



The  
Complete Works of William  
SHAKESPEARE  
(abridged)

Written by Adam Long, Daniel Singer, Jess Winfield

**REDUCED SHAKESPEARE COMPANY**



A NEW 42ND STREET PROJECT



Show photos Courtesy of Reduced Shakespeare Company. Title treatment by Tom Slaughter.



To help preserve the environment, this NEW VICTORY School Tool resource guide has been printed with soy-based ink on paper that comes from well-managed forests, controlled sources and recycled wood or fiber.

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**REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE**  
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**AND FURTHER RESOURCES**

## DEAR TEACHERS,

Welcome to the NEW VIC SCHOOL TOOL resource guide for *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare* (abridged). These materials have been designed to expand your students' engagement with and appreciation for the concepts of abridgement and parody of the works of William Shakespeare.

Further exploration through the performing arts education activities suggested in this guide can enrich your students' experience of the performance itself while further developing their understanding of this complex text and the art form of theater.

Comments from you and your students are always welcome. We rely on feedback as a crucial component in our efforts to develop and extend our relationship with our audience.

Thank you,

Edie Demas  
 Director of Education

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 Curriculum and Publications Manager

## THE NEW VICTORY THEATER

The New Victory Theater, a New 42nd Street® project, is New York City's first and only theater for kids and families. The New Victory was also the first historic theater to reopen on 42nd Street (December 11, 1995) and has become one of the city's most respected cultural institutions. With its dynamic mix of theatrical programming, this nonprofit theater "is credited with having pioneered a new, sophisticated vision of children's entertainment" (*Time Out New York*). In addition, the NEW VICTORY offers daytime school performances, interactive family workshops and paid apprenticeships for high school and college students.

The New Victory Theater has a rich and varied past that reflects the history of 42nd Street itself. Opened by Oscar Hammerstein in 1900, the theater presented plays for over 30 years, including one of Broadway's longest-running hits, *Abie's Irish Rose* (1923). In 1931, Billy Minsky transformed the theater into Broadway's first burlesque house. A decade later the theater began to show movies, and in 1972 it became 42nd Street's only XXX-rated movie house. In 1990, the Theater became one of seven historic theaters to come under public ownership as part of the City and State's 42nd Street Development Project, and five years later — following a 16-month, \$11.4 million renovation — The New 42nd Street, Inc. opened the doors of The New Victory Theater.

### NEW VICTORY Education Program receives generous support from:

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This NEW VICTORY SCHOOL TOOL resource guide was produced by the NEW VICTORY Education Department.



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# USING THIS GUIDE:.....

This resource includes a range of information, questions, activities and worksheets that can stand alone or work as building blocks toward the creation of a complete unit of classroom work. Inside you will find a series of questions and activities designed to be used **Before** and **After the Show** in order to help your students' engage with the performers and foster critical discussion after their experience. Following this section are materials geared around an investigation of the production through the **Themes to Follow**: *Shakespeare: Straight Up, Shakespeare: Mixed Up* and *Comedy and Improv*.

Below you will find excerpts from the *Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in Arts: Theater* and the NYS Learning Standards to aid in your planning. Again, these are to be viewed as starting points. Fundamentally, the **NEW VICTORY SCHOOL TOOL resource guides** have been created to be flexible in structure so that you can adapt and combine activities to suit your own needs, the needs of your students and the demands of the curriculum.

## Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts: Theater Grades Pre K-12 New York City Department of Education

### Theater Making: Acting, Playwriting/Play Making, Designing and Technical Theater, and Directing

Theater Making provides multiple avenues for active learning. Through the interpretation of dramatic literature and the creation of their own works, students engage as writers, actors, designers, directors and technicians.

### Developing Theater Literacy

Theater Literacy provides theater vocabulary when making and responding to performance, and develops critical, analytical and writing skills through observing, discussing and responding to live theater and dramatic literature. In this strand, dramatic literature is also viewed as a catalyst for production and performance.

### Making Connections

Students make connections to theater by developing an understanding of self and others. They respond to theater by identifying personal issues and universal themes in performance and in dramatic text. They investigate theater by examining the integration of other arts into a complex multi-media art form.

### Working With Community and Cultural Resources

Community resources that support Theater Making, theater literacy, theater connections and career exploration, expand students' opportunities for learning. Active partnerships that combine school, professional and community resources create rich avenues for student and teacher innovation in the classroom and in production.

### Exploring Careers and Life long Learning

Students develop audience skills and a connection to theater that allows them to value the theater throughout their lives. They explore the scope and variety of theater careers in teaching, production, performance, criticism, design, technical theater and related occupations, and they investigate how these careers align with their personal goals and aspirations.

