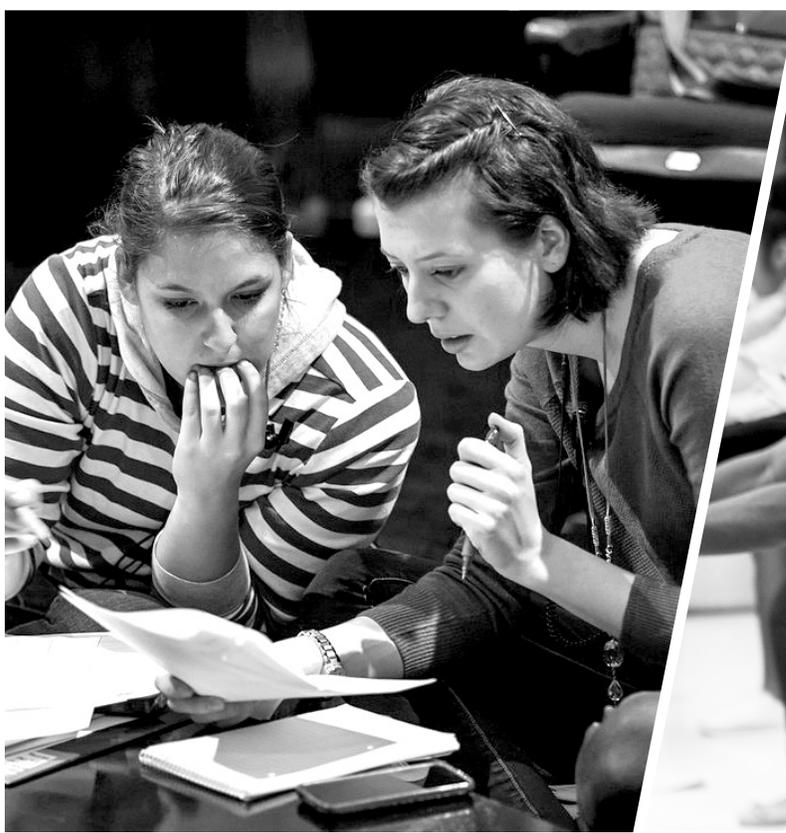




chicago  
shakespeare  
on navy pier theater

CRACKING OPEN TEXTS  
and Having Fun in the Process!



# CRACKING OPEN TEXTS

## and Having Fun in the Process!

Thank you for taking some time to think about new ways to engage with students—whether you are a classroom teacher now practicing online, or a family member working with the students in your family. With schools closed for a time, we hope these activities will offer some new ways to connect and encourage learning. Here you'll find some reading activities, warm-ups that help you focus, and theater games that help students engage with complex texts. We at Chicago Shakespeare Theater hope that students in your extended classroom, or in your family (and perhaps you as parents, too) will find these tools helpful—and fun!

### **Marilyn J. Halperin**

Director of Education and Communications

*Ray and Judy McCaskey Chair*

### **Jason Harrington**

Education Outreach Manager

### **Maggie Suggett**

Learning Programs Manager

### **Sara B.T. Thiel, Ph.D.**

Public Humanities Manager

#### ACTIVITY KEY



The number of people recommended for each activity



Activity includes online resources

# A COUPLE OF PHYSICAL WARM-UPS

**Here's why actors do them (and why you might want to do them, too):** Warm-ups like these are time well spent in helping any of us put aside other things by focusing on our body in the present moment. These activities get the blood flowing if you've been sitting for too long. Or if you need to get ready to do something different, warm-ups can help you transition from one subject or activity to the next one.

## Getting Started

- creates focus on the immediate moment
- brings awareness to the body
- releases tension

Begin by taking a comfortable stance with your feet shoulder-width apart, toes pointing straight ahead, knees relaxed. Inhale deeply through your nose, filling your lungs deep into your abdomen, and exhale through your mouth. Repeat this a few times. Notice how your lungs fill like a six-sided box, creating movement in all six directions.

## Warm-up from the Top of the Body Down

- gentle movement helps increase circulation, flexibility, and body readiness
- increases physical and spatial awareness

Begin by doing very gentle head-rolls to the left and to the right, about four times each way, very slowly. Then do a series of shoulder rolls to the back and to the front, again very slowly, and emphasizing a full range of motion.

Stretch each arm toward the ceiling alternately, and try to pull all the way through the rib cage, repeating this motion six to eight times.

Next, with particular care to keep knees slightly bent, twist from the waist in each direction, trying to look behind you. Repeat six to eight times.

