



The Shakespeare Project

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## 2022 Lesson Plan | The Play Is the Thing

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**Director**

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### General Workshop for all ages:

Lesson Goal: Help bring new life and bold choices to reading Shakespeare

#### **“The Shakespeare Scramble”** - energy passing game/warm up

- Similar to games like “zip, zap, zop,” this game sets the tone and starts to get the participants thinking about Shakespeare text
- Game mechanics:
  - Start the game in a circle.
  - Pass- “To be” *Hamlet*  
*Pass the energy all the way around, with each participant saying the line.*
  - Stop- “Not to be” *Hamlet*  
*Introduce the new quote, and stop means to reverse the energy in the opposite direction.*
  - Throw Across- “Oh Romeo, Romeo” *Romeo & Juliet*  
*Choose a person opposite you in the circle and pass the energy to them. They can pick up with “to be” on one direction or the other.*
  - Catch- Wherefore art thou Romeo? *Romeo & Juliet*  
*The person catching the energy across receives the energy by saying this quote.*
  - Through your neighbor “Skip” - “Is this the dagger which I see before me?” *Macbeth*  
*Skip the person to your left or right with this quote.*
  - Scramble/All Switch places- “Cry havoc” *Julius Caesar*  
*Introduce new energy and chaos.*
  - One switch places- “Get thee to a nunnery!” *Hamlet*  
*If you don’t like who you’re standing next to, you can change places with someone.*
  - Fall (Opt Out)- “A man can die but once.” *Henry IV*  
*Only to be used when you’re tired.*
- These game mechanics do not all have to be applied, depending on the age and ability of the students. Discuss beforehand how many steps to add.



**Monster Tag** - improv sound and movement game

- This game allows students to open up a little more and feel comfortable doing something silly.
- Encourage them to explore the space physically and, in this setting, enhance their comfort in making bolder and big choices.
- Game mechanics:
  - One monster is chosen from the group (maybe one of the workshop leaders) and makes a noise and movement to create a monster.
  - Then the whole group should echo the sound and mimic the movement in a mill and seethe of the room.
  - After a minute, the first monster tags the next monster, and then the game repeats.



### **Translator** – improv gibberish game

- The purpose of this game is to help the students open up vocally and infuse gibberish with meaning. They have to convey action through their body and voice without saying any words.
- Game mechanics:
  - Option 1: Choose two students. One is an interviewer, and one is a Martian (Perhaps for the first game, the leaders demonstrate both or at least the interviewer.). The interviewer introduces the alien as an expert on a topic (Ask students for this.) that they are coming to earth today to give a speech about. The alien gives an overview of the topic stopping here and there for the interviewer to translate. After the speech is finished, a Q& A section is performed with the other student participating and building the story. The interviewer wraps it up after a few good questions and the interview ends.
  - Option 2: Minions: Classic game of translator with two characters acting out a scene, each with a devoted translator. Ask students for the type of scene and relationships of the characters and go from there.



## TABLE WORK : Monologue group work

*TOOLS: Heightened language, Verse vs Prose, Antithesis, Metaphor (Provide definitions of each.)*

- *Heightened Language: Often defined as a more formal, emotional, or poetic way of speaking, “heightened language” frequently features words that are chosen for their sound and power, not just their meaning.*
- *Verse: verse has a set rhythm (or meter), and it looks distinctive on the page as the lines are usually shorter than prose. Verse is normally arranged in lines that make up a stanza, which then makes up a poem. Verse is distinguished from prose by the relative regularity of its rhythm.*
- *Prose: any spoken or written language in its ordinary form, without metrical structure, meaning it doesn't have a consistent rhythm. These words are arranged in sentences, which form a paragraph. It often runs margin to margin on the page.*
- *Antithesis: a figure of speech in which an opposition or contrast of ideas is expressed by parallelism of words that are the opposites of, or strongly contrasted with, each other, such as “hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all sins”.*
- *Metaphor: Metaphor is a comparison between two things that are otherwise unrelated. With metaphor, the qualities of one thing are figuratively carried over to another. A metaphor makes a comparison by stating that one thing is something else, but a simile states that one thing is like something else.*

