. Never ignore or keep information a secret.** Peers should not agree to keep the suicidal thoughts of a friend a secret and instead should tell an adult, such as a parent, teacher, or school psychologist. Parents should seek help from school or community mental health resources as soon as possible. School staff should take the student to the designated school mental health professional or administrator.
- 10. Get immediate help if a suicide threat seems serious.** Call 911 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

#### **Suggested Resources:**

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- [Trevor Project for Youth and LGBTQ](#)
- [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#)

# VIDEO INTRODUCTIONS TO THE STORY



## Shakespeare's Timon of Athens—Discussion and Summary (29:11)

Detailed discussion from a scholar who loves the play:

*(This is long but worthwhile!)*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8iB9lvOmeKU>



## Animated with modern-day illustrations (The Book Tutor): (6:02)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZyWp9N6mMhM> (4:17)



## History with photo illustrations (Storyline Monster): (4:17)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZyWp9N6mMhM> (4:17)



**Context of the play and the history of Athens**, particularly its role in creating the idea of democratic government (This is History - includes ads from sponsor Incogni which can be skipped): (28:01)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2O7nrMnF2Y0>

*Note that some of these videos pronounce "Timon" differently - there seem to be many different ways to pronounce it!*



# ADDITIONAL SHAKESPEARE RESOURCES

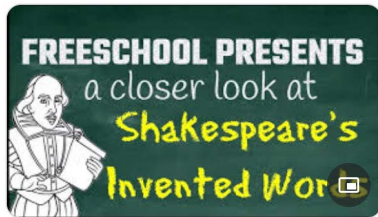
## UNDERSTAND SHAKESPEARE: King Lear, Macbeth, Romeo and Juliet | Play On Shakespeare



Hear from and learn about our partners at Play On Shakespeare! This video provides context about the how & why of presenting a translation of Shakespeare. Play On's founder Lue Douthit has led demonstrations all over the world showing artists and audiences how Shakespeare's text can undergo subtle changes and allow us to more fully understand not only the language but also the depth of the stories. As Lue says, "Shakespeare was popular 400 years ago, and I still want it to be popular culture today." (23:44)

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## FreeSchool Presents: Shakespeare's Invented Words



Explore words and phrases Invented by Shakespeare! He is credited with adding as many as 1700 words to the English language, but what does that mean? Watch to see some of the words the Bard is credited with inventing, as well as some famous phrases first recorded in his plays. (2:03)

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## Ten Thousand Things



*The A.C.T. OUT Tour is inspired by and grateful for the foundational work of Ten Thousand Things!*

Ten Thousand Things performs in prisons, homeless shelters, low-income housing and community centers. Their mission is to bring "lively, intelligent theater to people with little access to the wealth of the arts, invigorating ancient tales, classic stories, and contemporary plays through vital, open interactions between actors and non-traditional audiences." MN Original follows them to the Hennepin County Adult Corrections Facility for their performance of "Life's a Dream" by Pedro Calderon de la Barca, and talks with Artistic Director Michelle Hensley about the power of minimalist theater. (8:34)

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## Play On Shakespeare x ACT San Francisco 2025



This video shared interviews with A.C.T. staff members, clips from our spring 2025 tour of Julius Caesar directed by Rebecca J. Ennals, and commentary from audience

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## ACT OUT Tour 2024: Measure for Measure



This lively promotional video highlights our first A.C.T. OUT production in 2024, including audience responses.

# LOGISTICS & REMINDERS

## FOR ALL SCHOOLS

- Discussing the show **before and after** you see it is a trauma-informed practice that helps students comprehend, contextualize, and maximize the experience of seeing the show. Thank you for using this Guide!
- *Timon of Athens* contains references to and depictions of violence. It also features content that is eerily relevant to our times. Please consider what kinds of support your students need before, during, and after the performance.
- Read the A.C.T. [“Rules of Play”](#) to learn more about how we hope you engage with the show! If your students would benefit from additional information about theater etiquette, consider discussing some of the points made by [Blake Theater](#).

## FOR ALL PERFORMANCES

- During the show, please stay in your seat unless using the restroom. Please be safe in the aisles, which the performers also use to enter and exit the space.
- No cell phone use during the performance. No unauthorized photo or video.
- To ensure a positive experience for all, we kindly request chaperones monitor students to limit phone use and promote respectful engagement. Please also allow and encourage participation; let students enjoy and experience the show on their own terms!
  - Laughter is welcome, and verbally responding to the show in a respectful way is welcome. We want the students to embrace the experience and express themselves.
  - Theater is alive and precious in that aliveness. Disrespectful engagement can be a real bummer. Encourage students to be present and mindful, helping ensure a positive live performance experience for all.
- Your students will have the opportunity to ask the performers questions after the show! Invite them to consider their curiosities in advance, and encourage them to participate in the Q&A.