From a standing position, starting with the top of the head, roll down with relaxed neck and arms until your body is hanging from the waist. Shake things around, making sure your body is relaxed. From this position, bend at the knees, putting both hands on the floor. Stretch back up to hanging. Repeat this action about four times. Then roll back up; starting from the base of the spine, stack each vertebra until the head is the last thing to come up.

Repeat the deep breathing from the beginning of the warm-up. Bring your feet together and keep a soft bend in your knees. Keeping your knees together, rotate them in a circle parallel to the ground six to eight times. Repeat in the other direction. Return to standing.

Pick up the right foot, circle it inward six to eight times, then do the same with the left foot. Repeat with outward rotation of the foot. Take a few moments and shake out the entire body.

# ENSEMBLE BUILDERS

**Here's why acting ensembles use them (and what is a classroom or a family if it isn't an ensemble?):**

These activities can engage our minds in new ways, helping us to think on our feet—and laugh together! Many of these games started in the rehearsal hall as ensemble builders, and they can offer your online class or family another way to connect around a shared activity. You can use them to energize yourself while taking a break from a more focused task. However you play, the best part of these games is that the more you try them, the better you'll get!

## What Are You Doing?

- encourages quick, on-your-feet thinking
- promotes creativity

Form two parallel lines with enough room in between for “action” to take place. (Only have 2 people playing? That works too!) The first person in one line, Person A, steps into the empty space between the two lines and begins miming any action (for example, bouncing a basketball). The first person in the opposite line, Person B, steps out and addresses Person A, saying their first name and asking, “[Name], what are you doing?” Person A then states any action that is not what they are miming (for example, “Baking a cake!”). Person B then begins miming the action that Person A has just said, and the next person steps out to continue the exercise!

*[To the leader: Once you feel confident with the exercise, ask everyone to choose actions found in a chosen text. For instance, if you're familiar with Romeo and Juliet, someone might say, “I'm sword fighting,” or “I'm climbing a garden wall.”]*

## Tongue Twisters

- builds awareness of language
- fosters risk taking and making “big choices”

Take turns trying out the tongue twisters below. Once you've got them down, see how fast you can say them!

- Red Leather, Yellow Leather
- Unique New York
- Rubber, Baby, Buggy, Bumpers
- Peter Piper Picked A Peck Of Pickled Peppers

## Mirror, Mirror on the Wall

- helps grow trust
- encourages you to “listen” with all your senses
- helps you reach a state of “relaxed readiness,” which will encourage your impulses

You’ll need a partner for this activity! Sit facing them in fairly close proximity. You and your partner will be mirrors of each other. One partner begins as the leader, and the other partner will move as the leader’s reflection. Begin by using smaller, slower movements, and work up to the maximum range of movement that your partner can follow. Partners should make eye-contact and see each other as a whole picture, rather than following each other’s small motions with their eyes. Switch leaders and repeat. After the second leader has had a turn, stand to increase your range of movement and try again with both of you having a turn as leader. Finally, try it a third time, but now there is no set leader—try to stay in sync by each mirroring the other’s movements at the same time!

## Group Juggling

- promotes teamwork
- encourages focus

What you’ll need: 2 or more balls (tennis balls, nerf balls, even crumpled-up paper will work)

Standing in a circle, toss a ball across the circle so that each person gets the ball once. Remember the pattern you create. (Who threw the ball to you? Who did you throw the ball to?) Then repeat the pattern, picking up the speed, and eventually adding more balls to the mix as you continue. How many balls can you keep going at the same time?

## Wah!

- practices physical awareness and risk-taking
- encourages vocal projection
- helps increase your sense of timing and decrease response time

Stand in a circle, facing in. Everyone in the circle is now a fearsome warrior. Press the palms of your hands flat together to become a sword.

To begin the game, one warrior raises their sword straight up, then brings it down, pointing at another warrior in the circle. Warriors must make excellent eye contact to avoid confusion. As the warrior brings down their sword, they utter a fearsome battle cry, by saying, “Wah!” When you become the recipient of “Wah!” raise your sword up above your head. After your sword is raised, the warriors on either side of you slash towards your sides, as they cry “Wah!” in unison. Then make eye contact with someone else in the

circle, and slash your sword towards them with a defiant “Wah!” as you begin the next battle. Each battle should have three clear beats – try to keep the rhythm through each battle!

The game continues as the “Wah” gets passed from warrior to warrior. As the group becomes familiar with the game, work to increase your speed and volume. This is a silly game—remember that warriors don’t care about “looking cool” because they’re too busy fighting unending battles. When a warrior misses his or her cue, stop the round and start it again until everyone is comfortable being loud and making big physical choices.