Excerpt taken from *Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts: Theater* Grades Pre K-12, New York City Department of Education [www.schools.nyc.gov](http://www.schools.nyc.gov)

## Curriculum Connections: New York State Learning Standards

The NEW VICTORY SCHOOL TOOL resource guide supports learning in the following areas:

**NYS LEARNING STANDARDS**  
..... **A, LA**

(example)

### ARTS (A)

- Creating, Performing & Participating in the Arts
- Knowing & Using Arts Materials & Resources
- Responding To & Analyzing Works of Art
- Understanding the Cultural Dimensions and Contributions of the Arts

### LANGUAGE ARTS (LA)

- Language for Information & Understanding
- Language for Literary Response & Expression
- Language for Critical Analysis & Evaluation
- Language for Social Interaction

### SOCIAL STUDIES (SOC)

- History of the US & NY
- World History
- Geography
- Civics, Citizenship & Government

# ..... BEFORE THE SHOW

## ABOUT THE COMPANY

Created in 1981, the Reduced Shakespeare Company (RSC) is a comedy troupe known for transforming long, serious subjects into short, sharp comedies. The company began performing at Renaissance Faires in California before premiering *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)* at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in 1987. The show went on to become the longest running comedy in London. In the years since, the RSC has created six stage shows, two television specials, and numerous radio pieces. With performances across the United States and Europe, the RSC has been nominated for an Olivier Award in London, two Helen Hayes Awards in Washington, D.C., and RSC scripts have been translated into over a dozen languages.

## ABOUT THE SHOW

In *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)*, a three-man troupe presents Shakespeare's 37 plays in only 2 acts. Boasting the shortest performance of *Hamlet* in only 43 seconds, the play incorporates improvisation, physical comedy, and pop culture to reinvigorate the Bard's canon. The irreverent send-ups include *Titus Andronicus* as a cooking show, a hip-hop imagining of *Othello*, and a football game that presents all of the histories. The second act focuses on *Hamlet*, and the company breaks with traditional theater etiquette to interact with the audience while recognizing the power of Shakespeare's original text.

## William Shakespeare's Life & Works

Many of the exact dates and facts of Shakespeare's life are a mystery, and there remain significant disagreements among scholars about the actual order of composition and performance of Shakespeare's canon. The dates given below are approximate dates of the first performances.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| April 23, 1564 – William Shakespeare is born in Stratford-upon-Avon, England | 1600 – <i>Twelfth Night, Merry Wives of Windsor</i>    |
| 1582 – Marries Anne Hathaway   | 1601 – <i>Hamlet</i>                                   |
| 1587 – Moves to London to join a theater company, the Lord Chamberlin's Men  | 1602 – <i>Troilus and Cressida</i>                     |
| 1590 – <i>The Comedy of Errors, Titus Andronicus</i>                         | 1603 – <i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>                |
| 1591 – <i>Henry VI; Part I, II, &amp; III</i>                                | 1604 – <i>Othello, Measure for Measure</i>             |
| 1592 – <i>Richard III, Taming of the Shrew</i>                               | 1605 – <i>King Lear</i>                                |
| 1593 – <i>Two Gentlemen of Verona, Love's Labour's Lost</i>                  | 1606 – <i>Antony and Cleopatra, Macbeth</i>            |
| 1594 – <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>                                      | 1607 – <i>Pericles, Timon of Athens</i>                |
| 1595 – <i>Richard II, Romeo and Juliet</i>                                   | 1608 – <i>Coriolanus</i>                               |
| 1596 – <i>The Merchant of Venice, King John</i>                              | 1609 – <i>Cymbeline</i>                                |
| 1597 – <i>Henry IV; Part I &amp; II</i>                                      | 1610 – <i>The Winter's Tale</i>                        |
| 1598 – <i>Much Ado About Nothing, As You Like It</i>                         | 1611 – <i>The Tempest</i>                              |
| 1599 – Shakespeare and the Lord Chamberlin's Men open The Globe theater      | 1612 – <i>Henry VIII</i>                               |
| 1599 – <i>Henry V, Julius Caesar</i>   | April 23, 1616 – Shakespeare dies on his 52nd birthday |

## ?? BEFORE THE SHOW FOCUS QUESTIONS

What do you know about William Shakespeare's plays?

Have you seen versions of Shakespeare's work on stage? What about on film or television?

Do you think Shakespeare's plays are funny?

Why is it important to make the audience laugh during a production of Shakespeare?

How many of Shakespeare's plays do you think you are going to see during this production?

