



Shakespeare rationale

"You do not understand Shakespeare fully [...] until you have spoken the text aloud [...]. This is because there is something in the physicality of the language [...] which is not only an intrinsic part of the rhythm and form of the writing, but also of the underlying motive and reasoning of the characters involved. And I believe young people of whatever academic ability [...], given the right opportunity to speak the language, latch on to this in a remarkable way and I know it excites them and makes them want more."

Cicely Berry RSC Voice Director 2016

In our writing curriculum, every year group studies a Shakespeare play at the end of the year. The oracy elements of our English curriculum are a key focus in these units, and there are rich opportunities for children to perform to other classes as well as to their families.

In KS1, children are introduced to *The Tempest* and *Twelfth Night*: well-known plays with sub-plots, intrigue, and humour. Children will act out scenes from the plays and be introduced to theatrical techniques, such as using a story stick. They will learn that Shakespeare typically wrote comedies and tragedies.

In LKS2, children study *Richard III* and *Julius Caesar* and are introduced to the third type of play written by Shakespeare: histories. They will compare the real King Richard III that they studied in history with Shakespeare's Richard to understand how this famous king is often mis-represented, as well as learning key quotes. While studying *Julius Caesar*, children will meet familiar names from history and learn to declaim Mark Antony's famous speech: Friends, Romans, Countrymen act III scene II. They will draw on their knowledge of the Roman Empire from history learning to reflect how Brutus's intentions backfired.

In UKS2, children study *Macbeth* and *Romeo and Juliet*. They analyse how Shakespeare uses foreshadowing in both plays, learn how blank verse is written in iambic pentameter and explore meter and rhythm. They learn to perform scenes with The Weird Sisters in *Macbeth* and *Macbeth's* play. In both plays, children draw on their history learning to understand the context in which Shakespeare was writing.

KS1

Introduced to play with storystick – teacher tells the story with children in a circle, points stick to a child to come up and become character etc. We provide the story circle version. Key quotes are introduced in the circle version. Children are introduced to rhyming couplets.

- Learn key quotes from story circle version
- Read Andrew Matthews and Tony Ross version
-

Y1 The Tempest

- Setting description
- Make up own insults in role as Caliban using quotes from Act II Scene II and Act III Scene II



Y2 Twelfth Night

- Letter to Malvolio
- Learn quotes from Act II Scene V – when Malvolio reads the love letter supposedly written by Olivia.

LKS2

Introduced to play with storystick – teacher tells the story with children in a circle, points stick to a child to come up and become character etc. We provide story circle version. Key quotes are introduced in the circle version.

- Learn key quotes through story circle version.
- Close reading of selected scenes from original
- Introduction to rhyme and meter
- Act out scenes from original
- Read Tony Ross and Andrew Matthews version with Marcia Williams quotes

Y3 Richard III

family structure, how he transcends family

settings: palace, road to funeral, sending bishop for strawberries etc all in London then out to Bosworth for the battle – east (Richard travels from London) meets west (Henry travels from Wales)

learn key quotes and intro to rhyme and meter

Now is the winter of our discontent ...

Y4 Julius Caesar

empire structure

settings: all set in Rome until assassination then out of Rome for the fighting

learn key quotes and intro to rhyme and meter

Friends, Romans, Countrymen

UKS2

Y5 Macbeth

- Read Andrew Matthews and Tony Ross version with key extracts from the original for close reading. Build background knowledge- King James and Queen Elizabeth I from history units. Read and summarise the play, watch film clips, read scenes from original and annotate meter and rhyme for The Weird Sisters Act I Scene I
- Learn and perform The Weird Sister Act I Scene I
- Study layout, metre and rhyme for The Weird Sisters Act IV Scene I
- Learn and perform The Weird Sisters Act IV Scene I
- Soliloquy Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow. Study and use knowledge of iambic pentameter to analyse how Shakespeare uses meter to show time is slowing down and coming to an end for Macbeth.
- Write analysis of evil in Macbeth – use model text.



Y 6 Romeo and Juliet

- Study the prologue – close read for meaning, analyse iambic pentameter. Summarise the story – foreshadowing.
- Read Andrew Matthews and Tony Ross version with key extracts from the original for close reading. Build background knowledge and draw on history learning about monarchy etc. Read and summarise the play – identify foreshadowing throughout.
- Study layout, metre, and rhyme of the prologue for Act II
- Learn and perform the prologue
- Write analysis of love and hate in Romeo and Juliet – use model text.

RSC Warm-ups

- **Boal Handshakes...** meeting as many people in the circle as we can, holding each handshakes until the next one has been formed
- **Clapping game** – start with a simple passing of a clap around the circle, then send another to chase it, then one in each direction, then in opposite directions.
- **Naming circle** – each player puts their hand on their own shoulder and says their name. This passes round the circle as quickly as possible. Then we name the person on our right, then two spaces to the right, left etc.
- **Crossing the circle** – one player walks across the circle making eye contact with another as they go. Before they reach them, the other player must set off across the circle and make eye contact with another. This sets up a continuous pattern of movement and we can add people's names as we meet them, then a series of 'as if's': greet them as an old friend; someone at a business meeting; as if a matter of real urgency etc.
- **Ensemble walking** – can the group all stop together? Can everyone walk in 'neutral'? Can we all stop when a chosen member of the group stops? How well can we do this without a named leader? How might different groups of the young people we teach react to this game?
- **Go, stop, show me** – using emotions and actions associated with the play (terrified, alone, exploring etc), working in pairs and groups to create images such as *family, father and daughter, a duke and his court, a ship in a storm, a shipwreck etc.*
- **Go, stop, jump, clap** – the whole group responds to the words together, then the meaning of the words is reversed – stops means go, jump means clap etc – what is it like when the rules are changed in this way? How does it make us feel? Relate to The Tempest – power and control
- The storyteller's circle – the class sits in a circle and the teacher stands in the middle with a storystick. The storystick can be whatever you want it to be. When the stick is pointed at a child, they take on the role of the character being described and come into the circle and act out the narration. When you say 'whoosh' all characters in the circle go back to their places so you can 'reset' and invite other children into the circle to continue acting out the story. You may wish to have a refrain that is repeated by all children as you tell the story.