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# SHAKESPEARE'S LANGUAGE

WHEN ASKED THE NUMBER-ONE CHALLENGE WITH SHAKESPEARE'S WORKS, MODERN-DAY AUDIENCES WILL ALMOST ALWAYS RESPOND: "THE LANGUAGE." IT'S TRUE THAT THE LANGUAGE DOES SOUND DIFFERENT TO OUR EARS AND THAT SHAKESPEARE USES PHRASES WE NO LONGER USE IN OUR EVERYDAY SPEECH. BUT THINK OF THIS: THERE ARE PHRASES THAT WE USE TODAY THAT WOULD Baffle SHAKESPEARE, SHOULD HE MAGICALLY TIME-TRAVEL TO THIS DAY AND AGE. THAT'S BECAUSE LANGUAGE [ESPECIALLY ENGLISH] IS CONSTANTLY TRANSFORMING.

NOTE: HERE IS A LINK TO THE GREAT RIVER SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL'S YOUTUBE VIDEO "MEAN TWEETS - SHAKESPEARE EDITION" TO GIVE THEM A JUMP START INTO THE LESSON [HAVE A DISCUSSION BEFORE YOU BEGIN AND CHOOSE SOME FROM THE VIDEO TO HAVE THE STUDENTS INTERPRET]

☺ [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=R9e5L7bX74c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R9e5L7bX74c)

## CAN YOU MATCH THESE ORIGINAL QUOTES FROM HAMLET TO THEIR MODERN-DAY TRANSLATIONS?

COME, COME, AND SIT YOU DOWN,  
YOU SHALL NOT BUDGE. YOU GO NOT TILL I SET YOU UP A GLASS  
WHERE YOU MAY SEE THE INMOST PART OF YOU.  
**HAMLET, ACT 3, SCENE 4**

TO BE, OR NOT TO BE, THAT IS THE QUESTION:  
WHETHER 'TIS NOBLER IN THE MIND TO SUFFER  
THE SLINGS AND ARROWS OF OUTRAGEOUS FORTUNE,  
OR TO TAKE ARMS AGAINST A SEA OF TROUBLES,  
AND BY OPPOSING END THEM.  
**HAMLET, ACT 3, SCENE 1**

OH, WHAT A ROGUE AND PEASANT SLAVE I AM!  
**HAMLET, ACT 2, SCENE 2**

HOW WEARY, STALE, FLAT, AND UNPROFITABLE  
SEEM TO ME ALL THE USES OF THIS WORLD!  
**HAMLET, ACT 1, SCENE 2**

THIS ABOVE ALL: TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE,  
AND IT MUST FOLLOW, AS THE NIGHT THE DAY,  
THOU CANST NOT THEN BE FALSE TO ANY MAN.  
**POLONIUS, ACT 1, SCENE 3**

WHEN SORROWS COME, THEY COME NOT SINGLE SPIES BUT IN BATTALIONS.  
**CLAUDIUS, ACT 4, SCENE 5**

OH, WHAT A NOBLE MIND IS HERE O'ERTHROWN!  
**OPHELIA, ACT 3, SCENE 1**

IF THOU DIDST EVER HOLD ME IN THY HEART  
ABSENT THEE FROM FELICITY A WHILE,  
AND IN THIS HARSH WORLD DRAW THY BREATH IN PAIN TO TELL MY STORY.  
**HAMLET, ACT 5, SCENE 2**