## Zip Zap Zop!

*[To the leader: Watch this video, [www.tinyurl.com/zipzapzop](http://www.tinyurl.com/zipzapzop), for a demonstration and instructions.]*

- great for mental focus
- encourages eye contact and teamwork
- builds a sense of rhythm and pace

In a circle (and your family could be one!), bring your hands to your chest in a prayer pose. Make sure everyone can see each person in the circle. Eye contact is going to be very important! To start, one person makes clear eye contact with another person in the circle, points their hands at them like a laser, and says “zip.” The receiver now makes eye contact with someone else, points their hands towards them and says “zap.” This new receiver chooses someone else in the circle and sends “zop” their way. Keep going while maintaining the word sequence of “zip, zap, zop” as well as the rhythm—start slowly and build speed as you go!

## To Be!

*[To the leader: consider using Zip Zap Zop here as a lead-up to this warm-up. And, incidentally, we think this could work on an online platform like Google Meet or Zoom, with the “circle” of players in rooms around the world. Check it out and let us know!]*

- helps you create a supportive learning community by listening to and working with someone else
- brings physical and the vocal tools together
- builds mental focus
- introduces you to some of Shakespeare’s language and characters

Stand with your group in your circle, facing in. One person will start as the “keeper of the energy.” There are tons of ways to pass the energy using Shakespeare’s words. The idea is to keep the energy constantly in motion. Introduce each option one at a time so everyone has time to experiment as the game builds in complexity.

- “To be!”—make eye contact with the person to the left or right of you. Reach towards them with your hand (as if you are clutching Yorick’s skull) as you’re speaking this line from *Hamlet*. Now that person has the energy.
- “NOT to be!”—to change the direction the energy is flowing, hold up your hands in a “stop” gesture as you’re speaking this line from *Hamlet*. The person who tried to pass you the energy now has to send it in another direction.
- “Get thee to a nunnery!”—to send the energy across the circle, point to someone and deliver this line from *Hamlet*. That person now has the energy.
- “Out, damn spot!”—to “ricochet” the energy back across the circle in response to “Get thee to a nunnery!”, make an X with your arms as you speak this line from *Macbeth*. The person who tried to pass you the energy now has to send it in another direction.
- “Romeo!” “Juliet!”—to trade places with someone else in the circle, make eye contact and stretch your arm towards them as you cry, “Romeo!” They must then respond “Juliet!” Now run gracefully past each other. The person who cried “Juliet” now has the energy.
- “Double, double, toil and trouble!”—this line from *Macbeth* instructs everyone to change places at once, leading to a completely new circle. Whoever cried, “Double, double, toil and trouble!” keeps the energy.
- “A horse, a horse!”—Whoever has the energy may call out this line from *Richard III*. Everyone else in the circle must respond, “My kingdom for a horse!” while galloping in place like a horse. The energy stays with the person who gave the command.
- “Exit, pursued by a bear!”—point to someone across the circle as you speak this stage direction from *The Winter’s Tale*. Run through the circle to take their spot. They must now run around the outside of the circle to take your previous spot in the circle. That person now has the energy.
- Add your own rules! Choose short lines from any Shakespeare play you’re familiar with and match them with a gesture and action. Where does the energy travel? Your goal as a group is to keep the energy moving in the circle without letting focus drop. As you become more comfortable with each command, the game will get faster and faster, and you will need to think less and less about what to say next.

Experiment with the way you deliver the lines! There is no wrong way, as long as you speak the lines with energy.

# READING ACTIVITIES

**Here's why you might consider trying these:** This set of literacy tools can help us read in new and engaged ways. You can take on the perspective of a particular character, dig deeper into the ideas behind a story, or connect the plot to your own experiences. Take a look at the tools below for activities that can support learning—whether you're reading Shakespeare, a novel, a short story, or even a piece of non-fiction!

**“Consider Common Core”:** In this section, you'll see a list of suggested Common Core Anchor Standards after each activity. We include these standards in our teacher handbooks to help educators as they plan their units, and we've left them here for you too so that you can see how these activities connect to statewide learning goals for English Language Arts students. These activities are fun, engaging and active—but they're also rooted in some of the most important skills that students are learning in both middle and high school. You can read more about these standards on the Illinois State Board of Education website (starting on page 34).

## Book Blog (or Journal)

*[To the leader: Don't yet have a blog? Check out [www.kidblog.org](http://www.kidblog.org) or [www.edublogs.org](http://www.edublogs.org), two free and simple websites where teachers, parents, and families can create blogs. You may also want to explore <http://wordpress.com/classrooms>, another resource for building a classroom website. Any of these activities can be done in a journal or on loose leaf, too!]*

### BEFORE YOU READ

If you're looking for a way to connect with others while you read, consider creating a book blog for whatever you're reading so you can discuss the story with other families or classmates. Or you could use this blog/journal as a place to keep track of your own thoughts as you read. Start your blog by posting images or words that represent any information you already know or have heard about the story or the author. For example, what words or images come to your mind when you hear Hamlet or think about Shakespeare? What do you already know about this play? What words would you list to best describe Shakespeare? As you read, add videos, headlines, articles, songs, etc. that remind you of characters, events, key objects, words, or anything else you feel is relevant to your reading. Give a short explanation.

