

studio180theatre

**STUDY GUIDE
FEBRUARY 2018**

King Charles III
by Mike Bartlett

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A. Guidelines for Productive Classroom Discussion

Thank you for bringing your students to *King Charles III*. We hope your students have the most positive and engaging theatre experience possible. To that end, we have created this **Study Guide** to support your pre-show preparation and post-show follow-up in the classroom.

For the most robust exploration of the characters and themes of *King Charles III*, we recommend booking a [Studio 180 IN CLASS](#) workshop led by our experienced Artist Educators. We use drama-based activities to promote empathy and inspire critical thinking in three immersive sessions, delving into the big questions of the play. Please contact [Jessica Greenberg](#) to learn more or book a workshop.

Studio 180 is known for provocative shows that tackle potentially sensitive, personal and controversial topics. *King Charles III* contains some serious themes that may feel private or uncomfortable for some students, including issues of identity, family, privacy and consent. With this in mind, Studio 180 has developed the following guidelines to help you lead productive pre- and post-show sessions in which **all students feel valued, respected and able to contribute openly and honestly to the discussion.**

- Class members should make a commitment to respecting one another. Invite suggestions from students as to what “**respect**” means to them. Some of these guidelines may include commitments to confidentiality, avoiding side chatter, and never ridiculing or putting down participants or their ideas.
- Your class may include students from a wide variety of cultural, racial, religious and national backgrounds, as well as students whose gender and sexual identities range across a broad and diverse spectrum. **Teachers and students must resist the urge to place individuals in the spotlight based on their perceived identity or point of view.** Students will engage in the conversation as they feel comfortable.
- Family diversity is important to keep in mind for both teachers and students to **avoid generalizations and assumptions** that could isolate or alienate individuals. Frequent reminders that there will often be as many different perspectives as there are people in the room are useful and help reinforce the value of a multiplicity of ideas and points of view.
- It is the moderator’s role to establish a space of respect and inclusion, and they must take special care to **ensure that students holding a majority opinion do not vilify those “on the other side” who hold a minority view.** The moderator should also pose questions to the class to help keep the conversation on track.
- The point of a classroom discussion about *King Charles III* should not be to reach a class consensus. The goal should be to **establish a forum for a free and respectful exchange of ideas.**

B. Feedback

1. Teacher Response Form

Studio 180 is grateful for your feedback and strives to incorporate your suggestions into our educational programming. Kindly complete this form and return it by mail to **Studio 180 Theatre, 19 Madison Ave, Third Floor, Toronto, ON, M5R 2S2**. We welcome student feedback as well, so please do not hesitate to send us student reviews, reports, projects and other responses. If you prefer to respond electronically, we offer a single teacher/student feedback form that can be completed here: <http://studio180theatre.com/education/feedback/education-feedback-form/>.

- 1. How did you find out about *King Charles III*?**

- 2. Did you find the Study Guide useful in preparing your class for the play and/or in helping to shape post-show class discussion?**

- 3. Did you find the post-show Q&A session productive and interesting?**

- 4. Did the themes and issues of the play inform or enhance your course curriculum? Were you able to use the experience at the theatre as a springboard to class work and if so, how?**

2. Student Response Form

Thank you for taking the time to respond to Studio 180 Theatre's survey about your recent experience with *King Charles III*. Your feedback is important and we appreciate your help!

NAME (optional)

SCHOOL

YOUR GRADE LEVEL

YOUR SUBJECT OF STUDY (e.g., Drama, World Issues, etc.)

- 1. What did you think of the play?**

- 2. Did you feel prepared for the play? What activities helped you feel comfortable with its themes and content? What would have enhanced your experience of the play?**

- 3. If you participated in a Studio 180 IN CLASS workshop, tell us about that experience. What were your favourite parts? Was there anything you would have changed?**

- 4. Tell us about the Artist Educators who led the workshop sessions. How did they do?**

- 5. Please share any additional feedback on the other side of this page.**

C. Introduction to Studio 180 Theatre

Inspired by the belief that people can engage more fully in the world through the experience of live performance, Studio 180 Theatre produces socially relevant theatre that provokes public discourse and promotes community engagement. In 2017/18 we are celebrating 15 years of bringing Toronto audiences compelling, high quality theatre that inspires us to ask big questions about our world and ourselves.

Our inaugural production of *The Laramie Project* played to sold out houses at Artword Theatre in Toronto in 2003. Its success led to a 2004 remount at Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, which earned two Dora Award nominations. Since then, Studio 180 has continued to stage acclaimed productions of plays that tackle difficult issues and generate powerful audience and community responses. These are often Toronto, Canadian and/or North American premieres of large ensemble pieces that are contemporary, internationally renowned, and unlikely to be produced elsewhere.

As an independent theatre company, we are a nomadic group of artists. We create and produce our work in various spaces and venues across Toronto and we frequently partner with other companies in order to stage our plays. Past partnerships have included collaborations with Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, Canadian Stage, The Musical Stage Company (formerly Acting Up Stage), The Theatre Centre, Tarragon Theatre and The Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company. *King Charles III* marks our fifth partnership with Mirvish Productions and our fourth Off-Mirvish season.

In addition to our producing partners, we have a proud history of collaborating with community and advocacy organizations to raise funds and awareness around issues, causes and communities. Through special events, art exhibits in our theatre lobbies, pre- and post-show conversations, and panel discussions, we work together with artists, community leaders and subject matter experts to bring conversations ignited by our plays [Beyond the Stage](#). Community partners have included Supporting Our Youth, The Triangle Program, Givat Haviva, Palestine House, Democrats Abroad, The 519, AIDS ACTION NOW!, AIDS Committee of Toronto, Toronto People With AIDS Foundation, Positive Youth Outreach, Peace Now, The Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation of Canada, Women in Capital Markets, Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention, CATIE, Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention, the Cities Centre at U of T, Feminist Art Conference, Shameless Magazine and the Dotsa Bitove Wellness Academy.

Outreach to high school audiences has always been a crucial component of our work. In 2009 we launched [Studio 180 IN CLASS](#), an innovative workshop model that fosters productive dialogue, encourages critical thinking, and promotes empathy by exploring the uniquely humanizing capacity of live theatre. Over the years, our Studio 180 IN CLASS program has grown to reach hundreds of high school students across the GTA each year.

We love plays that provoke big questions about our communities and our world; we have introduced Toronto audiences to a significant number of socially relevant plays from international stages. In 2015, inspired by our eagerness to investigate more locally rooted questions, we launched [Studio 180 IN DEVELOPMENT](#), one of Toronto's newest theatre creation initiatives. Working with both established and emerging playwrights and creators, we provide financial and artistic resources to a broad range of issue-based works at various stages of development. We then invite student and public audiences to hear the work and contribute to the development process.

