

## **Two Faces of Shakespearean Drama: Comedy and Tragedy**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Last year, I ended up the school year with a “big bang” (not the beginning of the school year, you will notice) by introducing the seemingly eternal love-and-lost experience of *Romeo and Juliet* to my ninth grade class with the hopeful venture of leaving an inspiring lesson from a Shakespearean play. It was a wonderful experience not only for me but for my students, as well. It was my first time to teach the play as a whole. This time, I want to extend the students’ experience beyond a Shakespearean tragedy and beyond *Romeo and Juliet*. A comedy seems to be in order, since knowing William Shakespeare and his plays and poetry will never be complete without at least knowing both his major genres: tragedy and comedy. And, of course, there’s also what might be called his tragicomedies. This unit, created in a seminar dealing with the lighter side of Shakespeare, will deal with one of his wonderful comedies, *As You Like It*.

### **A Break Away From Tragedy**

As a Language Arts teacher teaching ninth graders, I found *Romeo and Juliet* to be a valuable and appropriate Shakespearean play I can use to teach about love and about life in general, especially as experienced at a very young age. But then I realized that adaptable as it is for my students because of the young love and age of the characters, it is a play that has the elements of violence and the classic tragic ending. I have decided to write a unit that will focus more on the lighter side of Shakespearean plays, therefore the decision to use a comedy to offset the tragic end of *Romeo and Juliet*. I still intend to teach my students *Romeo and Juliet* as an introduction to the world of Shakespeare.

Having made the realization of the importance of ending a school year on a positive and happy note, I decided to use *As You Like It*, a comedy, as the end-of-the-year play. With the element of disguise used as a means of discovery for the characters in the play as well as a profound element of freedom (as was depicted in the life in the forest of Arden), I have found that this play is going to be appropriate for my students considering their age and their own stage of self-discovery.

### **The Ninth Grade Level**

The senior high school where I teach is a very diverse community. At the beginning of each school year, the colors and sounds of the school changes with the influx of new ninth graders. This new “breed” of 14 to 15 year old students are energetic with unique backgrounds and experiences. A lot of people find the students in this level incorrigible

and loud but I find in them a world in themselves. Yes, they may be sometimes willful but they are also young adults struggling to be heard and anxious to make a mark in a more adult school (the incorrigibility not necessarily out of bad habit). My students are a combination of two traits: that of still being a child and being an adult who is worldly in all guises therefore their incorrigibility is rooted in both these traits. With their youth, there is still the great possibility that their youthful views and opinions can still be changed. Exposure to the right stimuli will gradually and eventually lead them to recognize right from wrong and this may result in an even greater height of educational awareness. The appreciation of academic goals will then encourage them to achieve more than what they currently have. The student population is not only diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, and language but economically. While I have some students who can financially support their projects, there are also others who cannot. Just like in any community, the economic factor is always a big issue. Since this is going to be an inevitable obstacle, the activities and projects will be limited to frugal-oriented projects but not limited to an experience of a lifetime that will involve having fun while learning.

I consider my students the future, not only of the United States but of the world. With the current political, social and economic situation in America, especially after the September 11th attack on the World Trade Center, it will be of great benefit for them to learn the social, economic and political norms during Shakespeare's time. These norms are reflected in the comedy, *As You Like It*, as well as in the tragedy, *Romeo and Juliet*. Studying Shakespeare's era and awareness of current events will give the students comparable scenarios that will help them hone their attitudes and behavior towards future events. My students have critical minds when they are guided and encouraged. They have the basic observation skills that can still be tempered and molded.

## **ABOUT THE PLAYS**

*As You Like It* is a play focusing on young love wherein the characters "discover happiness by recognizing and accepting the briars with the roses, the sour with the sweet." (Gardner, 132). The four main characters, Rosalind, Celia, Orlando and Oliver, will help students understand that life is actually full of trial and error and disguises. An understanding of life's realities and frail imperfections will lead the students to a conclusion that will leave them in awe of the characters and hopefully lead them to a better perspective of life in general. *As You Like It* ends happily with every character's crisis resolved. There was not a single drop of blood shed as opposed to the tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet* where death became the final resolution. In this comedy, the students will also discover a world with courtly guises which is in direct contrast to that of a life in the forest (Arden) and distinguish the difference between happiness and cynicism. Happiness is a virtue that the real duke, Rosalind, Celia, Orlando and Oliver find in the play while cynicism is something Frederick has since he was embittered because of his own wrongdoing. He could never find the happiness his brother and his brother's followers have because he was always doubtful of his court's sincerity. In *Romeo and Juliet*, students will also learn through dramatic lyricism of a young love between two