# THE COMPLETE WORKS...

*“Love is a devil. There is no evil angel but Love.”*  
 — *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, Act I, Scene ii

**Suggested Activity** ..... NYS LEARNING STANDARDS ..... A, LA

## LOVE IS A DEVIL...

Courtship played a vital role in Elizabethan society, but it looked and sounded very different than it does today. To navigate the rules and expectations of courtship, Edward Phillips published a guide to romance in 1658. In this activity, using this primary source, your students will explore the language of Shakespeare’s time while developing skills of parody and exaggeration.

1. Write each of the statements on separate index cards. Make sure there are enough cards for the entire class, if necessary statements may be repeated.

<i>Your face is full of sunshine.</i>	<i>Your breath calls sweet perfumes.</i>
<i>Your eyes dart lightning through the air.</i>	<i>There is no treasure on earth like you.</i>
<i>Your lips are like a full ripe cherry.</i>	<i>There’s music in your smiles.</i>
<i>Your words, like music, please me.</i>	<i>Your eyes are orbs of stars.</i>
<i>You are a flame of beauty.</i>	<i>Your words have charmed my soul.</i>
<i>You are the star I reach at.</i>	<i>Your hair is soft as new spun silk.</i>
<i>I wear you in my heart.</i>	

2. Place all the cards in a bag and allow each student to choose one. Request that they keep their cards to themselves.
3. Ask your students to walk around the room, repeating the statement written on their card to themselves. When you say “Wherefore art thou Romeo?” the students must find the nearest person and profess their love using the statement that is written on their card.
4. Once both students have shared, they should continue to walk around the room. Repeat until everyone has shared their statements several times. Encourage students to be bold and silly, using accents, gestures, etc. Their goal should be to make their partner laugh.
5. After the sharing, bring the group together. Allow several individuals or pairs to share their statements as dramatically as possible.

*What did you hear? How were the words and sentences similar or different to how we speak?  
 How did your partner make you laugh?*

Primary Source: *The Mysteries of Love & Eloquence, Or the Arts of Wooing and Complementing*; by Phillips, Edward, 1630-1696?. London: printed for N. Brooks, at the Angel in Cornhill, 1658.



# ..... AFTER THE SHOW

**Suggested Activity** ..... NYS LEARNING STANDARDS ..... A, LA

## PARED & PRUNED PLAYS

After seeing the production, your students may have noticed different methods the actors and writers used to abridge Shakespeare’s plays. At over 4,000 lines of text, *Hamlet* is Shakespeare’s longest play. But the performers of *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)* hold the world’s record for the shortest performance of *Hamlet* in only 43 seconds. In the following activity, your students will have a chance to abridge a work of their own using dialogue and physical action to explore this challenging and exciting process.

**Teacher’s Tip:** This activity could be done using the acts of a play that is being studied in class, individual plays, fairy tales, or any other stories with which students are familiar.

1. Break the class into small groups and provide each group with a piece of narrative.
2. Ask each group to write a summary of their narrative in no more than one paragraph. *What are the essential ingredients of the story?*
3. Now it’s time to put the narrative on its feet. Each small group should create a short performance to be shared with the rest of the class. They will have only one minute to present their narrative.
4. Encourage every group member to be involved.

**Teacher’s Tip:** It may be useful to provide further parameters, such as asking that each group member have only one line of dialogue.

5. After a short period of time, ask the groups to share with the rest of the class. Be sure to have a stopwatch or timer to challenge your students to finish in time.
6. Once every group has shared, offer a challenge to the class to present their story or narrative again in only 30 seconds. If time allows, you could repeat the activity a third time with the challenge of presenting in only 10 seconds.

*How did you choose the “essential ingredients” of the story in your small group?*



## ?? REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Discuss these questions with your students to help them remember the show and focus on its themes:

*How many of Shakespeare’s play do you think the actors performed?*

*What do you know about Shakespeare’s plays that you didn’t know before?*

*For any play you were familiar with, what parts of the story did you see represented on stage?*

*Why and how do you think the actors or writers made those choices?*

*What made you laugh? What methods did the actors use to make Shakespeare relevant?*

# AFTER THE SHOW

**Suggested Activity**..... NYS LEARNING STANDARDS LA

## A REVIEW FROM YOU!

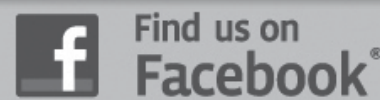
This is your opportunity to really express your thoughts and opinions about the performance you got to see at the New Vic! Think about your experience and answer the following questions. Let's review!

- What performance did you see at the New Victory?
- What was the play or performance you saw about (the plot)?
- Who were the main characters?  
Who were your favorite characters? Why?
- What was your favorite part of the performance?
- Did you have a least favorite part of the performance? Why?
- Were there any additional aspects of the show that stood out to you (e.g. sets, lighting, costumes, music, and/or dancing)?  
What did you like most about those aspects of the show?
- Overall did you enjoy your experience at the New Victory Theater?  
What did you like about being in the theater?



