

The Ingredients

WHAT DO WE MEAN WHEN WE SAY INGREDIENTS?

We mean activities! Here's a collection of games and exercises that make unpacking Shakespeare's text via Zoom or Google Meet fun, invigorating, and different. Check out our accompanying video demos for six of these activities!

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The part when you decide to **IGNORE THE RECIPE** and throw in that spice your grandmother gave you eight years ago that you've always been meaning to use



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THE PREP



HOW to play it...



FOR A GROUP

Every person introduces themselves by name and with a gesture. Everyone repeats that person's name and gesture. Then everyone plays a "passing the energy" type game, saying your name and gesture followed by the name and gesture of the person you are sending your energy to. That person receives your energy by repeating their name and gesture and saying the name and gesture of another person.



WHAT is it?
A warm-up game!



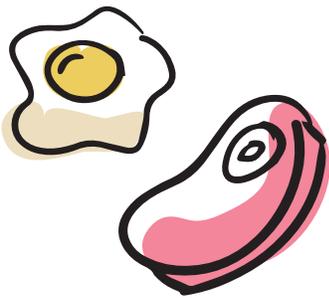
FOR A PAIR

One person starts with a sound and passes that sound to the other person. The other person repeats the sound and adds on to it, passing that back to the first person. The first person repeats the two sounds and adds on to it again.



☰ *WHY play it?*

We wanted to include an easy, fun warm-up game. This one requires good listening and sharp memory—skills that will be important working on your scenes later!

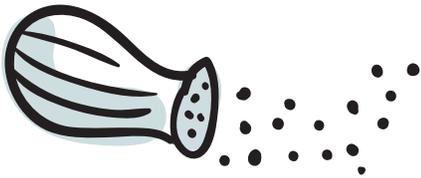


THE SALT

*a.k.a. getting all of your thoughts
in order, a.k.a. @wordspcare*

WHAT is it?

A tool to help build
character



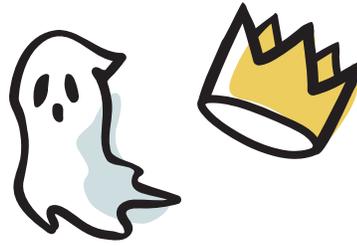
HOW to play it...

Each person creates an Instagram profile for their character, including name, age, where they're from, what they like to do, their favorite physical/character attribute, anything that might be important to them. And they'll choose an image to "post."

Let's use Horatio as an example and his line, "I saw him once; he was a goodly king." First, simply say the line.

Now the rest of the team can ask questions of Horatio. These questions might be based in the text, in the character relationships, or they may just come from the team's imagination. In this case, Horatio is talking about

the dead King Hamlet, so you may want to ask questions that help define how Horatio felt about the former king. After the questions have been asked and answered, write your Insta-bio for Horatio using your answers as a guide.



next...

choose an image that, for you, connects to Horatio's line in some way. It should be an image that helps you make the line even more specific.

Then Horatio returns to speaking the line, now with greater connection and context.

Return one last time to the line, adding in all the context and personalization you've discovered.



••••• *WHY play it?* •••••

This game is a great way to find depth and personal connection to a character or a particular line.

THE STOCK

a.k.a. the environment



HOW to play it...

WHAT is it?

A game to help build a sense of the world in which the scene is happening

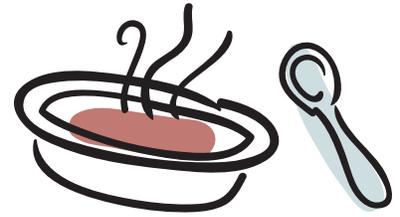
One person is chosen to “experience” the environment where the scene takes place. They leave their camera. Everyone else (be it the other partner or the whole group) is responsible for guiding this person through the environment. So, when the first person steps back into the frame, everyone else (gently) guides them.

- FOR EXAMPLE If the scene is the first one between the guards, the people guiding might say: It’s starting to rain. It’s really cold. The wind is nipping at your fingers. There is fog everywhere.

- ADJUSTMENTS More than one person can “go through” the environment at the same time. Using the above example, the two “guards” could be the ones chosen to experience the environment and the rest of the class/group would walk them through.



WHY play it?



It not only inspires you to get creative about the physical reality of the environment your character lives in, it's also a fun way to play with the video format. Embracing the idea of being on/off camera helps establish the Zoom/Google Meet window as a stage in and of itself. Plus, it inspires people to engage with one another beyond listening and watching → one person is really dependent on the cues of another!



