

DRAMA WORKSHOP

INTRODUCTION TO SHAKESPEARE

A few questions to find out what pupils already know

- What did Shakespeare DO for a living? Playwright, poet and actor
- How long ago was he writing plays? About 400 years ago
- Any idea how many plays he wrote? Have a guess. About 37
- Who can name any of these plays? See what people know
- Does anyone know a line Shakespeare wrote? Ever heard 'To be or not to be...' or 'Romeo, Romeo...'? Hear any lines with pupils standing to deliver the line and receiving huge applause.
- Why do you think we still perform his plays today? Shakespeare told great stories and invented great characters, which is why we like to watch his plays and actors love to be in them.
- Shakespeare's language is not the way we talk now, but remember that no-one understands every word of every play. Today's session is all about having a go and having fun. Today, were ALL actors!

Shakespeare Warm Up

Shakespeare Port and Starboard – Remember that 'right' and 'left' are always from the point of view of the actor standing on the stage!

'Stage left' – if you stand at the front of the class (as the audience) with the pupils facing you, they run to *their* left

'Stage right' – the opposite of the above!

'Centre stage' – the very middle, pupils in a group facing you

'Upstage' – the far end of the stage, away from the audience – tell them about the slope on raked stages

'Downstage' – the part of the stage closest to the audience

'Hamlet' – Theatrically say 'To be or not to be' with big hand gestures

'Macbeth' – as above with 'Is this a dagger I see before me?'

'Curtain Call' - Everyone steps elegantly forward into a line and forward and takes a big bow

Hurling Insults

- Issue the **Shakespeare Insult Generator (Handout 1)** and demonstrate how you can construct a great insult by using a word from each of the two columns. Don't worry about what it means. Enjoy the odd words and how they sound.
- With pupils in two lines, A's facing B's. All A's step forward and insult B's. Swap
- Try saying the insult in different ways e.g., shouting, sarcastic, superior, snarling rage
- Hear pupils insult each other two by two down the line
- What phrases did we really enjoy hearing?

Exploring the Witches

- Use the internet to find some images of the Macbeth Witches from different theatre productions. Try to find quite contrasting interpretations of the Witches. Print off these images and if possible enlarge them so that the whole class can see them.
- Using an image of your choice, ask some questions. Who are these people? What's happening? How do we know they're witches? What is a witch? What else can we see in the picture? Think about weather, terrain, colours, clothes.
- Does anyone know what play these images are from? Tell them it's Macbeth.
- Explain that there are various ways to represent the witches and show the whole range of images
- Look at the **Opening of Macbeth (Handout 2)**. You could perform it / read it with 2 other confident readers and yourself, with the rest of the class just listening.

Thunder and lightning. Enter three Witches

First Witch When shall we three meet again?
 In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

Second Witch When the hurly burly's done,
 When the battle's lost and won

Third Witch That will be ere the set of sun

First Witch Where the place?

Second Witch Upon the heath

Third Witch There to meet with Macbeth

All Fair is foul, and foul is fair.
 Hover through the fog and filthy air

(exeunt)

- Ask some questions: Where are they? What's the weather like? Who are they going to meet? Where? When? What else is going on at the same time? What might the last two lines mean?
- Explain the widespread belief in Supernatural/ ghosts in Shakespeare's time.
- Macbeth DOES meet the Witches and they tell him something very weird about the future – but first we're going to look at a spell they say.

A Spell - Double Double Toil and Trouble

- Read the spell once through, with pupils listening. Ask them to name some of the things they remember being put into the cauldron?
- Issue a copy of the spell **Double Double Toil and Trouble (Handout 3)**
- Explain / talk about words or phrases that people don't understand
- Everyone stands up to read the whole speech chorally – Encourage people to really try to get their mouth round all the words.
- Allocate two lines to pupils in groups of three. Ask them to act out their lines as well as say them. Pupils are to decide if they say everything chorally, divide up who says what etc. Encourage pupils to really physicalise what they are doing and remember they are trying to scare Macbeth! Give time to rehearse.
- Stage it, with you in role as Macbeth, returning from the battle across the heath and stumbling upon the various groups of Witches. Listen to each group in turn, in order of the speech. They are aiming to create an atmosphere of fear.
- End with reading the Witches' prophecy:

Macbeth	Speak if you can! What are you?
First Witch	All hail Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Glamis!
Second Witch	All hail Macbeth! Hail to thee Thane of Cawdor!
Third Witch	All hail Macbeth! That shalt be King hereafter!

