



# Welcome to Animated Shakespeare!

## The Power of Words

We think you'll find these teaching resources – created by professional theatre actors and educators – very valuable supports to your classroom explorations of Shakespeare. The following pages include lesson plans that can stand alone or be used to accompany our video series.

In each Module, you will have three or four Units that deepen students' understanding of various aspects of Shakespeare's work or a particular play. Each video is accompanied by several pages of in-class activities for teachers to prepare, as well as Class Handout sheets to reproduce for your students.

No matter which play you are studying, these activities can supplement your regular class work to enliven the text that has become so influential, not only in theatre, but in the common speech of Western society. Enjoy!

– *The team at KDOONS and WYRD Productions*

**NOTE:** In the following activities and handouts, you may see references to a few terms:

**The First Folio:** This is the common name for the collection of Shakespeare's plays, entitled 'Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies', published in 1623. This is the text favored by most professional actors, and the scenes used in the activities will come straight from the Folio. Many of the Folio plays, however, are not broken down into scenes, just five long acts. For ease of reference, therefore, we will include the standardized line numbers from modern editions of Shakespeare.

**Puke Books:** This term was not created by Shakespeare! We recommend each student have a small notepad – or "Puke Book" – in which she can do timed writing. Students are never forced to share this writing. They will be asked to read it over, highlight the phrase that resonates most strongly and, if they choose, share this tidbit with the class. 'Puking' allows students to personalize their experience of Shakespeare by reflecting on themes from the plays. In their Puke Books, they may discover connections between the stories and their own lives. Optional **Puke Topics** are suggested in an inset many of the Units for students' personal reflections.

**MacHomer:** The videos are performed by Rick Miller, creator of MacHomer (The Simpsons do Macbeth), a solo play that has been performed in 175 cities over 17 years. Prior knowledge of MacHomer is not a pre-requisite to using these videos, but the DVD and/or script are often used as additional teaching tools, and can be purchased as part of the full Outreach bundle at [animatedshakespeare.com](http://animatedshakespeare.com)



### Puke Topic

Students are given a topic, usually a reflective question that they are to consider with pen in hand. We suggest 2 - 3 minutes for students who are new to timed writing, 5 - 10 minutes for a class who is comfortable with it. Their pens are to move constantly through the timed writing period, even if just to repeat 'blah blah blah', because this movement is preferable to both the inertia of thinking and the self-critique of editing. The stream of consciousness that is produced may be ugly – like puke – but it comes whether we like it or not. Students are never forced to share this personal writing. When time is up, everyone should read over his/her own words and underline the phrase that resonates most for him/her.

# The Power of Words

## Video Transcript

Shakespeare's plays may not change your life, but one thing they will do for sure is *empower* you. Because words empower you. Language empowers you. The more words you have, the more power you have to shape your relationships, your career, your life... You'll need to go into college, you'll need to apply for a job, and the more words you have, the better chance you have of getting it. If someone has a better command of the English language, chances are they'll get it before you.

On a more practical note, if you feel like insulting someone who's bugging you, you could just go with the usual: "You stupid, stupid jerk-face dumbhead!" Or you could be a little more creative, a little more eloquent. You could use some of Shakespeare and call this person a "mewling, motley-minded miscreant!" or "obscene tar-faced wench!" or thousands of insults. OK, that'll make you sound a little weird. But Shakespeare also invented words that we use every day.

Words like:

- addiction
- assassination
- bedroom
- bloodsucking
- bedazzled
- fashionable
- freezing
- gossiping

These are words Shakespeare invented. He invented ***THOUSANDS of words***, and ***hundreds of phrases*** like "vanished into thin air" or "too much of a good thing". Shakespeare invented more words than anyone, and he contributed more than anyone else to the English language.

There's a memorial of William Shakespeare in Stratford-upon-Avon, where he was born and where he died and where he was buried. And this memorial has Shakespeare seated, he's got a quill in his hand, he's deep in thought, and he's surrounded by some of his favorite characters: there's Lady Macbeth, there's Hamlet, Prince Hal, there's big, fat Falstaff... And on the memorial there's an engraving by Alexandre Dumas and it says,

***"After God, Shakespeare has created most"***

You may not agree.

You may still think you hate Shakespeare, but you actually quote him every day of your life!

# The Power of Words

## Topic Recap and Discussion Starter:

### Shakespeare plays will empower you

- Words empower you
- Language empowers you

### More words = more power to:

- shape your relationships
- shape your career
- shape your life

### More words = better chance to:

- get into college
- get a job

### Practical uses of Shakespearean language:

- Insults
- Every day words
- Every day phrases

### Shakespeare invented THOUSANDS of words:

- addiction
- assassination
- bedroom
- bloodsucking
- bedazzle
- fashionable
- freezing
- gossiping
- etc.