THE OIL & VINEGAR

a.k.a. your scene partner

HOW to play it...

Each person in the scene chooses a (preferably physical) action or gesture that they do to another person. This can range from the literal (for example, Hamlet kills Claudius) to the subtle (for example, Hamlet rejects Ophelia). Then each person privately responds to 3 of the following questions with their own character in mind:



WHAT is it?

A game that helps build partner relationships and complex thinking about character

WHAT IS YOUR CHARACTER'S
JOB OR ROLE IN SOCIETY?
(e.g. prince, guard, gravedigger)

WHAT IS YOUR CHARACTER'S
RELATIONSHIP TO THE
OTHER CHARACTER?
(e.g. brother, lover, mother)



WHAT PART OF YOUR CHARACTER'S IDENTITY ARE THEY MOST PROUD OF?

WHAT YEARBOOK SUPERLATIVE WOULD YOUR CHARACTER WIN? (e.g. most likely to succeed, most daring, most likely to talk to a wall)

WHAT WORD WOULD YOUR CHARACTER USE TO DESCRIBE THEMSELVES TO SOMEONE THEY WANT TO IMPRESS? (e.g. smart, powerful, beautiful)

WHAT WORD WOULD YOUR CHARACTER USE TO DESCRIBE THEMSELVES TO SOMEONE THEY ARE SCARED OF? (e.g. unimportant, small, peaceful)

WHAT WORD WOULD YOUR CHARACTER USE TO DESCRIBE THEMSELVES TO SOMEONE THEY LOVE? (e.g. caring, devoted, honest)

Then...

the scene partners pair up and take turns. Person A will say who they are and their action—5 times!—and Person B will respond to it. For example, if it were the Hamlet and Ophelia scene:

1.

PERSON A: I am HAMLET and I reject you

PERSON B: *acts what it feels like to be rejected by Hamlet*

2.

PERSON A: I am a PRINCE and I reject you

PERSON B: *acts what it feels like to be rejected by a prince*

3.

PERSON A: I am your LOVER and I reject you

PERSON B: *acts what it feels like to be rejected by your lover*

4.

PERSON A: I am THE MOST POPULAR KID IN SCHOOL and I reject you

PERSON B: *acts what it feels like to be rejected by the most popular kid in school*

5.

PERSON A: I am HAMLET and I reject you

PERSON B: *acts what it feels like to be rejected by Hamlet, except this time hopefully what "Hamlet" means is informed by the three previous rounds*

The partners then switch. Once they are done, they talk about what they learned about how the action felt different when the other person defined themselves in a different way.

NOTE This was inspired as a way to do combat on Zoom or Google Meet. In the spirit of that, we believe that the more physical the gesture the more helpful!



WHY play it?

We think this is a creative way to think about the different levels of your character, and how those different levels, or roles, affect the people your character interacts with. It will help identify and unpack the complexity of identity. Being killed by a prince feels very different from being killed by your son. By bookending the exercise with the character's name, we hope to emphasize the way that these social/political/familial identities are rooted to the very core of who this person is.



THE RATATOUILLE

a.k.a. sense memory!!!

WHAT is it?

An exercise
(and game!)
that encourages
a multisensory
exploration of
the text



HOW to play it...

There are three rounds to this game. Each round involves each person choosing a 15-30 second clip of a song that they feel best expresses a moment in the play or scene. Each person takes turns playing their clip and everyone else has to guess which moment the music is chosen for.

ROUND 1

a moment in
the entire play
of *Hamlet*

ROUND 2

a moment in
the scene being
worked on

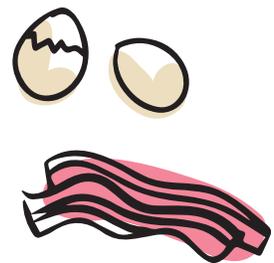
ROUND 3

a line in the text
of the scene being
worked on

WHY play it?



There's no time where music has a greater impact than during teenhood. Being able to identify what is happening in Shakespeare's world with music that speaks to you currently will help you find a personal way into the story. The act of pairing a song to a moment forces you to really think about what is happening on a deep emotional level, and seeing what your teammates choose is a fun way of getting to know people (and learning new songs!).



THE DEBONING

a.k.a. breaking down the text



WHAT is it?

A game to activate text
and express rhetoric

HOW to play it...

First, the scene partners read the scene aloud to each other as is. Then they go back and try to distill each line to only the essential words. Then they read the scene (or selected section) using only those essential words. Then they read the scene aloud to each other, as written.