Studio 180 Theatre's Production History

- 2003** *The Laramie Project*, Artword Theatre
- 2004** *The Laramie Project*, at and in association with Buddies in Bad Times Theatre
The Passion of the Chris, Toronto Fringe Festival
- 2006** *The Arab-Israeli Cookbook*, Berkeley Street Theatre Upstairs
- 2007** *Offensive Shadows*, SummerWorks Festival
- 2008** *Stuff Happens*, Berkeley Street Theatre Downstairs
- 2008/09** *Offensive Shadows*, Tarragon Theatre Extra Space
Blackbird, Berkeley Street Theatre Downstairs, in association with Canadian Stage
- 2009/10** *Stuff Happens*, Royal Alexandra Theatre, presented by David Mirvish
The Overwhelming, Berkeley Street Theatre Downstairs, in association with Canadian Stage
- 2010/11** *Parade*, Berkeley Street Theatre Upstairs, in association with Acting Up Stage
Our Class, Berkeley Street Theatre Downstairs, in association with Canadian Stage
- 2011/12** *The Normal Heart*, at and in association with Buddies in Bad Times Theatre
Clybourne Park, Berkeley Street Theatre Downstairs, in association with Canadian Stage
- 2012/13** *The Normal Heart*, at and in association with Buddies in Bad Times Theatre
Clybourne Park, Panasonic Theatre, presented by David Mirvish
The Laramie Project 10th Anniversary Reading (featuring 50-member ensemble), Panasonic Theatre
- 2013/14** *God of Carnage*, Panasonic Theatre, presented by David Mirvish
Cock, The Theatre Centre
- 2014/15** *NSFW*, The Theatre Centre
Love, Dishonor, Marry, Die, Cherish, Perish, Fleck Dance Theatre, co-presented with PANAMANIA presented by CIBC; in association with IFOA
- 2015/16** *You Will Remember Me*, at and in co-production with Tarragon Theatre
- 2016/17** *My Night With Reg*, Panasonic Theatre, presented by David Mirvish
- 2017/18** *My Name is Asher Lev*, with the Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company
King Charles III, CAA Theatre (formerly the Panasonic), presented by David Mirvish

D. Introduction to the Play and the Playwright

The Play – King Charles III

Mike Bartlett’s acclaimed “future history” play imagines the death of Queen Elizabeth II and the power struggle that results – all in contemporary iambic pentameter. Questions of leadership, identity, privacy, freedom, family and tradition are at the fore of this timely and epic play that shines a light on power, politics and the very nature of democracy.

King Charles III premiered at London’s Almeida Theatre in April 2014 and, after a successful run, transferred to Wyndam’s Theatre in the West End before touring the UK and Australia and hitting Broadway in 2016. It received the 2014 Olivier Award for Best New Play, five Tony nominations, and was adapted for TV, airing as a film on BBC Two in 2017.

Over the past few years, *King Charles III* has received a number of North American regional productions and, as the play features fictional versions of real life figures and examines themes of politics and power, its relevance continues to shift and evolve. For example, when Bartlett first wrote the play, the real Prince Harry was single and had not even met his now-fiancée Meghan Markle. Bartlett created the imagined character of Jessica Edwards and wrote a love story for Harry. For our Toronto premiere, Bartlett provided clever re-writes in order to retain the integrity of his script while accommodating current events. The Studio 180/Mirvish production will be the first time this new text is performed.

To learn more about the inspiration for the play and Bartlett’s fascinating writing process, check out his article in the Guardian, included in **Section G** of this Study Guide.

CONTENT: We recommend *King Charles III* for grade 11 & 12 students of Drama, History, Politics, English and Media Studies. The play includes several instances of mature language.

If you have questions or concerns about the content of the play, or wish to receive an electronic reading copy, please do not hesitate to contact us at education@studio180theatre.com or **416-962-1800**.

The Playwright – Mike Bartlett

Studio 180 Theatre was proud to introduce Canadian audiences to Mike Bartlett’s work when we produced the Canadian premiere of *Cock* at The Theatre Centre in 2014. Toronto’s Coal Mine Theatre produced *Bull* in 2015. Currently, Bartlett is Associate Playwright at Paines Plough. In 2011 he was writer-in-residence at The National Theatre, and in 2007 he was Pearson Playwright in Residence at the Royal Court Theatre. His play *Love, Love, Love* won Best New Play in the 2011 Theatre Awards UK, and his play *Cock* won an Olivier Award in 2010 for Outstanding Achievement in an Affiliate Theatre. He won the Writer’s Guild Tinniswood and Imison prizes for *Not Talking* and the Old Vic New Voices Awards for *Artefacts*. Theatre credits include: *Love, Love, Love, 13* (National Theatre), *Decade* (co-writer), *Earthquakes in London*, *Cock*, *Contractions*, *Artefacts*, and *My Child*. Radio credits include: “The Core,” “Heart,” “Liam,” “The Steps,” “Love Contract,” “Not Talking,” and “The Family Man,” all on BBC. Screen credits include “Earthquakes in London” and “Hometown.” Directing credits include *Honest* by DC Moore. He is currently under commission from Headlong Theatre, Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse, Hampstead Theatre, and The Royal Court Theatre.

F. Attending the Play

Prior to the performance, please ensure that your students are well prepared. The better prepared they are, the more they will gain from the experience. The following guidelines should help you and your students get the most out of attending *King Charles III*:

- **Please arrive early.** When travelling in the city, whether by school bus or TTC, it is always best to leave extra time in case of traffic or transit delays. We are proud to promote a multi-generational experience during our weekday matinées. Our audiences include student groups as well as general adult audience members and the **matinées begin promptly at 1:30PM**. To avoid disruption, **LATECOMERS may not be admitted**.
- **All photography and recording of the performance is strictly prohibited.**
- Please impress upon your students the importance of **turning off all cell phones**, music players and other electronic devices. If students understand *why* it is important to refrain from using electronics, they will be more likely to adhere to this etiquette. **Remind students that they will be seeing people performing live** and, as a rule, if you can see and hear the actors, the actors can see and hear you. Even text messaging – with its distracting, glowing light – is extremely disruptive in the theatre. **Please be courteous.**
- **Outside food and beverages are not permitted in the auditorium.** Spills are messy and noisy snacks and bottles can be disruptive for performers and patrons alike. Please ensure that students have the opportunity to eat lunch prior to attending the performance. There are many affordable food options in the immediate vicinity of the CAA Theatre if students wish to arrive early and purchase lunch before the show.
- **We encourage student responses and feedback.** After all Wednesday matinée performances, we offer a talkback (Q&A) session. We are interested in hearing what our audiences have to say and engaging in a dialogue inspired by the play. If students are aware of the post-show talkback, they will be better prepared to formulate questions during the performance – and they will remember to remain in their seats following curtain call! After the show, kindly take the time to complete our online [Teacher/Student Response Form \(studio180theatre.com/education-feedback\)](http://studio180theatre.com/education-feedback), or use the forms included in this guide in **Section B**, and ask your students to do the same. Your feedback is extremely valuable to us!