## WHAT TO EXPECT IF THE A.C.T. OUT TOUR IS COMING TO YOU

- Pre-show communication is the key to success! After our initial scheduling process, please keep an eye on your email, we will:
  - Share space requirements, requests and other logistical details in advance.
  - Schedule a site visit where we can come check out the space and confirm details in person.
  - Follow up with confirmation emails, pre-show workshop scheduling, and more.
- We plan to use the last 3-5 minutes of the show’s anticipated 90-minute run time for a very brief discussion after the show, however, we’d prefer a longer conversation if possible. Please check in with us in advance about timeframes and time constraints.

## STUDENT MATINEE PERFORMANCES at A.C.T.

- The post-show Q&A with the actors will last 15-20 minutes. Please consider staying for this dynamic engagement opportunity.
- Students are welcome to bring water bottles, to refill and use in the theater. Beverages in lidded cups, cans, and single serve bottles may be enjoyed at your seat. Food and glassware are not permitted in the performance space.
- [Double check A.C.T.’s COVID-19 updates](#). If you are feeling unwell, please stay home.
- [Learn about accessibility at A.C.T.](#)

A.C.T. PRESENTS

# TIMON OF ATHENS

BY **WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**

IN A MODERN VERSE TRANSLATION BY **KENNETH CAVANDER**

DIRECTED BY **PETER J. KUO**

Additional adaptation and translation by the A.C.T. OUT Tour company

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## CAST

(In alphabetical order)

<b>Jordan Covington</b>	Apemantus/Flaminius/Senator 2/others
<b>Poe Angeles Dayao</b>	Jeweler/Soldier/Caphis/others
<b>Evan Held</b>	Poet/Senator 1/others
<b>Christian Jimenez</b>	Painter/Servilius/Isidore/others
<b>Radhika Rao</b>	Timon of Athens
<b>Chris Steele</b>	Alcibiades/Lady Lucius/others
<b>Annie Wang</b>	Flavia/Senator 3/others
<b>Lauren Dunagan</b>	Understudy

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## CREATIVE TEAM

<b>Ben Chau-Chiu</b>	Assistant Director
<b>Kiki Hood</b>	Scenic & Props Designer
<b>Jessie Amoroso</b>	Costume Designer
<b>Dani O'Dea</b>	Fight Director
<b>Alyssa Songco</b>	Stage Manager
<b>Morgan Bright</b>	Assistant Stage Manager

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## ADDITIONAL CREDITS

<b>Rebecca J. Ennals</b>	Co-Producer
<b>Natalie Greene</b>	Co-Producer
<b>Viera Whye</b>	Co-Producer
<b>Anelisa Armijo Montoya</b>	Associate Producer
<b>Michael Anderburg</b>	Production Manager
<b>Megan McClintock</b>	Resident Stage Manager
<b>Lue Douthit</b>	Play On Director of Research & Practice and Co-Founder

The videotaping or making of electronic or other audio and/or visual recordings of this production, or distributing recordings on any medium, including the internet, is strictly prohibited.



# *Timon of* **ATHENS**

## CAST



**Jordan Covington**  
Apemantus/others



**Poe Angeles Dayao**  
Jeweler/Servant/others



**Evan Held**  
Ventidius/Poet/others



**Christian Jimenez**  
Painter/Senator/others



**Radhika Rao**  
Timon of Athens



**Chris Steele**  
Alcibiades/others



**Annie Wang**  
Flavius/others



**Lauren Dunagan**  
Understudy



<https://www.nationalartsstandards.org>

**Creating:** Conceiving and developing new artistic ideas and work.

**Performing/Presenting/Producing:** Realizing artistic ideas and work through interpretation and presentation.

**Responding:** Understanding and evaluating how the arts convey meaning.

**Connecting:** Relating artistic ideas and work with personal meaning and external context

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## THE A.C.T. OUT TOUR IS PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PLAY ON SHAKESPEARE



**Special Thanks to:** all of the actors, production staff and creative team members bringing this show to life, as well as to Anelisa Armijo Montoya, Elizabeth Halperin, and all A.C.T. Education & Community Programs teaching artists & team members.

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Thank you for being  
a part of the A.C.T.  
OUT Tour!