FOR EXAMPLE, FIRST READ:

KING CLAUDIUS

There's matter in these sighs, these profound heaves:
You must translate: 'tis fit we understand them.
Where is your son?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Ah, my good lord, what have I seen to-night!

KING CLAUDIUS

What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Mad as the sea and wind, when both contend
Which is the mightier: in his lawless fit,
Behind the arras hearing something stir,
Whips out his rapier, cries, "A rat, a rat!"
And, in this brainish apprehension, kills
The unseen good old man.

SECOND READ:

KING CLAUDIUS

Matter in heavens:

Translate

Where son?



QUEEN GERTRUDE

Ah, what seen!

KING CLAUDIUS

Gertrude? Hamlet?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Mad

lawless fit,

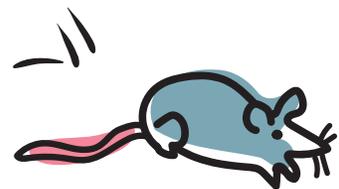
hearing something,

rapier, 'A rat!'

kills

Man.

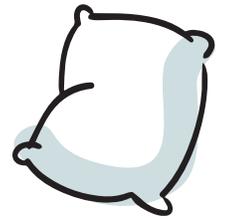
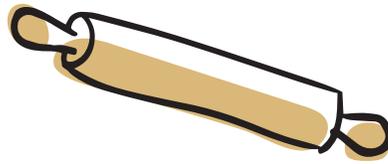
WHY play it?



If we are able to distill the sense of a line, we have a clearer access to the meaning of the words, and a clearer access to what we need. It can even help dispel any hesitancy toward the verse. This game will root you to the most important argument of your character's text.

THE DOUGH

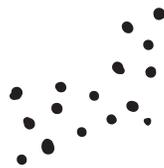
a.k.a. sculpting the text



WHAT is it?

A game to help
embody the text

HOW to play it...



ROUND 1

1. Assign a scene to two or more people (preferably a cut scene with few speeches)
2. The first speaker sculpts every word in the line with their voice and bodies (even the "to's" and "the's") as they speak it to the other.
3. The listener picks the word that stands out the most to them and repeats the word and gesture. Then they'll speak their own line sculpting each word.
4. The new listener repeats the process above.

ROUND 2 (optional)

1. After completing the scene sculpting every word, go back and identify the words that were repeated.
2. Do the scene again as before, but only sculpting the words that were repeated in the first round.

EXAMPLE:

HAMLET

The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.

HORATIO

COLD. It is a nipping and an eager air.

HAMLET

EAGER. What hour now?

HORATIO

HOUR. I think it lacks of twelve.

HAMLET

LACKS. No, it is struck.



-> *WHY play it?*

This exercise helps slow down the text and allow the meaning of each word to take up space in the body and voice to further personalize the text. It is also helpful in listening and responding to your scene partner.



THE SPECIAL SAUCE

a.k.a. understanding context



HOW to play it...

Break students up into groups of two. Have one person be the speaker and the other be the "setter." The speaker will leave the screen frame, then re-enter speaking the text.

The setter will call out environmental and circumstantial factors, preferably ones that could be particular to that character.

The speaker will have to adjust themselves to match the environment.

WHAT is it?

A game to help establish how environmental and circumstantial factors affect expression

EXAMPLE:

SETTER

Like you're on fire!

HAMLET

*How all occasions do inform against me,
And spur my dull revenge!*

SETTER

*Like someone is listening
you don't want to hear.*

HAMLET

What is a man,
If his chief good and market of his time
Be but to sleep and feed? a beast,
no more.

SETTER

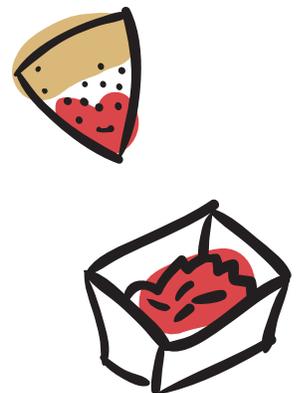
*Like it's 0 degrees
outside.*

HAMLET

Sure, he that made us with such large
discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and god-like reason
To fust in us unused.

WHY play it? <

Introducing environmental and circumstantial elements help explain some characters' decision-making. It also helps act as a tool for crafting a scene, and gives the actor an action to do and/or a potential obstacle to overcome.



THE SIDE OF BREAD



a.k.a. soliloquy exercises! b/c the side of bread is always low-key talking behind the main meal's back

THE FIRST SIDE OF BREAD



a.k.a. the first exercise

WHAT is it?