lovers, Romeo and Juliet, whose tragic end leaves the readers or audience with wonder “whether, and to what degree, the young lovers are responsible for their own catastrophe” (Bloom, 87). Students will learn and understand whether love and hate can thrive in harmony or disharmony in a culture that calls for young arranged marriages.

### **As You Like It**

*As You Like It* is a five-act play by William Shakespeare that was written and performed approximately in 1599 to 1600. It was first published in the First Folio of 1623 and was based on the play *Rosalynde (1590)* by Thomas Lodge (Bloom, 212).

The play has two major settings: the palace court and forest of Arden. Frederick usurps the palace court from his brother, who is the rightful duke, called Duke Senior, and the Arden forest is where the real duke and some of his followers live in exile including Jaques, a melancholy courtier. Duke Senior has a daughter, Rosalind, who lives with his brother in the palace with her cousin, Celia, who is the usurper’s daughter. The two princesses are very good friends whose classic friendship protects their love for each other. Rosalind falls in love with a young man, Orlando, whom she meets for the first time in a wrestling match. Orlando is Sir Rowland’s son and brother to Jaques and Oliver, who despises him. Sir Rowland is the exiled duke’s friend when he was alive. Frederick, upon knowing of Orlando’s parentage, takes out his anger and hate on his brother’s daughter and banishes her. Rosalind disguises herself as Ganymede and flees to the Arden forest with Celia who poses as Aliena, Ganymede’s sister and with Touchstone, Frederick’s courtier.

Ganymede and Aliena chance upon Orlando with his servant, Adam, in the forest. “He” encourages Orlando to continue to profess his love for Rosalind using him as a mock “Rosalind.” Orlando flees to the forest as well to get away from Oliver’s unjust hatred. Then, Oliver sets forth to search for Orlando to kill him. In the forest, he falls asleep by Ganymede’s cottage where Orlando finds him in danger from a lioness. Orlando saves Oliver’s life, who then asks for forgiveness from him. Oliver meets Aliena and falls in love with her. He asks her to marry him. Aliena agrees to the proposal and Orlando reacts with a longing for Rosalind. The next day the couple, Orlando and Ganymede, set forth to the forest to ask the duke to marry Oliver and Aliena. Ganymede and Aliena shed their disguises and become Rosalind and Celia again. This pleases the duke very much and he gives consent to the marriage of the two couples in love. By this time, Frederick goes to the forest with revenge in his heart but eventually reforms in the end. The duke and his company with the two couples go back to the palace and live happily ever after.

This play will hopefully teach the students lessons about integrity and honesty. In the end, all of the characters have realized something valuable especially Frederick who finally found peace and forgiveness in the forest.

## **Romeo and Juliet**

*Romeo and Juliet* is an all time favorite love story set in the Italian city of Verona in the 14th century that ended tragically. This is one of Shakespeare's unforgettable tragedies. This is a story of two feuding families whose heirs fall in love with each other. The action of the story is completed in a six-day time period.

The play unfolds with a brawl to introduce the hostility between the Montagues and the Capulets. Romeo, a Montague and once in love with Rosaline, falls in love at first sight with Juliet, a Capulet. He meets Juliet for the first time at the masquerade party given by Lord Capulet at the Capulet household. Tybalt, the Prince of the Cats and Juliet's cousin, has an extreme abhorrence for the Montagues. He notices Romeo and Juliet's attraction at the ball and vows revenge against Romeo and the Montagues for this and for daring to attend the Capulet ball. He exacts his vindictive plan on the day Romeo and Juliet marry each other secretly in Friar Lawrence's cell. Tybalt slays Mercutio, Romeo's best friend, so Romeo kills Tybalt in anger despite his desire for peace between the Capulets and the Montagues. Escalus, prince of Verona banishes Romeo to Mantua for the death of Tybalt. Romeo seeks Friar Lawrence's advice and goes to see Juliet, his wife, before he leaves to his banishment.