G. Background Information

1. Mike Bartlett: How I wrote *King Charles III*

Playwright Mike Bartlett knew he wanted *King Charles III* to be a Shakespearean drama – a family epic in five acts, complete with a ghost and a comic subplot. But would writing in iambic pentameter prove too great a challenge?

<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2014/sep/20/king-charles-iii-mike-bartlett>

Saturday 20 September 2014

The idea for *King Charles III* arrived in my imagination with the form and content very clear, and inextricably linked. It would be a play about the moment Charles takes the throne, and how his conscience would lead him to refuse to sign a bill into law. An epic royal family drama, dealing with power and national constitution, was the content, and therefore the form had surely to be Shakespearean. It would need five acts, quite possibly a comic subplot, but most worryingly, the majority of it would have to be in verse.

This was terrifying. Verse is one thing (and a thing I knew very little about), but verse drama? And a form of verse drama that would lay this play alongside the greatest literature in the English language? All of this was enough to stop me writing a word, so for two years the play remained merely a good idea – unspoiled by any attempt to write it into reality.

Eventually I mentioned it to the director Rupert Goold, who commissioned it straight away, and then pestered me into confronting it. When I finally started, I had two ways in, to make it approachable. Firstly, although I knew little about verse, I did know something of Shakespeare. At university, I studied English and theatre, and one of our lecturers, Bridget Escolme, had been doing a PhD on Shakespearean staging traditions. We'd learned about the length of time it took to make an entrance on to the stage, the conventions of crowd scenes, up and down, heaven and hell – the mechanics of the stage traffic. Crucially, we learned that this could all be seen, reflected in, and at times indicated by, the verse. There are few stage directions in Shakespeare because the verse serves that purpose. The dramatic action of the lines is related to the physical action required. And the audience is co-opted, part of the drama: it can become a crowd, a mob, the entire English population, or, during a soliloquy, the brain of the character. So I understood that Shakespeare's verse was never concerned with any pure authorial voice, but was instead a vast multiplicity of viewpoints, a rough and tumble performance text.

Secondly, I'd seen Ken Campbell perform at the Edinburgh fringe one year. He stepped forward and boldly claimed he knew exactly how Shakespeare wrote his plays. He had solved the authorship debate. Then his group entered and began to improvise in iambic pentameter, surprisingly well. Perhaps it lacked the finesse and poetry of Shakespeare – but actually, perhaps it didn't. Despite being made up in the moment, it was moving, funny, meaningful and dramatic. Campbell claimed that the reason Shakespeare could write the verse so well, and be so prolific, was that as an actor, he had to hold about 20 parts from different plays in his head at any one time. The iambic rhythm had been drummed into him until it became instinctual. The language was, to him, a vernacular. He had done his 10,000 hours of practice.

So clearly, I was more than a little behind Shakespeare. I needed to practise. I wrote lines and lines of iambic pentameter, speaking it round the house to myself, trying to get to the point where I might be able to improvise the verse fluidly, hoping that if I could, the writing would be driven by the desires and thoughts of the characters, rather than aesthetics or metric requirements. I wrote test speeches and scenes for the play, trying to see if or how it might work. And doing all this, I learned a few things – that the temptation was immediately to get carried away with metaphor

and simile. Characters in this form are allowed to use extended imagery to explore psychology and for a writer this is seductive. You can understand why Shakespeare succumbed to it so often. And, to an extent, audiences also enjoy it, but it has to relate to the specific predicament the character is in, in that moment, and it can't go on too long. The audience is only, in the end, concerned with the drama – anything that veers too far away from it, however well written, will lose their interest.

It also took me a while to find the right tone for the play, and to understand how important dramatic context is. An early speech I wrote, originally to test the verse, is in Act 1 Scene 3. The prime minister is discussing a privacy bill with Charles. The original speech was:

*It cannot be a right or civilised
Country, in which, in any private place
A toilet, bedroom, might be there concealed
A tiny camera, then these photos 'splayed
As front page news, the consequences thrown
Around the world and ever-lasting, so
Without a jury, judge, or evidence
A punishment is meted out, a life
Is ruined, reputation murdered.
And as we know the dead once dead are gone
Forever, all that's left is writing on the
Tomb, read by generations still to come
The only remnant of what press destroyed –
Electric letters scrawled forever on
The graveyard of the cursed internet.*

Although a part of this speech remains in the play, most of it was removed, because it occurs too early. We haven't built to this level of passion. But not only that. It feels too emotive and if spoken on stage, would make the prime minister seem unhinged. It became clear this language – with "remnants", "destroyed", "tombs", "scrawled" and "graveyard" – was simply too much. The vocabulary the characters used, and their verse, even though heightened, couldn't stray too far from the language we would believe them to speak day to day. These are not fairytale characters: we want to believe in them as the real people we know exist.

I found the same words cropping up often – just to fill the demands of the metre. For instance, people were often introduced as "good" ("My good prime minister"). I also had to avoid lines with monosyllabic words, because, spoken out loud, they expose the rhythm too much. But perhaps more interesting was when the verse compressed meaning, rather than extending it. This would happen particularly when characters were passionate – for instance, when Harry, late in the play, is attempting to persuade his father that he wants to stop being a prince:

*If King approves it can through boredom work.
We make no fuss 'cept that I have moved, got job.
And will no longer take the civil list
I'll have no role official and not prince,
I'll live a life of normalcy, within
This country, rather than atop the mound
Unearned and with a target on my back.*

I wrote this speech quite fluidly within the scene, but found, because Harry is passionate, he manages to tell the story of what he wants to happen, but also explain the reason for it, all within

seven lines. I suspect if I wrote this in a naturalistic play, the speech would be significantly longer. It reminds me of what Peter O'Toole said about speaking Shakespeare – that while the convention is to match the thought with the word, he found it works much better when the thought is just behind the word. The language leads, and we only have time to think in its wake. I only manage it a few times in the play, but in performance you can sometimes feel the audience enjoying the experience of catching up.

Having done my tests, and feeling a little more confident, I planned the play, again and again. There was indeed a subplot, of Harry falling in love with a commoner art student. Diana's ghost would make an appearance. But the planning was mainly to make sure the plot significantly moved forward in every scene, and did so through knotty problems that posed deep familial and constitutional problems. This meant that when I came to write the scenes there would be a lot for the characters to achieve through verse – not just explain their position, or psychology, but they would use the language as rhetoric to get what they want.