### AS YOU READ

Continue building on your Book Blog as you read. Use these ideas to start new entries:

- Choose a character to follow through the play. Keep a running list of references for that character—both what they say and what other characters say about them. What does your character feel about

the other characters? How do others feel about them? How much does your character reveal about themselves through their own words and how much did you learn from other characters? Based on the notes you've taken, write a short summary of your character. What qualities do you think are most important to highlight about your character?

- At the end of each section, chapter or act, list five of the major characters. Write a single sentence for each that begins, "What I most want is..." Take a risk—there's not just one right answer! Then write a sentence for each character that begins, "What I'm most afraid of is..." (Is there ever a situation when what a character most wants is also what that character most fears?) Keep track of your sentences and look at how characters' motivations evolve as you read.
- One of the best ways to understand the "through-line" (or overarching story) is to give each section, chapter or scene a title that captures the heart of what's happening. Directors often use this technique to help actors (and themselves) during the rehearsal process. Be as creative and specific as you can in naming each section.
- Is the story a comedy or a tragedy? To decide, first think of what makes a book, a play, or a film a comedy or a tragedy (and not just that it's happy or sad). Consider other tragedies you may have read, like *Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello*, or (for some non-Shakespearean variety) *Death of a Salesman*, *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Great Gatsby*, and *Of Mice and Men*. For comedies, consider plays like *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Comedy of Errors*, or (again, for some non-Shakespearean options) *Pride and Prejudice*. With these ideas in mind, write an entry about what makes the book you're reading a comedy or a tragedy.
- Shakespeare's plays—and many other stories—are full of uncertainties and questions. Characters themselves often ask questions, and stories can create questions for readers, too. As you read, keep a list of all the unanswered questions the story raises. Some of these questions may be voiced by the characters themselves. Some may be questions you imagine the characters asking. Others may be questions you have about what is going on. Which questions can you answer as you continue reading? Which questions are still unanswered even after the end of the story?

Consider Common Core Anchor Standards R2, R3, SI1, W3, W6, W10

## First Impressions

You only have one chance to make that first impression—and the same is true for the characters you're reading about—impressions that can tell us a lot about them and their relationships. As you come across new characters that seem important to you, make a list of their first lines and the context (Who are they talking to? Where are they? What's happening in the scene?). Now, make predictions about what you think will happen to that character. How will they change? What will happen to them at the end of the story? Come back to these notes after you finish reading to see how much the characters have changed. How close were your predictions? What surprised you?

Consider Common Core Anchor Standards R1, R3

## Colorful Characteristics

*[To the leader: Students lie down on large sheets of paper to trace their profile—newspaper, brown bags or wrapping paper will work!]*

Sometimes visualizing a character can be the best way to learn about them. After you create life-size outlines of your chosen characters, draw, print, or cut out costumes for them. Use context clues to help you. (Where does the story take place? What year is it? Is the character a king? A soldier?) As you read the story, use “caption bubbles” to attach quotes from the text that have particular significance for your characters. Continue adding to the portrait and change the caption bubbles to show how your characters are developing as you read. Consider taking photos every time your characters change and uploading them to your Book Blog or to your social media feed so you can keep track of how the character changes throughout the story!

Consider Common Core Anchor Standards R1, R3

## DIY Definitions

Leaf through any text you’re working on to find three words that you’re pretty sure will be unknown to everyone, including you! Then, using your resources (footnotes in the text, a dictionary if you have one, or websites like [shakespeareswords.com](http://shakespeareswords.com)), look up and write out the definition that seems to make the most sense in the context of the story. In Shakespeare (as in other texts), the context often helps lead you to a word’s meaning—even if you’ve never heard the word before. Now, make up two completely different, convincing definitions for each word that your family or classmates are sure to believe! First read aloud the line in which the word appears. Then read your three possible definitions for the word, including the right one. The others in your group will try to guess which one is right.

Consider Common Core Anchor Standards R4, L4, L6

## UNround Robin Reading

This is an out-loud reading activity (so no “reading silently to yourself” for this one!). For this activity, you’ll need at least two people to create a pair—one person becomes A and the other is B. If there are more people who can play along, have them work together as a pair, too, and decide who is A and B.

Select a passage with two characters from the play that you’re reading. When we use this activity at Chicago Shakespeare, we cut the passage down to no more than 20–25 lines. You’re going to read through it (out loud!) several times together.