Lord Capulet arranges for Juliet's marriage to Paris, a kinsman of the Prince, to offset the doom of Tybalt's death. Juliet refuses and goes to Friar Lawrence to seek counsel. The Friar arranges that Juliet should take a potion that will make her appear dead. This will allow Juliet to avoid the marriage to Paris. The Friar promises to send a message to Romeo about this. Romeo fails to receive the message and finds about Juliet's "death" from Balthazar, his servant. He decides to go back to Verona to confirm the "death" and finds Juliet in the Capulet tomb, apparently dead. He purchases a poison and drinks it while holding the sleeping Juliet. Juliet awakes, finds Romeo dead beside her and is so grief stricken, she kills herself to join Romeo in death. Thus, the story ends tragically.

## **COMPARISON BETWEEN A TRAGEDY AND A COMEDY**

The students will study the elements of tragedy and compare and contrast them to the elements of comedy. The elements may be present in both types of plays because of comic relief, soliloquy, aside, foil, allusion, and blank verse with the exception of a tragic hero and tragic end in tragedy, and a happy ending in a comedy. They will also compare the element of romance in both types of a drama through *Romeo and Juliet* and *As You Like It*.

## **Beginnings of Classic Comedy**

Classic comedy actually started way back in the Greek civilization when it was called *komodia* from the word *komos* which means a revel or carousal, or from the word *kome*, which means a village (MacDonald, xiv). It is divided into two groups: Old Comedy and New Comedy. Shakespearean plays fall under New Comedy.

Old Comedy thrived to its heights during the last quarter of the fifth century almost at the same time as tragedy. There were a great number of men who wrote comedies then but only about “11 complete plays of the brilliant Aristophanes are extant” (McDonald, xiv). There were several types of comic styles that were done during those days. One of them was called parabases, which were funny choruses used to cut short an action in episodic intervals to “chant long odes” (MacDonald, xiv) that were not in anyway connected to the immediate action at hand and “made venomous fun of prominent public figures, some of whom were doubtless in the audience.” (MacDonald, xiv). Another one is Socrates’ *phrontisterion* or “thinkery”, which is now a well- known example of “personal lampooning” (MacDonald, xiv).

After the Old Comedy came Middle Comedy to which not a single literary example came to survive to this day. Then the Menanderian or New Comedy came about after Menander, an Athenian comic writer developed a genre that would now be a popular model for modern Western comedy with themes such as “boy meets girl and falls in love, boy loses girl, boy gets girl in the end.” (MacDonald, xv). This having happened, when Shakespeare came into the literary world in 16th century England, he found a world already rich with literary actions and pursuits.

## **Shakespeare’s comedy and standard comedy**

The unit’s focus will of course concentrate on comedy and the students will delve into the difference between Shakespearean comic techniques and standard comic techniques.

Shakespeare’s plays in general make use of a great deal of imagery which he uses to “transmit to us through our emotions associations it arouses” and “gives quality, creates atmosphere, and conveys emotion” because of the lack of elaborate sets in his time (Spurgeon, 9). The imagery is seen through the character’s experiences as well as the setting. His images unveil his impressions of the truth of life during his time. These images help in creating and enforcing the comedy or the tragedy of his plays and somehow also helps readers and audiences to understand and experience the life at that time. His comedies, especially, have images that deal with nature and daily indoor life. Nature images present “life in the English countryside, the weather and its changes, the season, sky, sunrise and dawn, clouds, rain and wind, garden, flowers, trees, growth and decay, rivers, water, animals, birds” (Spurgeon, 44).

Under the greenwood tree  
Who loves to lie with me.  
*As You Like It Act II Sc. 5*

Under the shade of melancholy boughs,  
Lose and neglect the creeping hours of time;  
If ever you have look'd on better days,  
If ever been where bells have knoll'd to church,  
If ever sat at any good man's feast.  
*As You Like It Act II Sc. 7*

The daily indoor life reveals “indoor occupations and routine” (Spurgeon, 44) such as eating, drinking, housework, garden work, body and movement, sleep habits, fashion, handicrafts, light, and the use of candles, fire, illness and cure, parents and children, life and death and marriage.