Finally then, having settled on a plan, I began to write, and ended up pretty much going from beginning to end. With other plays I've written very fast: I'm keen for the energy of the moment to translate on to the page, so characters say things that surprise me. But with *Charles III*, the verse slowed me down. And I found I loved it. The writing became more considered, rather than impulsive. To paraphrase Charles in the play, it felt "slow cooked" rather than "microwaved", and so as the play emerged I felt it was something very different from anything I'd written before.

The other thing that surprised me as the play grew was that it was defiantly unironic. I found the verse rejected irony, forcing me to take the characters seriously. Another moment that didn't make the final draft (but lasted until the first preview, mainly at my insistence) was spoken by Charles, just after he sees the ghost.

*This is psychology so manifest
If shown upon the stage I would cry out
A fraud. Simplicity! And badly done!*

I wanted to see this played in front of an audience, because I was sure this knowing wink was in the Shakespearean mode, and would work well. Sure enough, it got a big laugh, but simultaneously it destroyed the scene. These lines told the audience not to take Charles, or the play, seriously, and that was the opposite of the message we needed. This was the case throughout – the terms the verse and the play worked on were sincere and meaningful. It wasn't a postmodern take on Shakespeare, it wasn't a parody or a pastiche – it was a play, telling a story the audience should care about. Anything that worked against this was swiftly cut.

Once the play was written, and liked, and then programmed, I was keen we found an actor to play Charles who knew Shakespeare – who could take on this part like any role – seriously, and follow the clues in the text, rather than perform an impression or parody of Charles the man. Tim Piggot-Smith was therefore perfect, and almost as soon as he was cast he began sending me emails about the verse. He would practise it at home, out loud, and if there was unintentional assonance, alliteration or – God forbid – repeated words, he'd expertly fish them out. He also encouraged me, as did Goold, to stray from the metre a little more often. For instance, the line:

*My Catherine I did make it clear I'll not
Inflict the same division on ourselves
That currently does tear our country up.*

Became

My Catherine I did make it clear I'll not

*Inflict the same division on ourselves
That currently does tear at our country.*

In the first, the emphasis falls on "up", whereas by breaking with the metre in the second version it falls on "tear" and "country". Vastly better. Once we were in rehearsal there were many more examples of this. A company of actors and a good director became the best editor one could imagine. The play lost about 20 minutes in running time, and was far better for it.

Then in performance audiences seemed to enjoy it. Some of them didn't realise it was in verse until they saw the text on the page. At first I thought this was a shame, but I quickly understood that it meant they were enjoying it for all the right reasons – meaning, imagery, character – rather than worrying about the technical aspects. Surely this is true in every element of theatre. The audience wants the lighting to enhance the mood and atmosphere of the scene – not to wonder how the lanterns are attached or wired. The mechanics of verse drama should happen behind the scenes, allowing the audience to experience the characters and story.

And now, despite saying how this form was uniquely connected to the content, and I can't imagine ever writing another play in verse, I'm not so sure. I hugely enjoyed the process of writing this play, more than any play I'd written before. I loved what heightened language could do in a scene, and being able to have a character explore inner decision-making and psychology with an audience. I'd be sad never to have access to all these modes again. So I reserve the right to return to verse drama one day. Even iambic pentameter. *King William V?*

2. Play Synopsis – King Charles III Scene by Scene

Act One

Scene 1.1

Queen Elizabeth II of England has died and her family – Charles, Prince of Wales, his wife Camilla, his sons the Princes Harry and William, and William’s wife Kate – convene immediately following the funeral. Charles has a moment alone to contemplate the weight of his upcoming coronation and betrays his fear of failure. Prime Minister Evans arrives to pay his respects and Charles makes a last-minute decision to make his public appearance unaccompanied – a bold symbolic gesture in his new role as King.

Scene 1.2

Prince Harry, shirking his responsibility and duty to his family, goes out partying with his friends Spencer and Couttsey. They set him up with a young woman, Jess Edwards, whom they expect will be a one-night stand for the rebellious and newly-divorced prince.

Scene 1.3

Charles meets with Prime Minister Evans and thwarts convention when he challenges a parliamentary bill proposing limits on freedom of the press. The two men debate the virtues of journalistic freedom, privacy, and the nature of parliamentary democracy. Charles bucks convention once again by summoning Mark Stevens, the leader of the opposition. Seizing a political opportunity, Stevens suggests that Charles technically has a legal right to refuse to sign the bill. In a soliloquy that ends Act One, Charles confesses his weakness and indecision and then thinks he sees a ghost – he wonders if it is the ghost of his mother or simply a hallucination born of stress, fatigue and grief.

Act Two

Scene 2.1

Prime Minister Evans is with his wife Sarah when he receives a letter from Charles proclaiming his refusal to sign the bill. Evans calls a meeting with Stephens and suggests that the two politicians present a united front to Charles. Stevens pledges his support to the PM but manages to convince Evans to speak to Charles without him.

Scene 2.2

After a fun night together, Harry is smitten with Jess and seduced by the normalcy she represents. Press Adviser James Reiss does not approve of the match. The PM arrives to speak with Charles and runs into Kate and William, with whom he shares the news of Charles’ refusal to sign the bill. The PM tries to convince Charles to change his position but Charles remains resolute, stating, “Without my voice, and spirit, I am dust.”

Act Three

Scene 3.1

Outside 10 Downing Street, PM Evans gives a speech to the British people publicizing Charles’ refusal to approve the bill. He vows to the people that with or without the King’s signature, the bill will be made into law within the month.

Scene 3.2

Charles makes a public speech on TV during which he argues the virtues of journalistic freedom, and cautions against the dangers of censorship and corruption. He emphasizes his duty to obey his conscience and uphold journalistic freedom, even if it thwarts democratic convention.

Scene 3.3

Jess Edwards secretly meets with Press Adviser Reiss and discloses that she is being blackmailed by an opportunistic ex-boyfriend who is threatening to sell naked photos of her now that she is an object of tabloid attention. She pleads for Reiss's assistance but he is unresponsive. They are soon interrupted by the arrival of Charles, who, in a soliloquy, reveals his surprise and delight in opinion polls reporting that he has the support of 50% of the British people. Camilla enters and laments the stress she sees in Charles. She tells him that Mark Stevens has arrived to see him. The two men hold a secret conference during which Stevens encourages Charles to seek historical precedence for a King interfering in government politics. After Stevens leaves, the ghost of Diana appears once again and stokes Charles' ambition when she refers to him as "the greatest King we ever had."