**EDUCATION@NEW42.ORG**  
Please include Name, School, Age, Date, and Title of the Performance.

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The New Victory Theater  **SEARCH**

# SHAKESPEARE: STRAIGHT UP



William Shakespeare's plays are performed more than the work of any other playwright, and they are also the source of inspiration for numerous other plays, television shows and films. But before they can be recycled for a new generation – let alone parodied or abridged as they are in *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)* – they must be understood. In this theme, your students will have the opportunity to explore Shakespeare's language and plays from a traditional perspective to encourage comprehension and appreciation.

### Blueprint Focus:

**Theater Making:** Students begin to recognize and articulate their personal vision and the cultural context of their work

**Developing Theater Literacy:** Students use vocabulary that is authentic and integral to theater

**Making Connections Through Theater:** Students examine the themes and contexts of theater to recognize and connect personal experience to universal themes

**Suggested Activity Worksheet**..... NYS LEARNING STANDARDS A, LA

## UNCOVERING SHAKESPEARE'S STAGE DIRECTIONS

### PHOTOCOPY THIS ACTIVITY

Stage directions are used by playwrights to describe the setting of a scene and the physical movements of the actors. Modern playwrights from Tennessee Williams to Tony Kushner write extensive stage directions to help directors and actors understand their play. Shakespeare's plays have very few stage directions but the details of the setting and action are often implied in the words of the characters.

Read the first 15 lines of *Hamlet* and answer the questions below to uncover Shakespeare's implied stage directions.

*In the scene, what time is it? What is the weather like? Describe the environment of the scene. How would you describe the mood of the characters?*

**Suggested Extension Activity:** Now choose another scene from *Hamlet* or another play of your choice and repeat the activity to uncover more implied stage directions!

## HAMLET, Act I, Scene i

Elsinore. A platform before the castle.  
Enter BERNARDO and FRANCISCO two sentinels.

**BERNARDO** Who's there?

**FRANCISCO** Nay, answer me: stand, and unfold yourself.

**BERNARDO** Long live the king!

**FRANCISCO** Bernardo?

**BERNARDO** He.

**FRANCISCO** You come most carefully upon your hour.

**BERNARDO** 'Tis now struck twelve; get thee to bed, Francisco.

**FRANCISCO** For this relief much thanks: 'tis bitter cold, And I am sick at heart.

**BERNARDO** Have you had quiet guard?

**FRANCISCO** Not a mouse stirring.

**BERNARDO** Well, good night. If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus, the rivals of my watch, bid them make haste.

**FRANCISCO** I think I hear them. Stand, ho! Who's there?

# THE COMPLETE WORKS.....

**Suggested Activity** ..... NYS LEARNING STANDARDS ..... **A, LA**

## ALL THE WORLD’S A STAGE...

One of Shakespeare’s most famous and recognizable speeches comes from the play *As You Like It*. Delivered by the character Jacques, the speech uses vivid language to describe seven stages of human life. Shakespeare uses strong imagery throughout his plays to convey messages to the audience or reader. In Elizabethan England, plays were performed with few sets, props, or costumes so the audience had to use their imaginations to bring the story to life. In this activity, your students will explore this famous speech by bringing Shakespeare’s imagery to life in the classroom.

1. Break your class into seven small groups. Assign each group a section of text from the speech.
2. Allow your students to read the text aloud several times in their group.
3. Ask each group to underline or circle words or phrases that stand out to them. You can also suggest that they brainstorm other words or images that relate to the text they’ve received.
4. Once they have a list of words and images, each group should find a way to represent their text in a physical way with a tableau – a still image or statue.
5. After every group has created and rehearsed their tableau, invite each group to share with the class, but be certain to present them in order. Before they are shared, introduce them with the first five lines of text.

6. As each group shares, ask the class to consider what comes to mind with each still image or statue.
7. After all the groups have shared and the class has discussed the images, repeat the activity while reading the text aloud for the entire class.

*What symbols or themes were present in both the text and the image or statue?*  
*Did physicalizing the text help to clarify the language?*  
*How did seeing the image help you to understand Shakespeare’s language?*  
*When listening or reading Shakespeare, what is the audience’s role?*

**KEYWORD: Tableau**

A still image or statue created using your body.