1. On your first read-aloud, alternate readers at every **punctuation mark** (a comma, period, exclamation point, or question mark). As you read, circle any unfamiliar words or words that are confusing to you.

2. This time, you'll read to the end of each **complete sentence** (period, question mark, or exclamation point—these are called “Full Stops”). Alternate readers at each Full Stop, sentence by sentence. Again, circle any words or phrases that confuse you.
3. Your third time through, read the passage and stand **back to back**. Each partner takes the lines of one character. Listen closely to what your partner says.
4. This time, read the passage again (keeping the same roles), but **whisper**. Make sure that your partner can hear all the words. Are there moments when whispering feels right?
5. Next, stand as far apart as your room allows (about **five big steps apart**, if you have the space). Read the passage again at “full” volume, sending your voice to each other. Are there moments when this elevated volume fits the scene?
6. Finally, while one partner stands still, the other **moves** wherever/however you want to in relationship to your scene partner. Based on what you both say, move however it feels right. (If space is limited, explore the options of sitting and standing rather than moving around the room.)

### SOME BASIC TIPS...

- **There's no one “right” answer!** You're just playing with the language and with different interpretations.
- Having a couple of dictionaries close at hand (or use [shakespeareswords.com](http://shakespeareswords.com) to help!) makes looking up words a “team sport.” See who can find the definition first!
- Discussion is key. Stop after every read-through to talk about what you learned about the scene by reading it in that way.
- Oh, and by the way: how many times did you read the same passage? And what did you discover about your fluency reading along the way? Rereading is what actors have to do throughout rehearsal—as do strong readers when they're wading through tough text.

### Consider Common Core Anchor Standards R1, R4, R6

## Mind Your Gestures

Actors often match what they say to physical actions to get what they want (just as we do in everyday life). The different strategies they use to get what they want are called “tactics.”

Practice each gesture below.

- **Hook**—Extend the arm and curve the fingers toward your body. Move the hand toward your body like you're trying to pull something toward you.
- **Poke**—Use your index finger as if you're pestering your partner.

- **Deflect**—Extend your arm with your palm facing upwards as if pushing something away.
- **Flick**—Move your hand and fingers as though you were flicking water on someone.

With a partner, look at the scene from *Hamlet* in **Appendix A** and decide who will read each character, then read the scene aloud with your partner. Now go back to the script and pair one tactic gesture with each of your lines. Before deciding on one, try all four different gestures for each line to explore the ways the words and gestures could affect the other character. (Hint: There's no right or wrong answer as you pair gestures with lines. Pick the pairings that seem right to you as you create your own interpretation of the scene!)

With your partner, read the scene again, this time adding the gestures you've chosen. Let the gesture affect how you deliver the line vocally. Think about how your voice changes if you read the line while deflecting someone versus flicking them away, etc. After you and your partner read through the scene with each other's gestures, discuss any changes you might make to the gestures you've picked. Keep refining your line and gesture pairings until you've decided what works best for your interpretation of the scene. Again, no right or wrong answers! Give a final performance of your scene while exaggerating the gestures you've landed on. Don't forget to take a bow at the end!

If you felt there were any tactics missing from the list, choose one or two new tactics and create a simple gesture for them. Go back to the scene and add in the additional tactics you've created.

**Consider Common Core Anchor Standards R1, R4, R6**

## Doodling Descriptors

*[To the leader: From the text you're reading together, choose examples of figurative language—words that paint a picture in your mind. Print or write your figurative language on strips of paper to share. We've included some lines from Macbeth below that you can use as examples to help get you started, but all of Shakespeare's plays are filled with this kind of figurative language.]*

Read your line out loud a few times. Identify a word or phrase in your line that paints a strong picture in your mind, then draw that picture, as a literal image of the words on your paper. If you're working with others, when you're done, look at each other's doodles and talk about what you see. How do others' drawings change the way you think about the language?

Here are some examples of figurative language from *Macbeth*:

- It is too full o' the **milk of human kindness** / To catch the nearest way. (Act 1, scene 5)
- But **screw your courage to the sticking-place**, / And we'll not fail. (Act 1, scene 7)
- Methought I heard a voice cry "Sleep no more! / **Macbeth does murder sleep," the innocent sleep...** (Act 2, scene 2)
- **Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood / Clean from my hand?** (Act 2, scene 2)

- **Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player** / That struts and frets his hour upon the stage... (Act 5, scene 5)
- O, **full of scorpions is my mind**, dear wife! (Act 3, scene 2)

Consider Common Core Anchor Standards L5, R4, SI2

## Jump-in Reading and Pointing

We love this activity, taught to us by Timothy Duggan, Ed.D. at Northeastern Illinois University's School of Education. It encourages you to really pay attention to the meaning and power of individual lines or phrases in the text. Plus, because we're reading the same passage a bunch of times, it encourages us to do what actors—and strong readers—have to do when they're reading more challenging texts: they read, and reread, and yes, even re-reread them! It works with short stories, novel excerpts, and, of course, passages from Shakespeare. We've included three Shakespeare monologues in **Appendix B** that we've used this activity with before—but this is enormously versatile as a tool for entering all kinds of packed texts—including famous speeches and documents.