Scene 3.4

In the middle of the night, William and Harry both think they hear screams. Harry, distraught because Jess has abandoned him in the night, leaves. Kate enters and learns that William has summoned the PM for a secret midnight meeting to discuss the issue of Charles and the privacy bill. William betrays his nervousness by pleading with Evans to try one more time to convince Charles to sign the bill. Frustrated, Kate takes matters into her own hands and insists that William present his father with an ultimatum in order to preserve the monarchy. Reminiscent of Lady Macbeth, she tells William, "Become the man I know you are and act."

Scene 3.5

Harry buys a kebab from a food truck. The food vendor, not knowing he's speaking with Prince Harry, reveals a view widely held among the British people – that the Queen's death has signalled the unraveling of the British Empire. When the kebab vendor detects that Harry is lovesick, he encourages him to pursue his romance.

Scene 3.6

At the House of Parliament, both political parties are prepared to sign the new bill into law, regardless of the King's unwillingness to consent. They are interrupted by Charles, who bursts in and dissolves Parliament.

Act Four

Scene 4.1

In the wake of Charles' bold act, there is growing political protest, violence and instability. Jess Edwards protests against the monarchy. Harry finds her and convinces her to give him one more chance.

Scene 4.2

At Buckingham Palace, Charles asserts his authority and implores the Chief of Defence, Sir Gordon, to make a "show of strength" by bringing in an armoured tank to guard the palace. Charles continues to insist, despite pushback from the MPs, on the dissolution of Parliament. He enlists Mark Stevens to deliver this message to the House. Harry and Jess come to Charles to declare their love for one another, warn him that a naked photo of Jess has been leaked to the

press, and request permission for Harry to be absolved of his royal duties and lead a common life. Charles pledges his support to Harry and Jess, granting Harry's request; but, at the behest of Reiss, asks Harry to postpone the announcement until after the coronation.

Scene 4.3

In a soliloquy, Kate condemns race- and gender-based power imbalances in government and reveals her plans to stake a claim for herself and her children. She then surprises William by summoning the Prime Minister, together with the Head of Police, who provide reports of increasing instability. Kate and Evans insist that the future of the royal family is threatened if William does not interfere; he eventually relents and agrees to follow Kate and her plan.

Scene 4.4

Charles, William and Kate are at a TV studio with James Reiss as Charles prepares to make a televised speech to the nation, defending his position. At the last moment, he is ambushed by William, who takes the stage to declare that he will act as a liaison between the King and Parliament. He states that Charles has agreed to this arrangement. Furious at his son's lie, Charles exits.

Act Five

Scene 5.1

Betrayed by William and James Reiss, Charles is enraged but remains resolute in his position. He fires Reiss, who says he now works for William. William enters and the father and son confront one another – Charles demanding respect and familial duty, and William pleading for a peaceful, stable end to the conflict. William proposes that at the forthcoming coronation, he and Kate should be crowned in place of Charles. The PM joins to help convince Charles to follow this course. Eventually Camilla, Kate and Harry also arrive, delivering an ultimatum to Charles, forcing him to choose between his family and the crown. Eventually, a sorrowful Charles acquiesces.

Scene 5.2

At the coronation, Jess arrives to discover that Harry has reversed his decision, choosing family, duty and royalty over her. Charles briefly holds the crown and muses, "It is much heavier than I thought," before William is crowned King of England.

H. Topics for Discussion and Classroom Activities

1. Theatrical Presentation

a) ISSUE-BASED THEATRE

Studio 180 Theatre produces plays that speak to socially and politically relevant issues. With your class, examine the company's Vision and Mission statements.

Vision: The experience of live performance inspires people to engage more fully in the world.

Mission: To produce socially relevant theatre that provokes public discourse and promotes community engagement.

1. What do these statements mean to you? How effectively do you think the company's Mission serves its Vision? How does this production of *King Charles III* work toward fulfilling our Mission?
2. **Why live theatre?** What makes theatre an effective art form through which to explore themes, issues and human behaviour? Consider what is specific about your intellectual, emotional and communal responses to attending live theatre compared to engaging in other forms of art, such as reading a novel or looking at a painting.

•**HINT:** *How does live theatre HUMANIZE issues and why is the humanization of social and political issues important?*
3. Brainstorm issues that you would like to see turned into a piece of theatre. If you were going to see another play, or write a play yourself, what would you want it to be about? This question may serve as a jumping off point for **drama students** to begin their own issue-based theatre projects around stories and topics of particular relevance to them.

b) A FUTURE HISTORY PLAY

What does the phrase "future history play" mean to you and why do you think this phrase is used to describe *King Charles III*? What is the value of fictionalizing real life figures rather than creating an entirely imagined cast of characters? What are some of the benefits and challenges to producing a play about living public figures?

•**HINT:** How do changing circumstances and current events impact the play? Is the play the same in 2016 as it is in 2018?

c) IAMBIC PENTAMETER

Though the characters use contemporary language, the play is written in verse or iambic pentameter – just like the plays of William Shakespeare. Why do you think Mike Bartlett wrote the play this way? How does this connect with the idea of a **future history play**? How does the verse and rhythm impact your experience of the play?

•**HINT:** *How does the verse elevate the text? Which characters speak in verse and which do not? What is revealed when a character switches between verse and prose?*

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

Learn and perform a Shakespeare monologue! See **Section I1** for suggested speeches and guidelines for the scansion and playing of verse.

d) METAPHOR

As playwright Mike Bartlett writes in the Guardian article included in section G of this study guide, metaphor and simile are used throughout the play, just as they are in Shakespeare. Refer to **Section I2** for some great examples of metaphors in *King Charles III*. Discuss the effect of this language and use of imagery in the play. Are you aware of poetry, imagery and metaphor when watching the play? Does it enhance meaning or sharpen character? Does the extensive use of metaphor and imagery distinguish the experience from other forms of storytelling such as contemporary plays, film or TV?

d) POINTS OF VIEW – CHARACTERS

How effective is *King Charles III* at exploring **multiple perspectives or points of view**? Which points of view came into direct conflict with one another? Did that conflict propel compelling drama? Was the play even-handed? Did you feel that a multitude of opinions and points of view were expressed? Were the characters portrayed fairly? Do you believe an even-handed or fair portrayal is important when it comes to seeing a play? Which characters and stories were the most memorable? Which voices remained with you the longest and why? Which moments had the greatest impact? Which characters surprised you? Did the play create questions for you regarding the characters or their circumstances? Did you form an emotional attachment to any of the characters? Who were you rooting for? Who did you want to see more of? Did you disagree with what some of the characters were saying or doing? What would you ask those characters, given the opportunity?

e) POINTS OF VIEW – PLAYWRIGHT

What is the playwright's point of view regarding the characters and their circumstances? Is Mike Bartlett taking sides? And, if so, who is he rooting for? What do you think inspired Mike Bartlett to write *King Charles III*? What big, open-ended questions might have inspired him?

f) DESIGN

How did the design of the production affect the presentation of the piece? How effective was the **set** in defining the space? What mood or ambience was created? How did **colour, texture and space** add to the theatrical experience? How was **lighting** used to create mood or ambience? How did lighting work to define space and setting? How did the set and lights work in combination with one another? How was **sound** used to affect the presentation? How were **costumes** used to define characters? How did the costume designer make use of **colour, texture and style**?

