

## Honors Literature – World History Grade 10

**TASK:** Read the following text carefully, making all appropriate notations. Identify SOAPStone, DIDLS, PERSIAN, and other information as evidence of your research and analysis of the piece of literature. Answer the related questions on notebook paper. You may use this information for any written essay on the piece.

### A Guardian's Farewell Speech to a Young Woman About to Be Married

One of the great plays written during the Hindu revival of the early centuries C.E. was SHAKUNTALA, by *Kalidasa*. The play is a Cinderella-style tale about a beautiful young woman, Shakuntala, who is loved by a king, and the travails she must endure before they are happily united. In the following exchange, as Shakuntala sets out to join her husband at his palace, she is instructed by her guardians (the hermits Kashyapa and Gautami) on the proper behavior for a young wife, in a manner that recalls the famous speech by Polonius to his son, Laertes, in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

**Kashyapa:** Now you Shakuntala. Respect your superiors,  
Be friendly toward the ladies of the palace.  
Never be angry with your husband, no matter what happens.  
Be polite with the maids;  
In everything be humble.  
These qualities make a woman; those without them are black sheep  
in their families.

What is your opinion, Gautami?

**Gautami:** A bride needs nothing more. Remember his advice, Shakuntala.

**Shakuntala:** How will I ever manage in the palace? I feel so lost. I belong here, Father.

**Kashyapa:** Don't worry, my child; you are privileged.

You will be his great wife;

He is noble and great.

You will give him a son, as the East gives us light.

The pain of separation will then pass.

**QUESTIONS** What does this conversation tell you about gender relationships and marriage in classical India? What does it say about attitudes toward women? How do these relationships and attitudes compare with those found in China and Greece in this era? How do they compare with those in our own society?

### Comprehension Questions:

1. Identify SOAPS / DIDLS / PERSIAN.
2. What does this conversation tell you about gender relationships and marriage in classical India?
3. What does it say about attitudes toward women?
4. How do these relationships and attitudes compare with those found in China and Greece in this era?
5. How do they compare with those in our own society today?