And one man in his time plays many parts,  
His acts being seven ages. At first an infant,  
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms,  
And then the whining school boy, with his satchel  
And shining morning face, creeping like snail  
Unwillingly to school.  
*As You Like It Act II Sc. 7*

Shakespeare's comedies create a lot of movement and color. He is also fond of change and contrast through which the five senses are used so that it appeals to the audience's sensual side. He shaped experiences, emotions and light sensations familiar to Englishmen by injecting gaiety, the languorous mood of a forest, verbal wit, similes and metaphors, and double meanings. In *As You Like It*, as in *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Shakespeare started the story in sorrow and ended it up with joy. He sets the place of comic and gaiety, the Arden forest, apart from the real world, which is the palace court where the sorrow began. Rural life becomes a focal point in some ways because it is there that characters seem to have found a means of discovery of themselves, of those around them, and events that affect them. The forest is somewhat part of rural life where the portrayal is one of complete freedom and abandon, where the rules of the court does not apply.

Standard comedy, on the other hand, makes use of modern conventions wherein the actions are hilarious not necessarily witty. It has evolved from the Menanderian or New Comedy and has for its themes such as “a boy meets a girl” and everything falls in the order of things, “heavy fathers, shrewish wives, or a braggart soldiers“ (MacDonald, xv). It makes use of slapstick jokes and slang language that appeals to the masses. The music creates the mood that brings the audience to a frenzied, boisterous laughing.

The most common and popular modern comedy these days is the stand-up comedy, which is done live on-stage if not scripted for a television presentation. Comic actors play different roles in which they call improvisational comedy. The antics depend on the individual or group playing. Different genres can be acted out on stage or done impromptu. According to Take 5, a comedy troupe, some of these genres are: standard genre-rama, which is the playing out of a style then comic actors switch to another one. Water-game, which is a novelty in itself because participants will have their heads wet and afterwards will tell why they are wet; and sketches, that feature designed musical accolades. Other stand-up comedies made fun of people in the audience or other prominent figures in society, political or otherwise.

Of course, other comedy shows that are even more popular are those played in or hosted by Jay Leno, Bill Cosby, and Alan King in show business. Their comedies involve anecdotes about their lives, daily living, and other petty and essential observations around them that they re-create or have re-created entirely to bombastic effects for laughing and entertainment purposes.

Some modern standard stand-up comedy could have well taken after the Old Comedy classic called *parabasis* that were performed during Socrates and Aristophanes' time. *Parabasis* also made fun of certain people in the audience.

### **Shakespeare's Tragedy**

"Anything bad." This is the common concept of a tragedy as most people see it. Curiously, Shakespeare also has this same view of a tragedy. The tragic hero, who is the center of the plot of a story, ends with a tragic mishap or death. Before anything happens to the hero, Shakespeare weaves an image that is a combination of "beauty and the two-edged quality of life and danger in his words"(Spurgeon, 309). He creates this vision in a story that makes the audience feel the main conflict and still get a grasp of the suspense through how he sees and tells the story.

In *Romeo and Juliet*, he romanticized young love by evoking (in the words spoken by Romeo and Juliet) an "exquisite and passionate expression of love's rhapsody"(Spurgeon, 310). Light, being a pronounced factor in the play, played a major role in both the characters of Romeo and Juliet. Each character sees the other one as a light in contrast with the dark of night.

O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!  
It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night  
Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear.  
*Romeo in Romeo and Juliet Act I Sc. 5*

Come, night ; come, Romeo, come; though day in night;  
For though wilt lie upon the wings of night  
Whiter than new snow on a raven's back.

*Juliet in Romeo and Juliet Act 3 Sc. 2*

Shakespeare symbolically projected life with the swift and beauty of it like in a blinding flash of light (Spurgeon, 312). He used such images as “clouding of the sun” to represent grief and sorrow. He used light consistently and deliberately to show the hastiness of life with its shine, danger, and destruction. He also made use of such imageries as dew and clouds to mean tears like in Juliet’s sadness because of her cousin Tybalt’s death as interpreted by her father, Lord Capulet. He constantly played the sharp contrasts of light and dark and beauty and ugliness in life that has a speedy end. He made use of similes and metaphors to achieve the purpose of contrasting opposites and create a suspenseful tragic end for the heroes.