2. Power & Responsibility

a) LEADERSHIP

A number of characters in the play are in positions of leadership. Which characters do you think are responsible leaders and who abuses their power?

1. Is Charles a responsible leader? Are his actions justified? Consider how he defies convention by refusing to sign a bill and then exercises his authority to dissolve parliament.
2. The play ends with Charles holding the crown and stating: “***It is much heavier than I thought.***” Have a class discussion about the symbolic meaning of these words. How does this statement connect to the themes of leadership and responsibility?
3. What do you think enables William to ascend to power? From whence is his power derived? Does he take on his new role responsibly? Why or why not?
4. Using the play as a basis for discussion about the nature of power, leadership and the potential to abuse power, can you think of any current world leaders who behave irresponsibly? What does it mean to abuse power and what are some of the consequences?

b) CHECKS & BALANCES

*I've long believed that we could never see
A Nazi party making British laws
Because the reigning monarch then would stand
His ground and being head of state refuse
To sign, refuse to let the country lose
Democracy, and doing so, provoke
Revolt.*

– Opposition Leader Stevens

In *King Charles III*, how does Stevens see the role of the monarch as being an important check on political power? What checks and balances are inherent in Canada's parliamentary democracy to protect against authoritarianism? **Politics students** can take this opportunity to do a comparative analysis between Canada and other democracies to look at the ways countries balance power in government.

c) GENDER

1. When it comes to the roles of men and women as portrayed in the play, who holds the most power? Does the play's representation of gender roles reflect our current reality? Why or why not? What do you think the playwright is saying?
2. How much power does Kate have in the play? How is the nature of her power different from that of the men? How does she use her power and does she wield it responsibly?
3. How much power does Jess Edwards have and why? In which circumstances does she have high status and when does she have low status?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

Do a close reading of part of Kate's soliloquy from Act 4.3 about power and gender roles. What are her arguments? What are her observations about women's place in society? Do these ring true? Are they familiar? What do you think about how women are represented in government and other positions of leadership? Is representation important? Why or why not?

*It is bewildering that even now
These little rooms of power are stocked full
With white, and southern, likely Oxbridge men.
Without the Queen, the bias is ore stark
The King's a man, Prime Minister as well
Combine the front benches of both sides
You'll have a female total of just four.
And so despite emancipation we must look
Towards the harder sex to find the power.
But I know nothing, just a plastic doll
Designed I'm told to stand embodying
A male-created bland and standard wife,
Who's only job is prettying the Prince, and then
If possible, get pregnant wit the royal
And noble bump, to there produce an heir.
Or two. And oft I'm told I don't have thought
Or brains to comprehend my strange position.*

d) INTEGRITY

*Without my voice, and spirit, I am dust,
This is not what I want, but what I must.*

– Charles

1. This rhyming couplet concludes the second act of the play. What is Charles saying here and how does it relate to the concept of integrity?
2. Consider each major decision Charles makes throughout the course of the play. In each case, do you think he makes a good decision? What is driving his decision-making? Integrity? Responsibility? Ego? Vanity? Ambition? Altruism?
3. Which other characters in the play have their integrity tested or challenged? How do they handle they challenge?

e) LEGACY

1. What is a legacy and what does it mean to be remembered? For each of the characters in the play, consider the significance of their legacy – what it means to them, to others, and how it impacts their decision-making. Consider different characters such as Charles, William and Kate. Also consider how legacy impacts characters we do not meet such as Queen Elizabeth or young Prince George. How does the weight of their legacy impact the other characters and their decision-making?
2. Focus on the play’s fictionalized portrayal of **Prince Harry** and imagine what **legacy** means to him. Discuss Harry’s connection to legacy in relation to concepts of **identity, destiny, authenticity, and integrity**. The following speech to his father may provide a useful jumping off point:

*But no, my love for Jessica comes first
Because like you, I don't believe that born
A prince must mean I sacrifice my soul,
My hopes, desires, all that makes me, me.
Instead I should be free to choose my path
We all should! William, yourself, young George
Should be allowed an unpredicted life.*

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

Using Prince Harry’s speech as inspiration, create a poem, speech, journal entry, drawing or painting entitled **An Unpredicted Life**. What does this phrase mean to you? Consider this phrase within the context of family, responsibility, culture, religion, class, duty, authenticity, career, gender, sexuality, etc.

2. What does legacy mean to you? How do you want to be remembered? Have a class discussion about this topic and invite students to share personal reflections. How do we hope to be remembered? What imprint do we hope to make? How do these hopes impact our behaviour and decision-making today?

f) AMBITION

1. Which characters in the play can be said to be ambitious? Consider Charles, William, Kate, Harry, Evans, Stevens, and Reiss.
2. Are there examples in the play of ambition being a valuable quality? Are there examples of ambition being a fatal flaw? What do you think Mike Bartlett is saying about the nature of ambition?
3. **English and drama students** can make connections between *King Charles III* and Shakespeare plays that explore the theme of ambition such as *Macbeth* or *Richard III*. What tropes, devices, images and conventions does Mike Bartlett borrow from these plays to explore the theme of ambition, and what is the impact?

g) POLITICAL PROTEST

How do we see political protest occurring in the play? **Politics students** can take this opportunity to study various examples of contemporary political protest. What political actions have taken place in Canada, the United States and globally, over the past few years? How do media and technology impact the way activism and protest happens?

3. **Family, Loyalty, Duty & Tradition**

a) **TRADITION**

*Oh sweet my dear we have no constitution
Instead Tradition holds us to account.*

– Camilla

Consider the role that tradition plays in *King Charles III*. What is the significance of tradition in the context of government, culture and family?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

What does tradition mean to you? Select a specific context in which to discuss the importance of tradition. This could be in connection to your family, religion, sports team, school, culture, gender identity, etc. Take time in class for students to share their personal responses and experiences around tradition with one another. What does it feel like to share your traditions? How does it feel to learn about the traditions of your peers?

b) **FAMILY**

What does family mean to the characters in the play? What is the relationship, for them, between family and responsibility, loyalty, tradition and duty? How much of this resonates for you? Do you relate to any of the characters when it comes to their circumstances? Why or why not?