**TEACHER:**

*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.*

Jacques; Act II, scene vii; lines 142-146

**GROUP 1:**

*At first the infant, Mewling and  
 puking in the nurse’s arms.*

Jacques; Act II, scene vii; lines 146-147

**GROUP 2:**

*And then the whining school-boy,  
 with his satchel and shining morning  
 face, creeping like snail unwillingly to  
 school.*

Jacques; Act II, scene vii; lines 148-150

**GROUP 3:**

*And then the lover, Sighing like  
 furnace, with a woeful ballad Made  
 to his mistress’ eyebrow.*

Jacques; Act II, scene vii; lines 150-152

**GROUP 4:**

*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.*

Jacques; Act II, scene vii; lines 152-156

**GROUP 5:**

*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.*

Jacques; Act II, scene vii; lines 156-160

**GROUP 6:**

*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.*

Jacques; Act II, scene vii; lines 160-166

**GROUP 7:**

*Last scene of all, That ends this  
 strange eventful history, Is second  
 childishness and mere oblivion, Sans  
 teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans  
 everything.*

Jacques; Act II, scene vii; lines 166-169

# SHAKESPEARE: STRAIGHT UP

**Suggested Activity** ..... NYS LEARNING STANDARDS ..... **A**

## SHAKESPEAREAN STATUS UPDATE

In Elizabethan England, society was generally divided into four social classes: nobility; merchants and clergy; yeomen or landowners; and farmers and peasants. An individual’s social class could determine everything from what they wore to what kind of jobs they could hold, and it was often difficult to change one’s status. As any playwright would be, Shakespeare was influenced by the class system he was a part of and often created characters of various statuses into his plays. The style of speech and rhyme is often an indicator of a character’s status or social class. In this activity, your students will have the opportunity to physically explore these four different classes using text from Shakespeare’s histories as a guide.

### PART I

1. Write each of the following words on a separate piece of paper: King, Cardinal, Citizen, Servant.
2. Separate your class into four groups and give them each a unique piece of paper. Ask that they brainstorm words and phrases associated with that kind of person or character but to only share the list with their own groups. It may be useful to have dictionaries available as some students may not be familiar with the term “Cardinal.”
3. Next, ask that each group create a style of walking for their character. The group should develop one style of movement that all group members can adopt. The group should also describe this style of movement and write it on their piece of paper.

*How would this character walk on the street?  
 What would their posture be?  
 What body part would they ‘lead’ with?  
 Their head, stomach, pelvis, something else?*

4. After each group has developed a style of walking, ask everyone to begin walking around the room silently as their character. They may interact with others silently and should observe the physicality of their classmates.
5. Discuss the activity. Allow each character to be introduced and described. *Who did you meet? How did it feel to walk around the room? Did you feel more or less significant than others?*

### PART II

1. Ask students to return to their small groups and then exchange their piece of paper with another group. They should then review the description of this new character.
2. Additionally, each small group should now receive a companion line of text:

**KING:** *Not all the water in the rough rude sea  
 Can wash the balm from an anointed king;  
 Richard II; Richard II; Act III, scene ii*

**CARDINAL:** *Then, by the lawful power that  
 I have, Thou shalt stand cursed and  
 excommunicate.  
 Cardinal Pandulph; King John; Act III, scene i*

**CITIZEN:** *I would to God thou and I knew where a  
 commodity of good names were to be bought.  
 Falstaff; Henry IV, Part I; Act I, scene ii*

**SERVANT:** *Would I were in an alehouse in London!  
 I would give all my fame for a pot of ale and safety.  
 Boy; Henry V; Act III, scene ii*

3. Students should rehearse the style of walking and line for this new character. Encourage students to use the whole line, a phrase, or even a single word – whatever they can remember. Then ask students to walk around the room as the character, greeting their classmates using their line of text.
4. If time allows, this rotation can be repeated until each group has had the opportunity to explore all four kinds of characters.
5. Discuss the activity, being sure to note that each character represents a different social class that would have been recognizable during Shakespeare’s lifetime. Allow time for the quotes to be shared and discussed with the entire class.

*What was it like to try a different character?  
 How did adding dialogue change the activity?  
 How was it different when speaking to other  
 characters of lesser or higher status?*

# THE COMPLETE WORKS.....

**Suggested Activity.....A, LA**  
NYS LEARNING STANDARDS

## CUSTOMIZING A CHARACTER PROFILE

When an actor is developing a character for performance, he or she will often create an elaborate personal history for the character using the information in the script as well as their own imagination. A playwright may include many hints about the background, history, and opinions of a character, but it is the actor and director's job to not only discover those details but expand upon them. The creation of a specific character is particularly important when an actor plays many roles, as is the case in *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)*.

In this activity, your students will use a new media form that is very familiar to them – a Facebook profile – to explore a specific character from Shakespeare's canon.