## **INFERENCES AND GENERALIZATIONS AND FACT AND FICTION**

The use of inferences and generalizations and the distinction between fact and fiction will be included in the course of study. Inferences and generalizations are techniques that can be used by the students to conclude using reasoning from something that is already known or assumed. Rosalind, in *As You Like It*, disguises herself as boy named Ganymede. Students can be prompted to ask questions why she did what she did. Despite the fact that she is a “boy“, Orlando agreed to woo “him” as “her.” What is the purpose of the disguise and how does it relate to everyday life?

Using facts about Shakespeare’s time and some scenes and situations in the play will let students understand and differentiate ideas and norms Shakespeare used as fact or a fiction in the play. One fact during Shakespeare’s time is the theater, which was the people’s favorite form of entertainment then. Is it still the people’s favorite form of entertainment today? Another is the politics or the hierarchy during the Elizabethan period. How did it manage to get the people loyal to the throne? Is it possible to apply the same political theories in the United States at present, especially after the onset of terrorist attacks in the past years? These will all be integrated with current trends in literature and society to provide ample information about the ramifications of life and how characters in real or fictional life can actually be made into very good examples. This will have a timeless impact on the students.

## **VIEWING AND PRESENTATION**

I hope to find at least two film versions of *As You Like It* to present as well as that of *Romeo and Juliet*. A film will provide the students a visual experience of the play that will further help them in exploring the depths of the characters and the plot itself. This activity will be done after the students read the texts of the plays.



A motion picture is endowed with the ability to demonstrate movement, graphics, dialogues and the setting. The way the characters use body movement and facial expression can help students have an in-depth view of what goes on in the mind of the character and have a full understanding of the reasons behind the action and reaction.

A visual projection of the plays can help students identify with the characters and learn more about what they already know about the story when they read it. The video presentation will enforce understanding, only this time the students will see and hear, almost to the point that all the senses are actually evoked. Text presentations can give description of sensual stimulus but not necessarily give students a “bird’s-eye-view” like what videos can give. Although, videos will be integral parts of the whole curriculum, instruction will not focus on them. As tools in instruction, videos have their advantages and disadvantages. They can disrupt the creative imagination of the students if the videos are used before the text-reading/studying part. So, the viewing and presentation part will only serve as a supplement.

### **INTERPRETATION, COMMENTS, AND ANECDOTES**

After the viewing and presentation, the students will take out their copy of the play and they will be asked to interpret certain passages or quotations. They will write comments or anecdotes that will further explain and represent a particular quotation. The passages will depend on its relevance on the Act or Scene being tackled.

Interpretation is a vital part of learning in literature. The students dissect and analyze parts and quotations to further an understanding or explain a question or observation that they have. Interpretations can sometimes be true or false. To verify the veracity of an interpretation using information from the literature, the students have to infer and generalize and do research.

While reading the plays, the students are expected to make comments on certain scenes that they find valuable in understanding the plot and conflict. With the comments, they can make note of certain anecdotes that somehow relate to their comments or the scenes. Act I Scene 2, Act II Scene 3 and Scene 7 are some of the parts in *As You Like It* that students will be dealing with.

### **VOCABULARY**

In Language Arts, words are very basic. They are even fundamental to everyday language used in conversations in the hallways, the cafeteria, the library, the streets, and even in the homes. They make up the sentences that make up the paragraphs that make up a poem, novel, a play, or even an ordinary dialogue. They give meaning to what is said or written in a particular text. But to give meaning, it is vital that words themselves are defined.

As part of the curriculum, word meaning is going to play a major role in the learning process of the students. Words that may be encountered in the process of reading the plays will be defined to better understand concepts and ideas pertaining to the comparison of a comedy versus tragedy, and the construction of information based on the texts of the plays as well as the rich background that add more color to the makings of the plays. Students will be asked to define at least one to two words a week. They will constantly use the words in sentences until they familiarize themselves with the words and become comfortable using them in everyday language communication.

