

10 Things I Hate About You Film Critique

CONTEXT: *The Taming of the Shrew* by William Shakespeare, written in the early 1590s, is a comedic play that explores themes of courtship, gender roles, and societal expectations. Set in Padua, the play follows the courtship of the strong-willed & outspoken Katherina (Kate) and the assertive Petruchio. The central plot involves Petruchio’s attempt to “tame” Kate and conform her to societal expectations of a submissive wife. Meanwhile, a secondary plot follows the romantic relationship between Kate’s sister, Bianca, and her suitors, who she will not accept until her older sister has a husband. In the end, Kate proves to be the more obedient wife. The play employs humor, witty dialogue, and farcical elements to examine the dynamics of relationships and the societal norms of the time.

1. Tropes are frequently used in movies & literature. A trope is a familiar and repeated symbol, theme, style, character or theme that permeates a particular type of movie/book. Teen movies have very predictable tropes as seen in their characters and storylines.

Teen movie tropes	Character tropes in <i>10 Things I Hate About You</i>

2. Central to the plot of this film is a discussion of ideal qualities in women and what it means to be desirable to men. What makes Bianca desirable and Kat the “shrew”?

Modern Feminism

Feminism in ‘90s was redefined and reborn. The 3rd wave of feminism that emerged in the mid-1990s was led by so-called Generation Xers who came of age in a media-saturated, culturally and economically diverse world. In an essay called “Bitching and Talking/Gazing Back: Feminism as Critical Ready”, Courtney Bailey outlines the new kind of feminist that was being embraced by mainstream pop culture of the time, saying:

‘the mid 1990s marked the appearance of another image of the feminist in mainstream media – the young, fashion-conscious, pop culture-savvy, single woman. Various referred to as ‘girl power’ or ‘lipstick feminism,’ this woman is well aware of patriarchal conceptions of femininity and uses them in a parodic or exaggerated manner to her own advantage... Depending on the commentator, she is either an empowering figure or a sign of complicity with patriarchy and with the forces of commercialism.’

Gone are the days when the word feminist conjured a hairy, angry, bra-less lesbian in the minds of the audience.
-- “Feminism, Shakespeare & Pop Culture”

3. What is the film saying about modern feminism through its central character, Kat? What does a modern feminist look like?

4. The storyline of *10 Things* takes a slightly different turn than Shakespeare's play. How can you make the case that in some ways, BOTH female leads are strong female characters who are representative of the progress made by the women's movement in the 20th century?

Bianca	Kat

5. Thoughts on the film:

- a. **Give the movie a star rating.** Now that you've done some active viewing and thinking about the movie, how many stars would you give it (on a 5-star scale)? Explain your answer in 2-3 sentences. (Your response could explain whether you thought the movie was good, what was memorable about it, etc.)