1. Compare and contrast how **William** and **Harry** experience responsibility, duty and loyalty to their family? What does family mean to them? What are the privileges and what are the constraints associated with being a member of the royal family? **Drama students** can role-play a debate or scene between William and Harry, each making an argument for or against family loyalty and what that means to them. Involve the entire class by placing two actors in the “hot seat” and having other students ask them probing questions about their beliefs, feelings and actions. **NOTE:** *Students of any gender can “play” William and Harry.*
2. Discuss the **parent-child** relationship as portrayed between Charles and William. What do you think Mike Bartlett is saying about the nature of parent-child relationships? How do the values of duty, loyalty, responsibility and integrity compete in this context? **Writing students** can reflect on their own experiences through a scene, poem, essay or short story. As a jumping off point, use this excerpt, from Charles’ speech during his confrontation scene with William:

*I will speak harshly William that I
Do not request your counsel, I do not need
Another view. Instead it is support
Expected and support that you must give.
I know that at your age you’ll have a sense
That in the prime of life, you shouldn’t be
Attending on an old and feeble parent,
So there’s temptation then to patronise
Ironically the ones who gave you birth,
To roll your eyes, and make a joke about
The modern things they do not understand.
But doing this is seen by all around
As juvenile, the mockery of age*

*As easy humour, and actually it's wise
To listen well, respect those older, and
Most subtly to learn and grow beside
To draw upon their strength while standing close
And offering support to deal with age.*

c) DATING & MARRIAGE

Mike Bartlett wrote *King Charles III* years before the real life Prince Harry started dating his real life fiancée Meghan Markle, so Bartlett invented the character of Jess Edwards – an anti-monarchist commoner art student who dates the prince. How does Harry's relationship with Jess highlight the themes of tradition, duty and loyalty? What is Harry's main struggle in the play and what do you think about his ultimate decision?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

Real life fiancée of Prince Harry, **Meghan Markle**, is very different from the fictional character of Jess Edwards. However, there are still many ways in which she represents a departure from a traditional British princess. Research Meghan Markle – her upbringing, her accomplishments, her politics – and report on what she might represent as a member of the royal family. Why is her inclusion in the British royal family culturally significant? Is representation important? Why or why not?

4. *Media, Privacy & Free Speech*

a) FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

*Once fragile politicians can,
While claiming public sensitivity,
Go censoring what's writ or not, it will
Be easier to govern as corrupt
Than bother being held unto account.*

– Charles

1. Why does Charles refuse to sign the bill limiting freedom of the media? Why do you think that freedom of the press is important? What function does a free press serve in a democratic society and what are the risks in limiting those freedoms?
2. Why is Prime Minister Evans a proponent of the bill, which places restrictions on the media? What are his arguments? Can you think of other reasons why limits on the media might be reasonable or necessary?
3. **Media and politics students** can use this opportunity to learn more about Canada's free speech legislation and what legal limits we impose in this country. In Canada, what are the tensions between freedom of expression, and laws around hate speech, pornography and privacy? How do we balance these competing values?
4. Mike Bartlett wrote *King Charles III* long before Donald Trump was elected President. Now more than a year into Trump's Presidency, what themes, characters and circumstances in the play resonate with regard to questions of freedom of the press in America?
5. Free speech is not only a hot topic in Britain and the United States. During the past year, debates have raged over questions of freedom of expression both within the context of traditional news media and beyond. **Media and politics students** should take this opportunity to investigate a local story centred around questions of freedom of expression and journalistic freedom.

b) PRIVACY

*It cannot be a right or civilised
Country, in which, in any private place
A toilet, bedroom, might be there concealed
A tiny camera, then these photos 'splayed
As front page news, the consequences thrown
Around the world and ever-lasting, so
Without a jury, judge, or evidence
A punishment is meted out, a life
Is ruined, reputation murdered.*

– Prime Minister Evans

Read the above speech made by Prime Minister Evans early in the play and discuss his arguments in favour of limiting freedom of the press in our current technological age.

1. What are the threats to privacy in the digital age and what are the potential consequences of invasions of privacy?

2. What happens to Jess Edwards in the play? How do we see her privacy violated and what are the consequences for her? How does her experience make you think about questions of privacy? How is Jess's gender a factor in her experience? Do you think the same thing would have happened were she a young man?
3. This topic, introduced by the play, provides an opportunity for your class to engage in an important conversation about privacy, consent, social media, harassment, bullying and allyship. Though Jess Edwards is a fictional character, there are far too many real-life examples of sexual images of girls and women being shared without their consent. In extreme cases, these violations lead to severe bullying and even suicide, as in the tragic stories of Rehtaeh Parsons and Amanda Todd, among others. You may choose to share these young women's stories with your students to initiate this conversation. Another suggested resource is the Ontario Government's #whowillyouhelp PSA combating sexual violence and promoting allyship. It is available on Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=opPb2E3bkoo>.

c) MEDIA & TECHNOLOGY

As a class, read the following excerpt of the TV Producer's speech, commenting on the state of social media, memes and viral videos:

*This may seem strange, but sometimes I wake up
From nightmares where I have been on TV
And something's happened, just by chance, perhaps
A light has blown, or chair collapsed, but I
Am shocked, and jumping look ridiculous.
And then that clip goes viral and from then
Forever more, I am the girl who jumped
It is the matter of my life, and when
I die it will be what is writ, not all
I did, and wanted, and achieved, but that:
A captured idiocy stuck on repeat.*

What does this passage mean for you? Does it resonate? Why or why not? How do digital and social media impact your wellbeing, self-esteem, and relationships? How can your media use impact things like reputation or career?

I. Literary Devices

1. Iambic Pentameter

Memorize and perform a Shakespeare monologue in verse. The following speeches are great options for students:

Viola, *Twelfth Night*, Act 2, sc. 2

Helena, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act 1, sc. 1

Juliet, *Romeo and Juliet*, Act 2, sc. 2

Portia, *Julius Caesar*, Act 2, sc. 1

Lewis, *King John*, Act 5, sc. 2

Sebastian, *Twelfth Night*, Act 4, sc. 3

Edmund, *King Lear*, Act 1, sc. 2

Romeo, *Rome and Juliet*, Act 2, sc. 2

Guidelines to approach the scansion of iambic pentameter and speaking verse:

1. Determine the number of “feet” in each line of text. A “foot” is a two-syllable unit. A standard or “regular” line of verse contains five feet (ten syllables). A standard line of verse has the rhythm of a heartbeat – a pattern of five feet going from unstressed to stressed like this:
da-DUM da-DUM da-DUM da-DUM da-DUM
2. Above each syllable mark whether it is stressed or unstressed. Use a – for unstressed and / for stressed syllables. Circle the irregularities in the verse. For example, a line might end with an unstressed syllable (**feminine ending**); or a word might need to be spoken DUM-da in order to make sense of it (**inversion**). As much as possible, adhere to the regular rhythm, only permitting variation when necessary. When you notice an irregularity, circle it and consider the significance of the word.