*Hardest working words in showbiz are verbs (Everything leads back to the verbs. Act out the verbs. It's intentional to repeat something, performing Shakespeare, rules of engagement, building a relationship.)*

*Go through Monologues and circle the verbs and iambic pentameter (Detroit's)*

- This exercise should take the vocal and physical choices and apply them to the monologue to uncover interesting choices.
- A well-known monologue from R&J that has stops in it is given to everyone on paper or on a tv/projector.
- Go through the monologue as a class and talk about what each line means.
  - Paraphrase Monologues: Each line one breath (line by line process)

### Monologue:

#### Romeo and Juliet Act II Scene II Lines 90-111

##### JULIET

Thou knowest the mask of night is on my face,  
Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek  
For that which thou hast heard me speak tonight.  
Fain I would dwell on form; fain, fain deny  
What I have spoke. But farewell compliment.  
Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say “Ay,”  
And I will take thy word. Yet, if thou swear'st,  
Thou mayst prove false. At lovers' perjuries,  
They say, Jove laughs. O gentle Romeo,



**If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully.  
Or, if thou thinkest I am too quickly won,  
I'll frown and be perverse and say thee nay,  
So thou wilt woo, but else not for the world.  
In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond,  
And therefore thou mayst think my 'havior light.  
But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true  
Than those that have more coying to be strange.  
I should have been more strange, I must confess,  
But that thou overheard 'st ere I was ware  
My true-love passion. Therefore pardon me,  
And not impute this yielding to light love,  
Which the dark night hath so discoverèd.**

- Then, each line is given a different acting verb and the entire class says and moves through the line with that verb. (Have each student read one line and read each line with different verb prompts, stopping with each punctuation.)
  - Lines should be assigned verbs beforehand so that they kind of work.
- After a few lines, we stop and discuss what works and what doesn't.
- Depending on the time, we can move to individual student monologue coaching/reading.



### Sub Figurative Language for Monster Tag

#### **Figurative Language Exercise** -physicalizing and vocalizing lines of text

- This game takes lines of Shakespeare text and breaks down the figurative language.
- Break into teams and assign each group a line of text.
  - “Arise fair sun and kill the envious moon, who is already sick and pale with grief.” *R&J*
  - “Look like th' innocent flower, but be the serpent under 't.” *Macbeth*
  - “Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind; And therefore is winged Cupid painted blind.” *Midsummer*
  - “And therefore think him as a serpent’s egg, which, hatched, would as his kind grow mischievous, And kill him in the shell.” *Julius Caesar*
- Then, they have to create a physical and vocal performance/interpretation of each phrase.
  - Give them a time limit.
- Show and tell.
- Discuss what works and what really brought the text to life?
- How can we incorporate these types of pictures into play performance of spoken text?

### Incorporate Monologue Group Work with Scene Group Work

#### **TABLE WORK: Scene group work**

*TOOLS: Heightened language, Verse vs Prose, Antithesis, Metaphor (Went over definitions of each)*

*Hardest working words in showbiz are verbs (everything leads back to the verbs, Act out the verbs, Its intentional to repeat something, performing Shakespeare, rules of engagement, building a relationship)*

*Go through Monologues and circle the verbs and iambic pentameter (Detroit’s)*

- A well-known scene is given to each pair on paper and parts are assigned
- Each line is scanned and translated as a group and then acted by pairs of actors.
  - looking up words we don’t know, and translating text into modern English
- We can focus on a set of actors or rotate through actors and scenes.

[As You Like It 3.2](#)

[Much Ado About Nothing 4.1](#)

[Romeo & Juliet 3.2](#)

[Twelfth Night 3.1](#)

[Comedy of Errors 3.2](#)