- ★ WHEN BAD THINGS HAPPEN, THEY DON'T HAPPEN ONE AT A TIME, THEY HAPPEN IN MULTITUDES.
- ★ COME HERE AND SIT DOWN. DON'T MOVE. YOU'RE NOT LEAVING UNTIL YOU LOOK IN THIS MIRROR-TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT YOUR SOUL AND SEE WHAT YOU'VE DONE.
- ★ THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS TO BE TRUE TO YOURSELF BECAUSE IF YOU DO, THEN YOU'LL NEVER BE FAKE WITH ANYONE ELSE.
- ★ IF YOU EVER LOVED ME, PLEASE STAY SAD FOR A WHILE. ENDURE THE PAIN OF LIVING WITH MY DEATH A WHILE LONGER SO YOU CAN TELL THE WORLD THE TRUTH ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED TO ME.
- ★ THE QUESTION IS WHETHER IT'S BETTER TO BE ALIVE OR DEAD. IS IT BETTER TO SUFFER LIFE'S PAINFUL EVENTS OR TO JUST AVOID IT ALL BY DYING?
- ★ EVERYTHING IN LIFE SEEMS SO TIRING, DULL AND USELESS.
- ★ UGH! I AM SO OUT OF CONTROL, AND SUCH A WORTHLESS PERSON. HE USED TO BE BRILLIANT; MADNESS HAS RUINED HIM.

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# SOCIAL NETWORKING CHARACTER

CREATE A FACEBOOK PROFILE FOR A CHARACTER FROM THE PLAY.

**OVERVIEW:** BEING ABLE TO EMPATHIZE WITH FICTIONAL CHARACTERS SHEDS LIGHT ON OUR OWN PERSONAL SITUATIONS, AND RECASTS THE PLOT OF THE PLAY IN RELEVANT TERMS.

**GOAL:** TO BRING THE CHARACTERS OF HAMLET INTO A REAL-WORLD CONTEXT.

**OUTCOMES:** STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO USE BASIC FACTS FROM THE TEXT TO IMAGINATIVELY ENTER INTO THE THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, AND MOTIVATIONS OF FICTIONAL CHARACTERS BY CREATING A MOCK FACEBOOK PAGE.

**ACTIVITY:** FAMILIARIZE STUDENTS WITH THE PROFILE LAYOUT OF A SOCIAL NETWORKING SITE PAGE, SUCH AS FACEBOOK.

☹️ ASK THE STUDENTS TO FILL IN THE PROFILE WITH:

- ☉ VITAL STATISTICS
- ☉ BRIEF BIO
- ☉ LIKES AND DISLIKES
- ☉ FRIENDS
- ☉ LIFE EVENTS

**NOTE:** STUDENTS SHOULD USE INFORMATION DRAWN FROM THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF THE PLAY (FOR EXAMPLE, HAMLET IS DRESSED IN BLACK), FILLED OUT BY THEIR IMAGINATIONS (FOR EXAMPLE, HAMLET HAS LIKED REALLY SAD MUSIC FOR A WHILE).

☹️ PROFILE PHOTOS MAY BE DRAWN OR CUT OUT FROM MAGAZINES. REMEMBER, MANY ACTUAL FACEBOOK PROFILE PAGES DO NOT HAVE AN ACTUAL PHOTO OF THE PERSON WHO MADE THEM—FACEBOOK MEMBERS SOMETIMES CHOOSE A PICTURE OF SOMETHING THEY FEEL REPRESENTS THEM LIKE: SYMBOL THAT REPRESENTS THEM OR AN IMAGE OF SOMETHING THEY MIGHT LIKE

☹️ SHARE THE PAGES YOU HAVE CREATED IN STUDENT PAIRS OR IN A GROUP DISCUSSION.

## REFLECTION

- ☹️ NAME ONE THING YOU HAD TO IMAGINE ABOUT YOUR CHARACTER THAT YOU THINK IS REALLY INTERESTING.
- ☹️ WAS IT EASY TO IMAGINE BEYOND THE PLAY—FOR INSTANCE?
- ☹️ DO YOU FEEL THE PLAY DID NOT PROVIDE ENOUGH INFORMATION? HOW SO?
- ☹️ HOW EASY WAS IT TO DECIDE WHO YOUR CHARACTER'S FRIENDS ARE?
- ☹️ WOULD YOUR CHARACTER IGNORE A FRIEND REQUEST FROM OTHER CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY? WHY OR WHY NOT?