Pick one of the passages listed at the end of this activity for your reading—or choose your own!

### 1. Silent Reading

For about 5 minutes, everyone reads through a passage of the text silently, noting any lines, words, or expressions that you find confusing, interesting, or important—and there will possibly be quite a few on your first read-through! Mark those lines or phrases as you go.

### 2. Jump-in Reading

Next, read the passage aloud together. One person starts to read the passage out loud and stops whenever they choose—it could be several lines or sentences, or just one. Anyone else then “jumps in” to continue. If two people start reading at the same time, one yields to the other so that only one voice is heard at a time. Continue “jumping in” until the end of the passage. As you go, mark any lines or phrases that stood out for you.

### 3. Pointing

This part is now a third “reading” of the passage, this time with a chance to create your own meaning in a type of “found poem” you'll be making together. Look back at the lines and phrases (even individual words) that stood out to you in the first two readings. The person leading this activity begins by reading one individual line or passage that they have picked. Then anyone adds to the found poem you're creating together by reading one of their lines, or phrases or words that jumped out at them, and so on. The order is completely random—and it's totally okay to repeat a line, phrase or word you or anyone else has contributed before.

Let the activity go for a while—try to be comfortable with any silences that land between your different voices. At some point when this third reading has run its course, stop and give everyone a chance to mark any lines they heard that they liked but hadn't marked before. Make a few notes of your thoughts on these lines (why you chose it, your questions, etc.), then write a few sentences

about what you discovered in this third “reading” about the original text that you didn’t hear in it before you began to create your group poem from it.

#### 4. **Free Write**

Everyone picks a line or phrase, just one to start with, and writes it at the top of a page. Using that one line as a starting point, write about it silently for 5–10 minutes. Explore its significance in the scene, its connection to the rest of the play (or novel, or poem, or newspaper article—in other words, any piece of text!), or how that line relates to your own life and experience. As a group, return to the passage and talk about what thoughts and ideas it sparked in all of you.

Consider Common Core Anchor Standards R2, R4, R9

## Argue with Yourself!

The **soliloquy**—a speech that a character performs alone on stage—was an important tool in Shakespeare’s dramatic “toolbox.” It gives the audience a closer look inside the character and what they’re thinking about. Characters can use soliloquies to debate an issue, weighing the pros and cons of taking one action over another. Hamlet’s “To be or not to be” is perhaps the most famous example, but there are many others, too, some of which you can find in **Appendix C!**

Read a speech together, changing speakers at each punctuation mark (a period, exclamation point, or question mark). Repeat once more to make sure everyone understands the soliloquy and talk about any unfamiliar or confusing words. You can use a dictionary or an online resource like [shakespeareswords.com](http://shakespeareswords.com) to check words you don’t know—just the way actors need to do as they work on a play.

As you read the speech, divide it into two voices: FOR and AGAINST. What is the character debating? When is the character for one side of the argument or the other? When you’ve determined which sections of the speech support each side of the argument, choose one person to read the FOR voice and the other to read the AGAINST voice. You might find it helpful to underline or highlight the speech in different colors to help visualize the FOR and AGAINST sections.

Read the speech again with your new role; when it’s your turn to read, move towards the other person, touching your fingertips together lightly, while your partner moves backward. This will help give you a sense for which way the character is leaning—of who’s winning the argument. Afterwards, talk about whether there are different ways to divide up the speech, and which lines seem more open to interpretation.

Consider Common Core Anchor Standards R1, SI2

## Speak the Speech

To really dig into a soliloquy text, together choose one that interests you from the previous activity. Using a clean copy of the speech, slowly read it aloud as a group. As you read, split the text into complete thoughts. Four kinds of punctuation marks—periods, semi-colons, question marks, and exclamation points—typically signify the end of a complete thought. On your own, label all the complete thoughts you find. Then, together, come to a consensus. If there are parts of the text that you don’t understand, now is the

time to ask for help! Then number each complete thought, and divide up these chunks of text among you. Get up and choose a place in the room to stand. Say your complete thought over and over again, so that everyone is speaking at the same time. Use these prompts to help you find new ways to interpret the lines:

- speak as slowly (then, as quickly) as possible
- exaggerate the consonant sounds, then all the vowel sounds
- change your physicality as you speak—stand up, sit down, curl into a ball—whatever makes sense for your line(s)
- speak as loudly (then as softly) as possible
- choose one place within the line to pause

After you play with several interpretations on your own, pick your favorite way to read the line. Create a collective reading of the soliloquy by reading your lines one after the other, in the order they appear in the speech. Make sure to stay wherever you are in the room and maintain your commitment to your choices! You can repeat the reading several times—and if anyone wants to make a new choice with their lines based on how it fits into the sequence of the entire speech, go for it! Get ready to be surprised by what you come up with as you shape the speech together. Once you've read together, talk about which pieces of the text stand out as especially significant—what parts do you think are most important in this speech? How do your voice and body work together to show those important lines?

**Consider Common Core Anchor Standards R3, R5, L3, L4, L5**

## Story Recap!

We like this activity to refresh our minds after we read a section—or even after reading the entire story! Sitting together in the living room or around a table, choose someone to start. That person begins to describe the action from the first act or chapter (or the second or third...) until they've come up with three plot points, or can't think of what comes next. (Take a peek at the play (or book) for inspiration if you get stuck!) Then the story passes to another person, who adds the next few plot points. As you create your shared synopsis, think about what everyone else is saying—how does hearing the narrative told by others change the way you think about the story?

**Consider Common Core Anchor Standards R2, SI4**

## Pearls on a String

This improv game is one of the most engaging ways we know to summarize material, and work together as a group doing it. With Pearls on a String, you can recap something you've read or create your own twist on a familiar story. You can play this with a partner or a small group. For now, your task is to create an original retelling of a book or story everyone is familiar with. Each person will contribute sentences for this

story, one at a time. To keep track of your story, draw 8 circles, in a line, on a piece of paper. Number them 1-8. Each circle represents a sentence in the story.

One person shares the opening line for the story and places their initials in circle #1 as a reminder that this line of the story is taken. Someone else jumps in with what they'd like to contribute as the FINAL line for the story, and writes their initials in circle #8. Now each person, in turn, shares a sentence any place in the story that hasn't already been taken—then writes their initials in the circle they've claimed in the order. With each new "pearl" added, tell the story from the beginning every time! You may want to write your sentences down to help you remember. After all 8 sentences have been given, share the entire story you've created from start to finish.

**Consider Common Core Anchor Standards R2, R3, R5**

# APPENDIX A:

## Mind your Gestures

### CUT FROM *HAMLET* ACT 3, SCENE 1

**OPHELIA**

Good my lord,  
How does your honor for this many a day?

**HAMLET**

I humbly thank you, well, well, well.

**OPHELIA**

My lord, I have remembrances of yours,  
That I have longèd long to re-deliver.  
I pray you now receive them.

**HAMLET**

No, not I,  
I never gave you aught.

**OPHELIA**

My honored lord, you know right well you did.

**HAMLET**

Ha, ha, are you honest?

**OPHELIA**

My lord?

**HAMLET**

Are you fair?

**OPHELIA**

What means your lordship?

**HAMLET**

I did love you once.

**OPHELIA**

Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

**HAMLET**

You should not have believed me. I loved you not.

**OPHELIA**

I was the more deceived.

**HAMLET**

Get thee to a nunnery—why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest, but yet I could accuse me of such things, that it were better my mother had not borne me. Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where's your father?

# APPENDIX B:

## Jump-in Reading and Pointing

### *OTHELLO*, ACT 4, SCENE 3

#### EMILIA

But I do think it is their husbands' faults  
If wives do fall: say that they slack their duties,  
And pour our treasures into foreign laps,  
Or else break out in peevish jealousies,  
Throwing restraint upon us; or say they strike us,  
Or scant our former having in despite;  
Why, we have galls, and though we have some grace,  
Yet have we some revenge. Let husbands know  
Their wives have sense like them: they see and smell  
And have their palates both for sweet and sour,  
As husbands have. What is it that they do  
When they change us for others? Is it sport?  
I think it is. And doth affection breed it?  
I think it doth. Is't frailty that thus errs?  
It is so too. And have not we affections,  
Desires for sport, and frailty, as men have?  
Then let them use us well: else let them know,  
The ills we do, their ills instruct us so.

**AS YOU LIKE IT, ACT 2, SCENE 7**

**JAQUES**

All the world's a stage,  
And all the 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 furnace, with a woeful ballad  
Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,  
Full of strange oaths and bearded like the pard,  
Jealous in honor, sudden and quick in quarrel,  
Seeking the bubble reputation  
Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,  
In fair round belly with good capon lined,  
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,  
Full of wise saws and modern instances;  
And 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 treble, 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.