1. Ask each student to choose a single character they would like to explore.
2. Explain that the students will now create a Facebook profile for that character using information drawn from the play as well as their imagination. They can use the Facebook template to the right or it may be useful to display a Facebook page as an example.
3. The profile must include the following: Name, Sex, Birthday, Current City, Hometown, Family Members, Relationship Status, Activities, Interests, and About Me.
4. The character's Facebook profile may also include: Interested In, Looking For, Religious Views, Political Views, Favorite Music, Favorite Movies, Favorite TV Shows, Favorite Books, Favorite Quotations, Education & Work Info, and any Groups or Fan Pages they belong to.
5. Encourage students to think outside of the box and imagine their character existing in a different time or place from the original text. This is an opportunity for students to work as a director or designer and adapt the characters and text. It may be useful to remind students of film adaptations such as *10 Things I Hate About You* or *She's The Man* that adapted and modernized Shakespeare's plays.
6. Ask that each student to share their profile with at least one peer.

*What was surprising or challenging about the activity?  
 If you changed or modernized the setting, how did the character profile change?  
 In what way does a Facebook profile represent someone? What does it leave out?*

**Teacher's Tip:** This activity can be done using the characters of any play that is being studied in class.

**KEYWORD: Meter**  
 The basic rhythmic structure of a verse or poem.

**PHOTOCOPY THIS PAGE!**

# SHAKESPEARE: STRAIGHT UP

**Suggested Activity Worksheet.....A, LA**  
NYS LEARNING STANDARDS

The image shows a Facebook profile template for 'The Reduced Shakespeare Company' on the left and a character profile form on the right. The Facebook page includes a cover photo, a profile picture, and a post about a 'Shorty Awards' vote. The character profile form includes fields for Name, Sex (Female/Male), Birthday, Current City, Hometown, Family Members, Relationship Status (Single, In a Relationship, Married, Engaged, It's Complicated, In an Open Relationship, Widowed), Activities, Interests, and About Me. A search bar at the bottom right contains 'The New Victory Theater' and a 'SEARCH' button.

# THE COMPLETE WORKS.....



# SHAKESPEARE: MIXED UP

To many, Shakespeare seems outdated and difficult to understand. Oscar Wilde famously remarked “Now we sit through Shakespeare in order to recognize the quotations.” But modern entertainment from hip-hop to television uses Shakespeare as a source of inspiration for content and style. In *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)*, the actors use multiple methods to update Shakespeare’s canon. In this theme, your students will have the opportunity to explore Shakespeare with a twist – reinventing and reinterpreting his work and words so that they are relevant and accessible.

### Blueprint Focus:

**Theater Making:** Students refine their ability to express point of view and personal vision. Students explore personal voice and individual expression by applying diverse conventions of dramatic writing to their original work

**Developing Theater Literacy:** Students engage in research and analysis to distinguish similarities and differences in diverse theater forms



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# SHAKESPEARE: MIXED UP

NYS LEARNING STANDARDS

Suggested Activity Worksheet..... A, LA

## WILLIAM THE WORDSMITH

In writing nearly 40 plays and over 150 sonnets, Shakespeare added hundreds of words to the English language that we still use today such as eyeball, alligator, and zany. Follow the directions below to create and define a few words of your own!

1. One method Shakespeare used to “create” a new word was to combine pre-existing words:

**bedroom (noun): a room furnished with a bed and intended primarily for sleeping.**

Ask your students to choose two separate words to create their own new word.

\_\_\_\_\_ + \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

2. Shakespeare would also adapt words from other languages. The word bandit originated from the Italian bandito:

**bandit (noun): an outlaw who lives by plunder.**

Ask your students to choose a word from another language they speak or from a foreign language dictionary to create their own new word.

\_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ (language) becomes \_\_\_\_\_

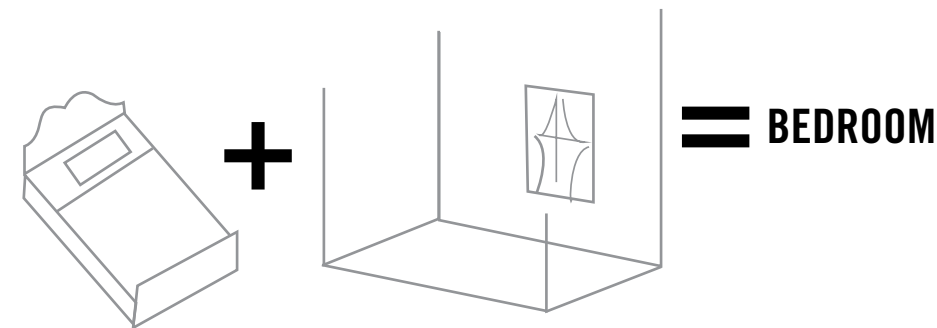
3. But sometimes, Shakespeare would simply make up a word if there wasn't a particularly vivid term for a specific action:

**puking (verb): to vomit**

Ask them to choose an action and then create a word of their own. Encourage them to consider changing a noun or adjective into a verb, or replacing letters in a word that already exists.