A collaborative exercise that focuses on uncovering the many emotions at play in one of Hamlet's soliloquies



HOW to play it...

As a group, everyone goes through one soliloquy (heretofore referred to as an S because I hate spelling this word), identifying the three major emotions in it. Then, as a group, they come up with a short, three-to four-word phrase that describes what this emotion is saying.

FOR EXAMPLE...

ANGER

I hate my father,
I hate my father.

DOUBT

I dunno! I dunno!

SADNESS

Not fair. Not fair.

Then one person is assigned to be "Hamlet" and three people are assigned to be the emotions. As the "Hamlet" speaks through the S, when each emotion feels they're being expressed in the text, they'll speak their phrase (for example, "Not Fair. Not fair."). They repeat their phrase over and over until their emotion is no longer being expressed. If more than one emotion is being expressed at once, it's totally cool to hear multiple phrases at once. In this way the group will get a sense of the "cascade" of emotion that is beneath the text of the S. People can take turns being the emotions to open up different interpretations.

.....

WHY play it?

It's a good way of identifying all the complex feelings behind these wordy speeches. Also, doing an S altogether removes the emphasis or spotlight on any one individual.

LEGAL ISSUES?

This idea was **TOTALLY** taken from *Inside out*...



THE SECOND SIDE OF BREAD

that you probably shouldn't have ordered but
the bread was so good you did it anyway
HaHaHAhAhaha carbs



a.k.a. the second exercise



WHAT is it?

An exercise breaking
down an S in a
different way

HOW to play it... ∴ ∴ ∴

This one requires a little bit of work ahead of time. The teacher, or group leader, divides the S up among the number of students in the group. HOWEVER, they only give the players three or four words of their cue line (as well as their own part). So, each person knows what THEY say but they don't know who is coming before or after them. Everyone turns their video cameras off except for the person with the first line. That person begins. Everyone else is listening for their cue words.



When they hear it, they turn their videos on and say their section. When they are done with their section, they turn their video off.



WHY play it?

This is first and foremost a listening exercise with a big nod towards how Shakespeare's actors originally received their scripts (via cues). But it's also a cool way of visually breaking down the different parts of a speech, forcing people to pay attention, and again, dividing up the Big Famous S's among everyone!



The part when you decide to
IGNORE THE RECIPE
and throw in that spice your grandmother
gave you eight years ago that you've
always been meaning to use



a.k.a. Shakespeare 2020: Rewriting the text

WHAT is it?

A game to help
personalize the text

HOW to play it...

SOLO

Assign a speech to one student, have them write the whole speech, line by line, as if they were saying it today in their own words. Have the student read the line as written, then read their translation, then read the line again.





FOR A GROUP

Complete the above step, then have the partner read the subtext aloud while the original writer reads Shakespeare's words.



EXAMPLE:

ORIGINAL

Speak the speech, I pray you,
as I pronounced it to you,

trippingly on the tongue:
but if you mouth it,

as many of your players do,
I had as lief the town-crier
spoke my lines.

Nor do not saw the air too
much with your hand, thus,
but use all gently.

PARAPHRASE

Say the words like I'm saying
it to you now.

Let it flow, don't take all day,
but if you do take all day—

like all y'all do—I would
rather a tiny yapping dog was
saying it.

And don't do weird stuff With
your hands either, like this,
but just be cool.

WHY play it?

Being able to use our own words helps bridge both the language and generational gap between Shakespeare and the actor. It's helpful to personalize the text and relate it to something recognizable.





Meet Your Chefs



CAGE SEBASTIAN PIERRE

has performed on Chicago Shakespeare's stages many times. You may have seen him as one of the 2018 SLAM emcees, in *Q Brothers Christmas Carol*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth*, or *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. He's also worked with Writers Theatre, Timeline Theatre Company, and American Players Theatre in Spring Green, Wisconsin. Cage holds a BFA degree from the University of Minnesota/Guthrie Theatre Actor Training Program.



AURORA REAL DE ASUA

is an actor, playwright, and director based in Chicago. You may recognize her as one of your 2018 and 2019 SLAM emcees! She's also worked with Goodman Theatre, Northlight Theater, Court Theater, Remy Bumppo, Victory Gardens, and Rivendell. She has workshopped plays with Victory Gardens, Sideshow Theatre Company, and Greenhouse Theater. She is a graduate of Northwestern University and proudly hails from the Basque Country.

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