### Shakespeare invented HUNDREDS of phrases:

- vanished into thin air
- too much of a good thing
- Even if you think you hate Shakespeare, you quote him every day of your life!



*"After God,  
Shakespeare has created  
most".*



## The Power of Words

*Please note: Shakespeare has coined many phrases, more than any other English writer, but he may not have 'invented' the individual words. His use of them, however, dating back to the late 16th century, may be the first recorded instance, as noted in the OED (Oxford English Dictionary).*

### Activity 1: Stand Up If...

#### Objective:

To reduce the alienation modern-day students may experience with Shakespeare's 'old-fashioned' language and to get them engaged in it by using popular expressions they have heard and may have even used themselves.

#### Introduction:

Your students may think they have no connection to Shakespeare, that 'nothing he says sounds like real people'. However, the following list of well-known phrases comes from Shakespeare.

#### Instructions:

Read through the following expressions one at a time and ask students to stand up if they have heard it before. Proceed to the next phrase, asking students to stay standing if it, too, is familiar or to sit down if it is not.

As a rest after all that standing(!), you could then run down the list a second time asking students what each phrase means and where they might have heard someone use it.

If your curriculum includes **internet research** you could also assign a phrase to each student and have them find and write the meaning, noting

- The original quote from the play (it may have changed over the years)
- The play from which it came
- Its meaning in the play dialogue
- Its general meaning today





## The Power of Words

All of a sudden  
All one to me  
All's well that ends well  
As dead as a doornail  
As good luck would have it  
As merry as the day is long  
At one fell swoop

Beast with two backs  
But, for my own part, it was Greek to me

Come what come may

Dash to pieces

Eaten out of house and home

Fair play  
Fancy free

Fie, foh, and fum, I smell the blood of a British man

Fight fire with fire  
For ever and a day  
Foul play

Give the devil his due  
Good riddance  
Green eyed monster

Heart's content  
High time  
Hot-blooded  
Household words

I have not slept one wink  
I will wear my heart upon my sleeve  
In my mind's eye  
In stitches  
In the twinkling of an eye

Lay it on with a trowel  
Lie low  
Like the Dickens

Make your hair stand on end  
Milk of human kindness

Night owl

Off with his head

Rhyme nor reason

Send him packing  
Set your teeth on edge  
Short shrift

Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and  
some have greatness thrust upon 'em  
Star-crossed lovers

This is the short and the long of it

Up in arms  
We have seen better days  
What a piece of work is man  
Woe is me

## Activity 2: Shakespearean Phrases

### Objective:

To use popular expressions as our starting point for examining excerpts from various Shakespeare plays.

### Introduction:

Having opened the door to the students' own reality, we can now consider three of the most popular expressions – left off the previous list for analysis here – in greater detail. We return to the study of Shakespeare now that it has been contextualized.

### Instructions:

Have a group of students read each of the scenes included in the handout aloud with its introduction and explanations. Take time to explain particular words and answer any questions. After each scene, there is an opportunity for the class to do a timed writing in their notebooks. (See handout at the end for the scenes).

### 1. In a pickle

*The Tempest*, ACT V, Sc. i, lines 279-284

In the closing scene of *The Tempest*, Trinculo (who calls himself 'a poore drunkard') has been discovered, drunk as ever, with his equally drunk friend, Stephano, wearing sparkling clothes stolen from Prospero. Trinculo is so drunk – so 'pickled' – that he fears he is preserved like a specimen in a jar in an anatomy museum. If he died, his skin would not decompose from his bones and the flies that gather on dead bodies could not stain him.

### 2. Love is blind

*The Merchant of Venice*, ACT II, Sc. vi, lines 34-39

This scene is reminiscent of *Romeo and Juliet*, featuring masquerades, young lovers from different clans, and a young man who must woo his beloved as she stands on a balcony in her father's house.

Shakespeare used 'love is blind' in several plays. In this case, the merchant of Venice is Shylock, a Jewish man, whose daughter, Jessica, has fallen in love with Lorenzo, a Christian. Jessica dresses as a boy so she can leave home undetected and go to Bassanio's feast with Lorenzo. Jessica is doing something drastic to be with Lorenzo, but she feels self-conscious about her appearance.



### 3. Wild goose chase

*The Tragedie of Romeo and Juliet*, Act II, Sc iv, lines 61-80

This dialogue is interesting because Romeo usually speaks in iambic pentameter (with his father, Capulet, and with the Friar and Juliet) but with Mercutio he speaks in prose.