Here is an example of a standard iambic line (from Sebastian’s *Twelfth Night* speech):

– / – / – / – / – /

This is the air, that is the glorious sun.

Speak the line aloud. Notice how adhering to the designated stressed and unstressed syllables may force us to stress words that might contradict our instincts. What does it mean to stress “is” rather than “this” and “that”? How does this impact the meaning of the line? Consider how within the context of this speech, Sebastian is trying to make sense of what just happened with Olivia (he isn’t simply cataloguing elements in nature).

3. Circle the **last word of each line** and pay attention to the significance of these words. When speaking the text, treat the last word as the most important word of the line. As an exercise, try speaking a “line ending poem” whereby you simply speak the last word on each line of the speech. This will help focus on these important words and the meaning they impart. Using Sebastian lines above as an example, this technique will guide the speaker to emphasize the word “sun” over “the” or “glorious.” Try speaking

- the line emphasizing each of these three words and feel the meaning of the text when you emphasize “sun.”
4. Pay attention to punctuation. Circle all the periods in the speech and, when speaking the text, be sure to only come to a full stop **at the periods**. In some cases, there may be very long phrases or thoughts. Focus on continuing the thought all the way to its end and all the way to the period. Resist the urge to break up the thoughts and drop the energy or take long pauses before you see a period.
 5. Now get very clear about the meaning of every word in the speech. You will need a **Shakespeare Lexicon**, which is like a dictionary for all of Shakespeare’s plays, providing the many meanings of each word. Even if you’re pretty sure about the meaning of a word, look it up – you might be surprised by a word’s multiple definitions. These can provide rich meaning for an actor.
 6. Identify instances of “**antithesis**” in the text. This is when a character sets up a comparison between two things. When this happens, emphasize that you are comparing *this* and *that*. Practice by holding an object in each hand and, when speaking the text, hold up each object for emphasis. Here is an example of antithesis in Sebastian’s speech:

That this may be some **error**, but no **madness**

When speaking this line you want to be clear that you are making a comparative distinction between “error” and “madness.” *HINT: These speeches are filled with antitheses!*

7. Identify any **lists** in the text. Characters will frequently build their arguments with a list. Make sure you are clear about the specific and distinct meaning of each item of the list and communicate that each subsequent element in the list is more important than the one prior.
8. Create an imagined “scene partner” for yourself by determining to whom you are speaking. It might be another character in the play. Or, in the case of a soliloquy (which is the case with many of the above suggested speeches), you might be speaking to the audience. Either way, it will help to “personalize” your imagined scene partner and make specific choices for yourself about who you are speaking to and why. What is your relationship to them? Do you trust them? What do you need from them?

2. Metaphor

Shakespeare's plays are notable for their use of metaphor. **English, writing and drama students** have an opportunity to access great examples of metaphor by closely reading excerpts from *King Charles III*. Have students select a passage and reflect back on the moment in the play. What affect does the imagery have in this moment? How does it illuminate the character's argument? What does it show us about the character's intellectual and/or emotional state? What experience does it provide to the reader/audience? **After discussing Mike Bartlett's use of metaphor, encourage students to write their own.** These do not need to be written in verse and can be created in any style: a poem, short story, dialogue in a scene, etc.

Act 1.1

In his first soliloquy, Charles laments the pressure he feels to instantly come up with answers and solutions:

*I'm trapped by meetings, all these people ask
Me questions, talking, fussing, what to do,
Expect I'll have opinion there, all good
To go, like Findus ready meals for one,
Pre-wrapped and frozen, "This is what I think."
As if I know! My better thoughts – they start
From scratch, slow cooked, and brewed with time.*

Act 2.1

Mark Stevens, the leader of the opposition, convinces the Prime Minister to go speak to Charles on his own:

*Although appreciating any hand
Outstretched across the aisle, I do believe
In such a constitutional issue as,
This surely is, it is important that
While choirs carry passion but the words
Are lost in many voices sung at once,
So we in politics must all step back
And in agreement believing in just one,
Entrust our finest soloist to sing.
You are, unlike myself, elected sole
And only leader of the British Isles.
I am convinced the message will sound best
And most authoritative said by you.*

Act 3.3

In another soliloquy, Charles grapples with questions around parliamentary democracy and the role of the monarchy in governing:

*Opinion polls suggest that people are
Divided almost equally as to
If my non-signing is within my rights.
Or not. But that half's far more than I
Expected would agree with me on this.
Whatever many like to think there is*

*A wise and ancient bond between the crown
And population of this pleasant isle.
It's only in the last five hundred years
That politicians and democracy
Have led the way in policy and meant
That people vote for who they want to lead.
And this is right, but unlike countries which
Did build existence through the parliament
This is to us, an option added on,
Like satnav on a car, it does not come
As standard, and the car will function well
Without, it drives, protects, it normally goes.
And though it's wise to pay for extra help,
And usually the voice of the machine
Assists us well to get from A to B,
When lost, and crisis strikes, we soon mistrust
These modern ways, and reach for what we know:
We seek the map, from years before, and there
Do stabilise and resecure our way.*

Act 5.1

Charles tries to convince his son William of his relevance and authority:

*I'm like a book myself, stuck on the shelf
For years, ignored and waiting, only judged
By one small sliver of the cover whole,
And sitting thus unopened and unused,
The outer surface gathers dust and fades
But if the moment comes to read the tome,
And it's removed and rarely opened up
The words and thoughts inside are here
As fresh and potent as the day of print.*

Thank you for joining us at ***King Charles III***. We welcome your feedback. Please take some time with your students to complete our response forms, either online or by distributing hard copies (Section B of this Study Guide).

If you enjoyed the show, please support us by helping spread the word! Word of mouth is one of the greatest tools we have to promote our work. Please tell your friends, family, colleagues and students about *King Charles III* and follow us on **Twitter (@stu180theatre)**, **Instagram (@studio180theatre)** and like us on [Facebook](#).

We also love receiving creative responses to our work and will proudly display writing, photography and other artwork in digital galleries for interested classes. The relationships we forge with school communities are important to us and we thank you for helping us develop meaningful and inspiring education partnerships.

If you have questions, suggestions, or would like to become more actively involved with Studio 180 Theatre's education programming, please contact Core Artistic Team member Jessica Greenberg at jessica@studio180theatre.com or [416-962-1800](tel:416-962-1800).