## **COSTUME AND HAT DESIGN**

I am also thinking of making the play a “reality” for the students by assigning them to do a costume and hat design. They will do a research on the Elizabethan era and make sketches of the costumes and hats at that time. To minimize expenses, the students will make use of used clothing that will fit one student who can play a role. I say, “play a role” because the students will also plan to use the hats and costumes in an actual presentation of certain parts/scenes of the play. Once the students have created the costumes and role -played, they will now have a very “real feel” of the scenes and setting of the play. The learning experience of the students will be more enforced.

If funding will not allow the students to re-create costumes, they will have to make do with the sketches or perhaps a scrapbook of Elizabethan era costumes and hats will work. The hat-making will not cost too much because the students will re-create the hats out of construction paper only.

Another variation of this project that will in a lot of ways give meaning to the costume design is a **Poster-Board/Paper doll design**. In this alternative and modified project, students are expected to re-create the Elizabethan era or a Scene in any of the plays, *As You Like It* or *Romeo and Juliet*, as assigned by the teacher to fully encompass understanding and visualization of the scenes and events either during Elizabethan period or any of the plays. The reasons for undertaking such a creative and interesting project is not limited to learning about Elizabethan era but also a view into the how and why William Shakespeare wrote so many plays that portrayed the life and times of his days.

## **“ALL THE WORLD’S A STAGE...”**

The students will also analyze this quotation in Act II Scene 7 of the play of *As You Like It*. This is one of the “best speeches” in the play assigned by Shakespeare and delivered by Jaques (Bloom,212) .

All the world’s a stage,  
And all men and women merely players.  
They have their exits and their entrances;  
And one man in his time plays many parts,

His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,  
 Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.  
 And then the whining school-boy, with his satchel  
 And shining morning face, creeping like snail  
 Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,  
 Sighing like a furnace, with a woeful ballad  
 Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,  
 Full of strange oaths and bearded like the pard;  
 Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,  
 Seeking the bubble reputation  
 Even in the cannon's mouth. And then justice,  
 In fair round belly with good capon lined,  
 With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,  
 Full of wise saws and modern instances;  
 An so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts  
 Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,  
 With spectacles on nose and pouch on side;  
 His youthful hose, well saved, a world too wide  
 For his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice,  
 Turning again toward childish trebel, pipes  
 And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,  
 That ends this strange eventful history,  
 Is second childishness and mere oblivion,  
 Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

*As You Like It Act II Sc. 7*

They will explain each stage played by “men and women” and why Shakespeare felt “all men and women” are “merely players.” They will probe into the mystery of life according to the stages set by Shakespeare and determine whether these are facts or just mere fiction. The analysis will also touch on the veracity of the description of each of the seven ages of men according to Jaques' character who believes that man has a “tendency to believe that the only worst truth about us is true”, which is termed *reductionism*.

The analysis will involve an activity called “Who Am I? or Who Are You?” that will get the students to do a self-analysis and make them decide about their roles in life, especially as an American. They will ask questions such as: Who am I?, Who are you?, What's my/ your role in our/your community, our/your school, our/your country, our/your world, or even in our/your circle of friends?, What can I/you do to help build peace, prosperity and solidarity?, Is my/your community, school, country, or even my/your hang-out a just a mere stage or the real world?, and Are tragedy and comedy parts of life?.

The two settings will be a “stage or theater” that they will apply in their analysis of their own roles and the world in general.

## **ENRICHMENT ACTIVITY**

The students will be asked if they have already seen or experienced rural life. As part of an enrichment activity, they will view a film that talks about rural life as well as urban life. Using critical thinking, the students will be made to compare and contrast urban and rural life and relate their own experiences to create a more visualized picture of the life in the two settings. Students may be asked to write their explanation and description in their journal.

## **LESSON PLANS**

### **Activity 1: Who is William Shakespeare?**

This activity will allow students to get to know William Shakespeare and his works. It will also provide students the chance to learn about Elizabethan England and the reasons that prompted William Shakespeare to write his plays. This will serve as an introduction to Shakespearean plays.

#### ***Objectives***

The student will:

1. Find sources about William Shakespeare.
2. Read and understand the life and works of William Shakespeare.
3. Learn how to take notes.
4. Learn how to connect their readings on William Shakespeare to his plays.
5. Understand the Elizabethan way of life and associate or connect to it if possible to modern day life.
6. Familiarize themselves with the costumes and hats in preparation for a forthcoming activity.