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# TO TWEET OR NOT TO TWEET

## #THEQUESTION

**OVERVIEW:** USING THE SOCIAL NETWORK TWITTER, HAVE YOUR STUDENTS CREATE A LIST OF TWEETS FROM DIFFERENT CHARACTERS, TRACKING THEIR PROGRESS THROUGHOUT THE PLAY. HAVE THEM GO A STEP FURTHER TO CREATE DIALOGUE BETWEEN CHARACTERS.

**GOAL:** TO BRING THE CHARACTERS OF HAMLET INTO A REAL-WORLD CONTEXT. TO INCREASE UNDERSTANDING OF HOW THE CHARACTERS INTERACT AND FEEL TOWARDS ONE ANOTHER.

**OUTCOMES:** STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO USE SPECIFIC FACTS AND LINES FROM THE PLAY TO MAKE CLEAR THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CHARACTERS.

**NOTE:** HERE IS A LINK TO THE GREAT RIVER SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL'S YOUTUBE VIDEO "KIDS EXPLAIN SHAKESPEARE'S HAMLET" TO GIVE THEM A JUMP START INTO THE LESSON. [PROVES ANYONE CAN UNDERSTAND SHAKESPEARE]

☺ [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=ETJIU7RdCpC&SPFRELOAD=10](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EtJIU7RdCpC&spfreload=10)

**ACTIVITY:** FAMILIARIZE STUDENT WITH THE LAYOUT OF A TWITTER POST [A TWEET] AND ITS CHARACTER LIMIT (140, INCLUDING SPACES).

- ☺ ASK THE STUDENTS TO CREATE A TWITTER NAME FOR THEIR CHARACTER.
- ☺ ASK STUDENTS TO CREATE A LIST OF TWEETS THAT THEIR CHARACTER WOULD POST THROUGHOUT THE PLAY.
- ☺ HAVE STUDENTS CREATE TWITTER NAMES FOR OTHER CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY AND HAVE THEM TALK TO ONE ANOTHER VIA TWITTER.

**EXAMPLES:**

- ☺ @THEMANINBLACK: 2 B OR NOT 2 B #THATISTHEQUESTION
- ☺ @ROSENGUILD: @HAMLET LET'S GO FOR A RIDE #IMONABOAT
- ☺ @OPHELIAFLOWERGIRL: OH, WOE IS ME #LONELYGIRLPROBLEMS

**REFLECTION:**

- ☺ WAS IT EASY TO DECIDE WHAT THE CHARACTERS' TWITTER NAMES WERE?
- ☺ DID YOU TRY TO MAKE THE TWITTER NAMES REFLECT SOMETHING ABOUT THE CHARACTER?
- ☺ WAS IT EASY OR FUN TO PICK OUT LINES FROM THE PLAY TO USE IN A TWEET?
- ☺ WERE SOME RELATIONSHIPS EASIER TO CONVEY VIA TWEETS THAN OTHERS? WHY?

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# YOU'RE THE CRITIC

## SHAKESPEARE PLAY CRITIQUE (1<sup>ST</sup> TO 7<sup>TH</sup> GRADE LEVEL)

1. CIRCLE THE NUMBER OF STARS THAT BEST MATCHES HOW YOU'D RATE THIS PERFORMANCE. (ONE STAR IS THE LOWEST RATING AND FIVE STARS IS THE BEST RATING.) THEN WRITE A PARAGRAPH IN THE SPACE BELOW THAT SPECIFICALLY DESCRIBES WHY YOU GAVE IT THAT RATING. DO NOT SIMPLY SAY "I DIDN'T LIKE IT," BUT SAY WHY. FOR EXAMPLE, "I DIDN'T LIKE THE FACT THAT THE DIRECTOR CHANGED THE SETTING TO NEW YORK" OR "I LOVED THE WAY THE ACTORS MADE ME BELIEVE THAT THEY WERE REALLY GOING TO KILL EACH OTHER."



STAR RATING: \_\_\_\_\_ STARS

2. WHAT IS THE CENTRAL IDEA OR THEME OF THE PLAY?

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3. OUTLINE THE MAIN ACTIONS THAT HAPPENED IN THE PLOT (WHAT WERE THE BIG EVENTS IN THE STORY?).