\_\_\_\_\_ becomes \_\_\_\_\_  
(action) (verb)

\_\_\_\_\_ becomes \_\_\_\_\_  
(word) (scrambled word)



“*Words, words, words.*”

– *Hamlet*, Act II, scene ii

**KEYWORD: Sonnet**

A fourteen line poem typically written in iambic pentameter with rhyme.



# THE COMPLETE WORKS...

**KEYWORD: Parts of Speech**  
The 8 classifications for how words are used to create correct sentence structure by the standards of traditional grammar, including verbs, nouns and adjectives.

**KEYWORD: Verb**  
A word used to express actions, events or states of being.

**Suggested Activity** NYS LEARNING STANDARDS A, LA

## SHAKESPEAREAN MAD LIB

A painter has paint and a musician has music, but playwrights have only words. The words they leave behind for actors, designers and directors have great power. Some of Shakespeare's most popular and recognizable words come from a soliloquy from *Hamlet*. In *Hamlet*, Shakespeare uses the literary device of repetition to emphasize his characters thoughts and feelings during this powerful speech.

In this activity, your students will discover the power of a few choice words by writing and performing their own version of the infamous "to be or not to be" speech.

1. Looking at the key on the side of Hamlet's Mad Lid on the following page, ask your students to choose eight words that fall into the following guidelines:

- |          |                 |
|----------|-----------------|
| A = VERB | E = VERB        |
| B = VERB | F = ADJECTIVE   |
| C = NOUN | G = VERB        |
| D = VERB | H = PLURAL NOUN |

2. Distribute copies of the Mad Lib and ask students to rehearse the speech using the list of words they just prepared.

4. Ask students to find a partner and share their speech as if they were having a conversation with a close friend. Then find a new partner and share their speech as if it were a secret. Lastly, ask students to share their speech with a third partner as though they were in a loud, crowded public place. *How does your delivery change?*

5. Share a few of the speeches with the class and then read the soliloquy in its original form.

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.

*Hamlet*, Act III scene i



What is happening to Hamlet in this speech?  
How did the speech change just by changing a few of the words?  
Did it tell a different story?  
What happens when words are repeated or patterns of words emerge?  
What was it like to perform for your classmates?

**KEYWORD: Noun**  
A word used to name a person, animal, place, thing, or abstract idea.

**KEYWORD: Adjective**  
A word that modifies a noun by describing, identifying or quantifying.

**KEYWORD: Plural Noun**  
The plural form of most nouns which is created by adding the letter s.

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**Suggested Activity Worksheet** NYS LEARNING STANDARDS A, LA

# SHAKESPEARE: MIXED UP

## MAD LIB KEY

- |                  |                         |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| A (VERB) = _____ | E (VERB) = _____        |
| B (VERB) = _____ | F (ADJECTIVE) = _____   |
| C (NOUN) = _____ | G (VERB) = _____        |
| D (VERB) = _____ | H (PLURAL NOUN) = _____ |

## HAMLET MAD LIB

To \_\_\_\_\_, or not to \_\_\_\_\_ : that is the question:  
(A) (A)

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to \_\_\_\_\_,  
(B)

The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
Or to take arms against a \_\_\_\_\_ of troubles,  
(C)

And by opposing end them? To \_\_\_\_\_ : to \_\_\_\_\_;  
(D) (E)

No more; and by a \_\_\_\_\_ to say we end  
(E)

The heart-ache and the thousand \_\_\_\_\_ shocks  
(F)

That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation  
Devoutly to be wish'd. To \_\_\_\_\_, to \_\_\_\_\_ ;  
(D) (E)

To \_\_\_\_\_ : perchance to \_\_\_\_\_ : ay, there's the rub;  
(E) (G)

For in that \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ what dreams may come.  
(E) (H)

THE COMPLETE WORKS...

"I love Shakespeare. He wrote some of the rawest stories..."

— Tupac Shakur

Suggested Activity.....NYS LEARNING STANDARDS.....A, LA

# IF MUSIC AND SWEET POETRY AGREE...

Though Shakespeare's plays were seen by kings, queens, and nobility, they were written to be enjoyed by everyone. In many ways they parallel contemporary music and media as very early examples of "popular culture." Modern music – particularly hip hop or R&B – shares many qualities with the work and words of William Shakespeare: the intended audience (anyone who will listen), content (love, betrayal, violence, crude humor), and form (rhyme patterns and rhythm.)

