



Pearls on a String

This improv game is one of the most engaging ways we know to summarize material—and to 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.

If you’re teaching virtually, check out the [▶ accompanying video](#) to see a group of Chicago Shakespeare’s staff summarize *Romeo and Juliet* with this activity over Zoom. We’ve also shared [📄 how to keep track of the order of lines](#) without having actual bodies as placeholders. If you play this virtually with a larger group, as the leader you’ll also need a way to track who has gone and who hasn’t. Otherwise we thought it worked just as well this way as it does in a physical classroom. It was still an inventive and creative way to summarize a text!

Invite the group to get on their feet and form a line.

Anyone can volunteer to contribute the first line to begin the story. They step forward and take the first position in the story line, all the way to the left.

The next person to volunteer will give a final line for the story. They’ll step forward and take the last position in the story line, all the way to the right. With each new “pearl” added, tell the story from the beginning—so for now, say the first and last sentences of your retelling. This helps everyone track the story as its being built.

The remaining players can fill in a sentence *any place along the line*, and in any order. Each time someone takes their place in the line, the story is retold from the very beginning.

After everyone has contributed a line, share the entire story you’ve created from start to finish.

Consider Common Core Anchor Standards R2, R3, R



Shakespeare and the art of theater open exciting, creative paths of learning. One of the largest arts-in-education programs in the country, Team Shakespeare brings Shakespeare's plays to life for middle and high school students. Team Shakespeare's expansive efforts to share Shakespeare with young people aims to empower them as interpreters, widen the scope of their imagination, and offer authentic opportunities to explore the complexities of human nature.



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