4. WHAT DID YOU PARTICULARLY LIKE OR DISLIKE ABOUT THE DESIGN ELEMENTS OF THIS PLAY (SET DESIGN, LIGHTS, COSTUMES, MUSIC, ETC.)?

5. SHAKESPEARE WRITES ABOUT FEELINGS THAT WE ALL EXPERIENCE. IN *HAMLET*, WE SEE PEOPLE WITH FEELINGS LIKE LOVE, JEALOUSY, ANGER, FRUSTRATION, AND OTHERS. PICK ONE OF THESE EMOTIONS THAT YOU'VE EXPERIENCED STRONGLY AND WRITE WHAT HAPPENED IN YOUR LIFE TO MAKE YOU FEEL THAT WAY AND WHAT HAPPENED BECAUSE OF IT.

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# YOU'RE THE CRITIC

## SHAKESPEARE PLAY CRITIQUE (7<sup>TH</sup> TO 12<sup>TH</sup> GRADE LEVEL)

GIVE THIS PRODUCTION A RATING OF 1 TO 5 STARS. (ONE STAR IS THE LOWEST RATING AND FIVE STARS IS THE HIGHEST.) BELOW WRITE A PARAGRAPH REVIEW OF THE PLAY. IN OTHER WORDS, DESCRIBE WHY YOU GAVE IT THAT RATING. GIVE SPECIFIC EXAMPLES TO SUPPORT YOUR REASONS. THEN REFLECT ON THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS



STAR RATING: \_\_\_\_\_ STARS

1. HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE CHARACTER OF HAMLET AS HE IS PORTRAYED IN THIS PRODUCTION?

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2. DOES SHAKESPEARE GIVE ANY REASONS AS TO WHY HAMLET DELAYS SO LONG IN TAKING ACTION? WHAT JUSTIFICATIONS CAN YOU FIND?

3. WHY ARE WE STILL STAGING THIS PLAY 400 YEARS SINCE SHAKESPEARE WROTE IT? WHY DO YOU THINK THE DIRECTOR CHOSE THIS PLAY?

4. WHICH CHARACTER DID YOU SYMPATHIZE WITH MOST? WHY?

5. THINK ABOUT AND DESCRIBE:

☺ THE VOCAL AND PHYSICAL ACTIONS OF THE ACTORS (CHARACTERIZATION)

☺ THE SET

☺ THE COSTUMES

6. WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE SOME OF THE THEMES OF THE PLAY?

7. DID THE ELEMENTS OF CHARACTERIZATIONS, SET, AND/OR COSTUMES REINFORCE ANY OF THESE THEMES?

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8. SHAKESPEARE WRITES ABOUT THINGS THAT WE ALL EXPERIENCE: LOVE, JEALOUSY, DEATH, ANGER, REVENGE, PASSION, MISUNDERSTANDINGS, ETC. WRITE A PARAGRAPH ABOUT ONE BIG EMOTION IN THE PLAY THAT YOU'VE ALSO EXPERIENCED IN YOUR LIFE.

9. NOW, IMAGINE YOU ARE THE DIRECTOR OF HAMLET, CREATE YOUR NEW PRODUCTION.

☹️ CAST THE CHARACTERS OF HAMLET AND OPHELIA WITH FAMOUS ACTORS. WHY WOULD YOU CHOOSE THESE TWO PEOPLE?

☹️ MANY DIRECTORS SET SHAKESPEARE PLAYS IN TIME PERIODS OTHER THAN THE RENAISSANCE. WHAT OTHER SETTING COULD YOU PLACE THE PLAY IN THAT WOULD MAKE SENSE? WHY?

☹️ HOW ABOUT COSTUMES? IMAGINE HOW THE CHARACTERS IN YOUR NEW PRODUCTION WOULD BE DRESSED THAT WOULD ILLUSTRATE THE KINDS OF CHARACTERS THEY ARE AND WHAT SETTING YOU HAVE PUT THE PLAY IN.



