



In a Snap!

We love this active approach to teaching a story's synopsis! We know that a lot of our teachers frontload with this before diving into an actual Shakespeare text. With teaching Shakespeare, it's less about the "surprise ending" than developing and practicing other higher-level reading skills. (Not to mention the fact that in the case of *Romeo and Juliet*, it's the playwright who spoils the ending in the first fourteen lines!) This activity introduces the story, while encouraging students to voice and physically activate some of the key lines as they're working collaboratively.

In the [▶ accompanying video](#), you'll see how we modified this activity to work over a virtual classroom platform. We shared each person's individual lines in advance, and used screen sharing to show the [📄 PowerPoint](#) with the numbers. Only the leader had the [📄 full narrative](#), so the participants could stay solely focused on the group. And it was a lot of fun to do!

[To the teacher: if you're in a classroom with your students, print out the sheet of the lines—along with their numbers—and cut them into strips. Divide the class into small groups of 3-4 people, giving each group several lines to share in their work together. Prior to class, write the quote numbers, 1-25, in sequence on the board so you can silently point to each, cuing the next group without interrupting the narrative.]

In your small groups, read your lines aloud a few times. Discuss what questions you have about the lines. Then, working with one line at a time, decide how you want to physicalize it to help bring its meaning alive for your audience. Your choices don't need to be literal, but they should help your audience to better understand the line as you play with the words' meaning or sounds.

Practice saying your line as a group with your gesture—either in a choral reading or dividing up the words between you. But everyone needs to speak at least part of each line! Repeat this process for the rest of your lines. As a class, stand in a circle. As the story is read, watch for the moment the narrator points to your line numbers and jump in with your line and gesture.

Consider Common Core Anchor Standards R2, SL2



Shakespeare and the art of theater open up many and varied paths of learning. Through one of the largest arts-in-education programs in the entire country, Team Shakespeare brings Shakespeare's works to life for middle and high school students. Team Shakespeare is an expansive effort to share Shakespeare with young people and to celebrate the work of this great playwright, who embraced the limitless scope of imagination and the exploration of our complex human nature.

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