- Talk about what's been said to Macbeth and why it matters

Introducing Lady Macbeth

- Explain that Macbeth is given the title 'Thane of Cawdor'. It's a reward by King Duncan as Macbeth fought really well in the battle and the Thane of Cawdor switched sides, so is now banished. The King plans to come to stay at Macbeth's castle this evening. Macbeth writes to Lady Macbeth telling her this, and about what the Witches said - that he'd be Thane of Cawdor AND then King. This is what Lady Macbeth says when she reads the letter, **Lady Macbeth's Speech (Handout 4)**
- Read Lady Macbeth's speech to the class and ask some questions: What kind of character is she? What does she say about Macbeth? Why does she mention a knife? What might she suggest to Macbeth as soon as he comes home?
- Explain that Lady Macbeth wants to persuade Macbeth to kill King Duncan and blame it on the King's guards. This means she and Macbeth can be King and Queen of Scotland.
- What are all the reasons Lady Macbeth wants Macbeth to kill Duncan? How would their lives change? What would they gain? Pairs discuss and feedback ideas.

- What are the reasons that Macbeth might NOT want to kill King Duncan? Think about the Risks? Punishments? Moral reasons? Pairs discuss and feedback ideas.

A Scene of Persuasion

- In pairs, A is Macbeth and B is Lady Macbeth.
- Lady Macbeth, you **MUST** persuade M to agree to kill the king, tonight. Macbeth you **DO NOT WANT TO DO THIS**. Try to persuade Lady M that it is wrong.
- Give pupils a few minutes to rehearse this improvised scene. Tell them to keep it short and decide how it ends. End with a freeze.
- See some of these scenes and discuss.

- Now each pupil has **ONE** line of Shakespeare that they must use at some point in their scene. Give pupils the **Lines from Macbeth (Handout 5)**.
- You read the lines aloud first and explore their meaning with the group.
- Each pupil chooses just one line to weave into his or her improvisation at some point.
- Pupils do not have to choose consecutive lines.
- Advise them try to keep the scene as close to what they had before as possible.

Macbeth We will proceed no further in this business

Lady Macbeth Art thou afeared?

Macbeth Prithee peace.
I dare do all that may become a man

Lady Macbeth When you durst do it, then you were a man

Macbeth If we should fail?

Lady Macbeth But screw your courage to the sticking place,
And we'll not fail

- See some of these scenes and discuss
- Ask some questions; what do you think happens in the rest of the play? Does Macbeth kill the King? What do you think happens to him and Lady Macbeth?
- Explore/reveal as much as you want!
- Finish the session with shouting 'Curtain Call' and everyone does a big theatrical bow.

HANDOUT 1**SHAKESPEARE INSULT GENERATOR****Column 1**

artless
bawdy
beslubbering
bootless
clouted
currish
dankish
dissembling
droning
errant
fawning
fobbing
froward
frothy
gleeking
goatish
infectious
jarring
loggerheaded
lumpish
mammering
mangled
paunchy
pribbling
puking
qualling
roguish
ruttish
saucy
spleeny
spongy
unmuzzled
vain
villainous
weedy
yeasty

Column 2

apple-john
baggage
barnacle
bladder
bum-bailey
clack-dish
Clotpole
coxcomb
codpiece
death-token
dewberry
flap-dragon
flax-wench
flirt-gill
foot-licker
fustilarian
haggard
harpy
hedge-pig
horn-beast
hugger-mugger
joithead
lout
maggot-pie
malt-worm
Measle
moldwarp
mumble-news
nut-hook
pigeon-egg
pignut
ratsbane
scut
Strumpet
whey-face
wagtail

HANDOUT 2**OPENING OF MACBETH**

Thunder and lightning. Enter three Witches

First Witch **When shall we three meet again?
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?**

Second Witch **When the hurly burly's done,
When the battle's lost and won**

Third Witch **That will be ere the set of sun**

First Witch **Where the place?**

Second Witch **Upon the heath**

Third Witch **There to meet with Macbeth**

All **Fair is foul, and foul is fair.
Hover through the fog and filthy air**

(exeunt)

HANDOUT 3**DOUBLE, DOUBLE TOIL AND TROUBLE**

**Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.**

**Fillet of a fenny snake,
In the cauldron boil and bake;**

**Eye of newt, and toe of frog,
Wool of bat, and tongue of dog,**

**Adder's fork, and blind-worm's sting,
Lizard's leg, and owlet's wing,—**

**For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.**

**Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.**

**Cool it with a baboon's blood,
Then the charm is firm and good.**

HANDOUT 4**LADY MACBETH'S SPEECH**

**Glamis thou art, and Cawdor, and shalt be
What though art promised. Yet do I fear they nature:
It is too full o'the milk of human-kindness
To catch the nearest way. Thou wouldst be great,
Art not without ambition, but without
The illness should attend it.**

**The raven himself is hoarse
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
Under my battlements.**

**Come, thick night
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark
To cry, 'Hold, hold!'**

HANDOUT 5**LINES FROM MACBETH**

Macbeth **We will proceed no further in this business**

Lady Macbeth **Art thou afeared?**

Macbeth **Prithee peace.
I dare do all that may become a man**

Lady Macbeth **When you durst do it, then you were a man**

Macbeth **If we should fail?**

Lady Macbeth **But screw your courage to the sticking place,
And we'll not fail**