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# COMPARE & CONTRAST

## 400 YEARS OF ADAPTATIONS

WHEN IT COMES TO THE WORK OF SHAKESPEARE'S THERE HAVE BEEN SO MANY DIFFERENT ADAPTATIONS FOR US TO EXPERIENCE. A GREAT ACTIVITY TO DO IS CHOOSE TWO VERSIONS OF THE SAME SHAKESPEARE SHOW TO WATCH OR READ AND COMPARE AND CONTRAST THEM [HERE ARE A FEW SUGGESTIONS: THE LION KING AND HAMLET - 10 THINGS I HATE ABOUT YOU AND TAMING OF THE SHREW - WEST SIDE STORY AND ROMEO & JULIET - SHE'S THE MAN AND TWELFTH NIGHT - SCOTLAND, PA AND MACBETH - RAN AND KING LEAR - BIG BUSINESS AND THE COMEDY OF ERRORS - FORBIDDEN PLANET - THE TEMPEST].

NOTE: HERE IS A LINK TO THE GREAT RIVER SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL'S YOUTUBE VIDEO "TYRANTS & TIARAS - TODDLERS & TIARAS" TO SHOW THREE SHAKESPEAREAN PLAYS ADAPTED TO A MODERN TELEVISION SHOW.

☺ [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=KGY6PVS-PA0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KGY6PVS-PA0)

The form consists of two large, overlapping circles that create a central intersection. To the right of the circles is a vertical dashed line. The entire diagram is intended for students to write their comparison and contrast notes.

# CAPTAIN SHAKESPEARE!

## COMIC BOOK STORYBOARD

**OVERVIEW:** USING THE RECENT CRAZE OF COMIC BOOK MOVIES AND SUPERHEROES, HAVE YOUR STUDENTS CREATE THEIR OWN COMIC CELL OF A SHAKESPEARE PLAY. HAVE THEM GO A STEP FURTHER TO CREATE DIALOGUE BETWEEN CHARACTERS.

**GOAL:** LEARNING SHAKESPEARE'S 5 ACT PLAY STRUCTURE AND STORY PLOT STRUCTURE.

**OUTCOMES:** STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO RETELL THE STORY AND SUMMARIZE EVENTS.

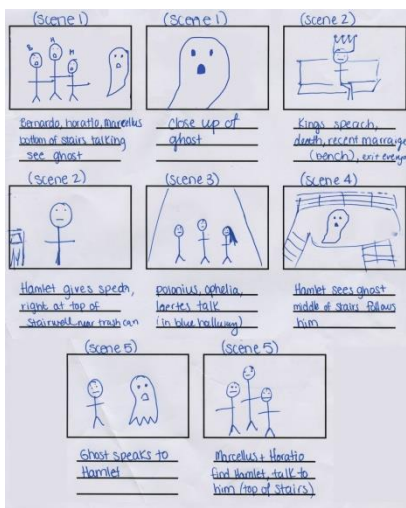
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**ACTIVITY:** FAMILIARIZE STUDENT WITH THE LAYOUT PLOT STRUCTURE

- ☺ ASK THE STUDENTS TO CHOOSE A SHAKESPEAREAN PLAY OR USE THE ONE YOU ARE CURRENTLY DISCUSSING
- ☺ HAVE THE STUDENTS BREAK DOWN THE 5 ACT PLAY INTO THE 6 CELL PLOT STRUCTURE
- ☺ USE THEIR CREATIVITY TO ILLUSTRATE EACH CELL AND WRITE A DESCRIPTION OF WHAT IS HAPPENING DURING EACH OF THE STEPS

**EXAMPLES:**



**REFLECTION:**

- ☺ WAS IT EASY TO FIGURE OUT EACH OF THE STEPS IN THE PLOT PYRAMID?
- ☺ WAS IT EASY OR FUN TO PICK OUT LINES FROM THE PLAY TO USE IN EACH CELL?
- ☺ WERE SOME RELATIONSHIPS EASIER TO CONVEY VIA TWEETS THAN OTHERS? WHY?