**HAMLET, ACT 1, SCENE 3**

**LORD POLONIUS**

Yet here, Laertes! aboard, aboard, for shame!  
The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,  
And you are stay'd for. There; my blessing with thee!  
And these few precepts in thy memory  
See thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,  
Nor any unproportioned thought his act.  
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.  
Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,  
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel;  
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment  
Of each new-hatch'd, unfledged comrade. Beware  
Of entrance to a quarrel, but being in,  
Bear't that the opposed may beware of thee.  
Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice;  
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.  
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,  
But not express'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy;  
For the apparel oft proclaims the man,  
And they in France of the best rank and station  
Are of a most select and generous chief in that.  
Neither a borrower nor a lender be;  
For loan oft loses both itself and friend,  
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.  
This above all: to thine ownself be true,  
And it must follow, as the night the day,  
Thou canst not then be false to any man.  
Farewell: my blessing season this in thee!

# APPENDIX C:

## Argue with Yourself!

### HAMLET, ACT 3, SCENE 1

#### HAMLET

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? To die: to sleep;  
No more; and by a sleep to say we end  
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks  
That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation  
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;  
To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub;  
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  
Must give us pause: there's the respect  
That makes calamity of so long life;  
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,  
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,  
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,  
The insolence of office and the spurns  
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,  
When he himself might his quietus make  
With a bare bodkin? who would fardels bear,  
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,  
But that the dread of something after death,  
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn  
No traveller returns, puzzles the will  
And makes us rather bear those ills we have  
Than fly to others that we know not of?  
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;  
And thus the native hue of resolution  
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,

## Appendix C continued

And enterprises of great pith and moment  
With this regard their currents turn awry,  
And lose the name of action.—Soft you now!  
The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons  
Be all my sins remember'd.

**MACBETH, ACT 2, SCENE 1**

**MACBETH**

Is this a dagger which I see before me,  
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.  
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.  
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible  
To feeling as to sight? Or art thou but  
A dagger of the mind, a false creation  
Proceeding from the heat-oppresèd brain?  
I see thee yet, in form as palpable  
As this which now I draw.      *(He draws his dagger.)*  
Thou marshal'st me the way that I was going,  
And such an instrument I was to use.  
Mine eyes are made the fools o' th' other senses  
Or else worth all the rest. I see thee still,  
And, on thy blade and dudgeon, gouts of blood,  
Which was not so before. There's no such thing.  
It is the bloody business which informs  
Thus to mine eyes. Now o'er the one-half world  
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse  
The curtained sleep. Witchcraft celebrates  
Pale Hecate's off'rings, and withered murder,  
Alarumed by his sentinel, the wolf,  
Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,  
With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design  
Moves like a ghost. Thou sure and firm-set earth,  
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear  
Thy very stones prate of my whereabouts  
And take the present horror from the time,  
Which now suits with it. Whiles I threat, he lives.  
Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives.      *(A bell rings.)*  
I go, and it is done. The bell invites me.  
Hear it not, Duncan, for it is a knell  
That summons thee to heaven or to hell.

**TWELFTH NIGHT, ACT 2, SCENE 2**

**VIOLA**

*[In this scene, Viola, disguised as a boy, figures out that Olivia, a beautiful woman of noble birth, is in love with her. Meanwhile, Viola is in love with the Duke Orsino, who (of course!) loves Olivia.]*

Fortune forbid my outside have not charmed her!  
She made good view of me, indeed so much  
That methought her eyes had lost her tongue,  
For she did speak in starts distractedly.  
She loves me, sure! The cunning of her passion  
Invites me in this churlish messenger.  
None of my lord's ring? Why, he sent her none!  
I am the man. If it be so, as 'tis,  
Poor lady, she were better love a dream.  
Disguise, I see thou art a wickedness  
Wherein the pregnant enemy does much.  
How easy is it for the proper false  
In women's waxen hearts to set their forms!  
Alas, our frailty is the cause, not we,  
For such as we are made of, such we be.  
How will this fadge? My master loves her dearly,  
And I, poor monster, fond as much on him,  
And she, mistaken, seems to dote on me.  
What will become of this? As I am man,  
My state is desperate for my master's love.  
As I am woman (now, alas the day!),  
What thriftless sighs shall poor Olivia breathe!  
O Time, thou must untangle this, not I.  
It is too hard a knot for me t' untie.



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Additional support provided by: Arts Midwest, BP, Helen Brach Foundation, Crown Family Philanthropies, The Grover Hermann Foundation, Kimberlee Herold, James and Brenda Grusecki, The Malott Family Student Access Fund, Mazza Foundation, Pritzker Foundation Team Shakespeare Fund, and The Segal Family Foundation Student Matinee Fund.