As a pre-lesson, students will be asked to gather in groups of three. Each group will be asked to discuss stock knowledge that they have about William Shakespeare and the Elizabethan era. If no one in the group knows anything about the topic, they will then list questions they want to ask when they go on to the lesson or activity itself.

The activity will require students to conduct a research on William Shakespeare and the Elizabethan era. With this activity, the students will better understand the ways of the characters in Shakespeare's plays. They will make use of all possible sources including the internet to gather the information they need. The project will be three (3) pages, typed with Times New Roman font size 12, and placed in a folder.

### ***Materials***

Pen and paper

Books, magazines, journals, or textbook (if provided) on William Shakespeare and the Elizabethan era.

Short bond paper and folder

### **Activity 2: Shakespeare's Tragedy and Comedy**

This activity will familiarize the students with the two major types of Shakespearean drama, the tragedy and the comedy. An understanding of the definitions of each according to Shakespearean drama will further introduce students to Shakespeare's concepts. Furthermore, this activity will provide students a better preview to *Romeo and Juliet* and *As You Like It*. They will effectively find the distinct differences and similarities of the two types of plays. Imagery will also be studied.

### ***Objectives***

The student will:

1. Understand the definition of tragedy and comedy.
2. Learn the elements of tragedy and comedy.
3. Become familiar with the similarities and differences between tragedy and comedy.
4. Become familiar with imagery.
5. Use life experiences as examples to further understand the concept of tragedy and comedy.

The students will be asked to share their own concept of a tragedy and a comedy. They will be asked to find the definition of the two words in the dictionary. They will compare the definitions that they have to Shakespeare's meaning. After the students have gathered and compared the definitions, they will study and understand the elements of both types of plays and find out the similarities and differences of the two. This activity is still part of the introduction to Shakespearean drama.

### ***Materials***

Pen and paper

Books, magazines, journals, or textbook (if provided) on Shakespearean drama

Notebook

### **Activity 3: Costume and Hat Design**

The students are creative and enjoy using their hands to create objects out of paper and cloth. This particular activity will require the students to use their research in Activity 1

to be able to design a costume and a hat. The Elizabethan era will very much be considered to get the best possible effect and experience of Shakespearean plays.

### ***Objectives***

The student will:

1. Sketch and design an Elizabethan costume and a hat.
2. Use the sketch to create the costume and the hat.
3. Use the costume and hat for the role-playing of a scene in the play to be read and studied.

Employing creative imagination and resourcefulness, the students will find designs of Elizabethan costumes and hats and re-create some choices using construction paper and used clothing. In order to achieve a real or near experience of a Shakespearean play as well as of Elizabethan England, the students will make use of their created costumes and hats in a role-playing activity. Props and graphics are additional projects for additional grades. The class will work in groups.

### ***Materials***

Construction paper  
Glue/scotch tape  
Used Clothing, scraps of cloth, thread  
Designs/Pictures of Elizabethan costumes and hats

### **Activity 4: Role-playing**

This is the concluding activity for the Shakespearean lesson. The students will be assigned a Scene in an Act of *As You Like It* and re-write the dialogues according to their style and preferences. This activity will allow the students to have an amateur first-hand experience of Shakespearean drama.

### ***Objectives***

The student will:

1. Choose a scene to be re-enacted.
2. Re-write the scene.
3. Use the created costumes and hats in Activity 3.
4. Present the play in class.

The class will work in the same groups they had in Activity 3.

***Materials***

Copy of the play

Pen and paper

Costumes and hats

## WORKS CITED

- Bloom, Harold. *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*. New York: Riverhead Books, 1998.
- MacDonald, Ronald R. *William Shakespeare The Comedies*. New York: Twayne, 1992.
- Spurgeon, Caroline F.E. *Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us*. Beacon Hill, Boston: Beacon Press, 1961.

## ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bloom, Harold. *Shakespeare The Invention of the Human*. New York: Riverhead Books, 1998.  
This book contains literary criticisms of Shakespearean plays as the author guides the readers through comprehensive reading of each play. He undoubtedly considers each play a masterpiece that created the idea of a human as we know them today. Bloom's analysis of each play centers on the Western canon and Shakespeare himself and convincingly explains each character in each play as reflective of human strengths and frailties.
- Brown, Ivor. *Shakespeare in His Time*. Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1961.  
Ivor Brown, in this book, relates history and literature, politics and drama that provides a social landscape of Shakespeare's time. A fascinating study of Elizabethan and Jacobean England, Brown presents the kind of life Shakespeare had and enlightened readers using Shakespeare's own evidence: "Hamlet's statement that the actors are the abstract and brief chronicles of time."
- Gardner, Helen. "As You Like It: A Comedy of Discovery." In *Readings on the Comedies*. Edited by Bruno Leone. San Diego, Calif.: Greenhaven Press, 1997.  
This is a book of essays that provides ample information and opinion on William Shakespeare's comedies. Various scholars and critics from America and England are represented. Helen Gardner, in her essay, has analyzed the young lovers' discovery of the imperfection of the human experience with sorrow and happiness going together, in "As You Like It," happiness having triumphed over the sorrow.
- Jones, Emrys. *The Origins of Shakespeare*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977.  
This book analyzes the Tudor era and how Shakespeare used this era as backdrop for his plays. It creates an understanding of Shakespeare's ingenious injection of the experiences of his time in his work.
- King, Alan and Chris Chase. *The Life and Lies of Alan King Name-Dropping*. New York: Scribner, 1996.  
A book about Alan King who has been entertaining people all his life.



Lamb, Charles and Mary, *Tales From Shakespeare*, New York: Signet Classics, 1986.

This book translated William Shakespeare's plays into prose that provides easy reading for students. This collection of translation is a retelling of the stories by the nineteenth century brother and sister, Charles and Mary Lamb which was originally written for children.

Leno, Jay. *Leading with My Chin*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1996.

This book is Jay Leno's own account of his own funny life story until he became a star of *The Tonight's Show*. A book describing wholesome experiences of one comedian.

Ludowyk, E.F.C. *Understanding Shakespeare*. Cambridge: University Press, 1962.

Understanding Shakespeare is an introductory book for readers especially teachers and students. It introduces the life and works of William Shakespeare and a reflection of his times, Elizabethan England. It also outlines methods of approach to Shakespeare studies.

MacDonald, Ronald R. *William Shakespeare The Comedies*. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992.

This book generally outlines the sources of William Shakespeare's talent for putting together the elements of "realism and fantasy." The author has presented various evidences in history that showed Shakespeare's influences.

Smith, Ronald L. *Cosby The Life of a Comedy Legend*. New York: Prometheus Books, 1997.

Ronald Smith's biography of Bill Cosby recounts the comedian's life from his "humble beginnings in the Philadelphia projects" to his "big break that brought him to television."

Spurgeon, Caroline F.E. *Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us*. Beacon Hill, Boston: Beacon Press, 1961.

This book studies the images that William Shakespeare used in all his plays. It shows how these images somehow reflects the person, the poet and playwright in Shakespeare as well as the time when he was alive.

Thorndike, Ashley H. *Shakespeare's Theater*, New York: MacMillan, 1962.

This book has information about theaters during Shakespeare's time and how it embodied the life and ways of Elizabethan England.

Trewin, J.C. *Shakespeare's Plays The Pocket Companion*. Octopus Publishing Group, 1994.

This book is a reference book for the theater-goer and the student. It includes a synopsis, a list of characters and notes on the chief characters, a critique on the poems and sonnets, a history of the Shakespearean theatre and the early players, background to the Apocrypha of plays attributed to Shakespeare and a selected glossary of Elizabeth English.

### **Internet Resources**

<http://www.bartleby.com/70/index20.html>

Bartleby Online. Bartlett, John. *Familiar Quotations*. 10th ed. 10 February 2002.

This website contains quotations from *As You Like It* selected by John Bartlett in 1919.

<http://www.ulen.com/shakespeare/plays/ayli>

*Surfing with the Bard: Your Shakespeare Classroom on the Internet*. February 2002.

This website contains lesson plans, links to online summaries and message boards.

<http://www.geocities.com/~take5improv/info.html>

*What Is... Take 5 A Comedy Troupe*, June 2002.

This website has information about standard comedy specifically stand-up comedy.