This often indicates class differences: nobility will speak in iambic pentameter, often with rhyming couplets, but common folk (Juliet's nurse; the Fool and Edgar, the bastard in *King Lear*; or drunks like Trinculo and Stephano!) use ordinary speech. In this case, it represents comfort over formality, being amongst friends rather than being careful with one's words.

Benvolio and Mercutio are looking for Romeo, who did not go home from the Capulets' ball with them but stayed up talking to Juliet. When Romeo arrives, he is distracted by thoughts of Juliet but gets into a game of wits with Mercutio. (See Class Handout)



#### Puke Topic



##### 1. *In a pickle*

'In a pickle' also means being in a tricky situation.

Have you ever been 'in a pickle'?

Describe what happened and how it felt to be stuck in it.

##### 2. *Love is blind*

Have you ever snuck out at night to go to a party or somewhere your family didn't want you to attend?

If not, can you imagine an event that would be worth breaking the rules for?

If not, what are your reasons for staying home?

##### 3. *Wild goose chase*

When you are down, do you stay alone or do you seek out your friends? How do they cheer you up?

As Romeo does with Mercutio, do you speak differently with different people? (your teacher, your grandmother, your friends?)



## The Power of Words

### 1. In a pickle

#### The Tempest

ACT V, Sc. i, lines 279-284

*In the closing scene of The Tempest, Trinculo (who calls himself 'a poore drunkard') has been discovered, drunk as ever, with his equally drunk friend, Stephano, wearing sparkling clothes stolen from Prospero. Alonso, the King of Naples, asks:*

ALONSO

And Trinculo is reeling ripe: where should they  
Finde this grand Liquor that hath gilded 'em?  
How cam'st thou in this pickle?

TRINCULO

I have bin in such a pickle since I saw you last,  
That I feare me will never out of my bones:  
I shall not feare fly-blowing.

*This quote plays on the maining of "pickle" three ways. It plays on*

- 1) "in a pickle" to be in a mess.
- 2) The term for being drunk - "pickled" - that we still use today, which comes from 3).
- 3) An actual pickle: Trinculo is so drunk - so 'pickled' - that he fears he is preserved like a specimen in a jar in an anatomy museum. If he died, his skin would not decompose from his bones and the flies that gather on dead bodies could not stain him.

### 2. Love is blind

#### The Merchant of Venice

ACT II, Sc. vi, lines 34-39

*Shakespeare used 'love is blind' in several plays. In this case, the merchant of Venice is Shylock, a Jewish man, whose daughter, Jessica, has fallen in love with Lorenzo, a Christian. Jessica dresses as a boy so she can leave home undetected and go to Bassanio's feast with Lorenzo.*

JESSICA

I am glad 'tis night, you do not looke on me,  
For I am much asham'd of my exchange;  
But love is blinde, and lovers cannot see  
The pretty follies that themselves commit,  
For if they could, Cupid himselfe would blush  
To see me thus transformed to a boy.

*Jessica is doing something drastic to be with Lorenzo but feels self-conscious about her boyish appearance.*







## The Power of Words

### 3. Wild goose chase

#### The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet

Act II, Sc iv, lines 1130-1148

*Benvolio and Mercutio are looking for Romeo, who did not go home from the Capulets' ball with them but stayed up talking to Juliet. When Romeo arrives, he is distracted by thoughts of Juliet but gets into a game of wits with Mercutio.*

ROMEO

Swits and spurs,  
Swits and spurs, or Ile crie a match.

MERCUTIO

Nay, if our wits run the Wild-Goose chase, I am done:  
For thou hast more of Wild-Goose in one of thy wits,  
then I am sure I have in my whole five. Was I with  
you there for the Goose?

ROMEO

Thou wast never with mee for any thing, when thou  
wast not there for the Goose.

MERCUTIO

I will bite thee by the eare for that jest.

ROMEO

Nay, good Goose bite not.

MERCUTIO

Thy wit is a very Bitter-sweeting,  
It is a most sharpe sawce.

ROMEO

And is it not well serv'd into a Sweet-Goose?

MERCUTIO

Oh here's a wit of Cheverell, that stretches from an  
ynch narrow, to an ell broad.

ROMEO

I stretch it out for that word, broad, which added  
to the Goose, proves thee farre and wide, abroad  
Goose.

MERCUTIO

Why is it not better now, then groning for Love, now  
art thou sociable, now art thou Romeo: now art  
thou what thou art, by Art as well as by Nature, for  
this driveling Love is like a great Naturall, that runs  
lolling up and down to hid his bable in a hole.

*Benvolio stops them  
at this point because  
their talk becomes quite  
bawdy!*