In this activity, your students will draw parallels between speeches written over 400 years ago and songs that are currently heard on the radio, while creating found poetry that fuses both forms.

1. Place students in pairs and distribute the handout of companion texts from Shakespeare and pop music. If necessary, poetry and music sections may be repeated.
2. Every pair should choose a set of companion texts and then each partner should choose one passage to work with.
3. Ask the students to read through their text several times before sharing it out loud with their partner. Next, ask students to discuss both texts with their partner. *What similarities or differences do they see and hear? What are the themes of the passages?*
4. Incorporating lines of text from both Shakespeare and the music lyrics, ask students to write a 14-line "modern sonnet" or found poem.
5. After students have written a found poem with their partner, ask them to rehearse the poem to be shared with the class. Encourage students to consider the wide variety of performance styles that exist in traditional theater as well as live music and concerts.
6. Share and discuss the poems with the class.

*What similarities did we discover between Shakespeare and the song lyrics? What differences?*

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SHAKESPEARE: MIXED UP  
IF MUSIC AND SWEET POETRY AGREE...

PAIR 1

Sweet Poetry

Sweet mistress, 'what your name is else, I know not, Nor by what wonder you do hit of mine,' Less in your knowledge and your grace you show not Than our earth's wonder; more than earth divine. Teach me, dear creature, how to think and speak: Lay open to my earthy-gross conceit, Smother'd in errors, feeble, shallow, weak, The folded meaning of your words' deceit. Against my soul's pure truth why labour you To make it wander in an unknown field? Are you a god? would you create me new? Transform me then, and to your power I'll yield. Sing, siren, for thyself, and I will dote: Spread o'er the silver waves thy golden hairs, And as a bed I'll take them and there lie; And, in that glorious supposition think He gains by death that hath such means to die: Let Love, being light, be drowned if she sink!

Antipholus of Syracuse, *The Comedy of Errors*, Act III, scene ii

MUSIC

It ain't a thing, mama, anything you need from me Baby, please take this ring It's like braille, girl, the way I feel It's something that I can't conceal For sure you're my light, personified I can only try to measure your shine on an earthly scale Everything else is pale compared to you Baby you're my cure, you're my remedy So sincere and pure, said I'll never leave I'll stay by your side, for eternity Til the day I die because Anything that I may have, anything that I'm blessed to grab I'll split it in half, for your tender touch Your lovin' girl it means so much I'll love you in style, on a sundrenched isle After we go down the aisle You're the thrill in my life, our love is amplified The type that only God provides, and it comes from you...

Ryan Leslie, "Just Right" from the album Just Right



Pair 2

Sweet Poetry

Within the bond of marriage, tell me, Brutus, Is it excepted I should know no secrets That appertain to you? Am I yourself But, as it were, in sort or limitation, To keep with you at meals, comfort your bed, And talk to you sometimes? Dwell I but in the suburbs Of your good pleasure? If it be no more, Portia is Brutus' harlot, not his wife. If this were true, then should I know this secret. I grant I am a woman; but withal A woman that Lord Brutus took to wife: I grant I am a woman; but withal A woman well-reputed, Cato's daughter. Think you I am no stronger than my sex, Being so father'd and so husbanded?

Portia, *Julius Caesar*, Act II, scene i

MUSIC

We're at the crossroads my dear Where do we go from here? Maybe you won't go maybe you'll stay I know I'm going to miss you either way It's such a lonely road When I cry your name Am I calling in vain? Am I waitin' only to drown in pain? Oh! Don't you do it, no don't you leave me this way I don't know if I could lift my head and face another day It's such a lonely road Usually not the kind of girl who's lost and looking for direction Who could this be staring at me? When I'm looking in the mirror tryin to find the resolution Are we too far gone to find our way home?

Alicia Keys, "Where Do We Go From Here," from the album As I Am



Pair 3

Sweet Poetry

This royal throne of kings, this scepter'd isle, This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars, This other Eden, demi-paradise, This fortress built by Nature for herself Against infection and the hand of war, This happy breed of men, this little world, This precious stone set in the silver sea, Which serves it in the office of a wall, Or as a moat defensive to a house, Against the envy of less happier lands, This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England...

John of Gaunt, *Richard II*, Act II, scene i

MUSIC

Welcome to the melting pot, corners where we sellin' rock Afrika Bambataa yea, home of the hip-hop Yellow cab, gypsy cab, dollar cab, holla back for foreigners it ain't for, they act like they forgot how to act 8 million stories, out there in it naked City, it's a pity, half of y'all won't make it Statue of Liberty, long live the World Trade Long live the King yo, I'm from the Empire State that's New York, concrete jungle where dreams are made of There's nothin' you can't do, now you're in New York These streets will make you feel brand new Big lights will inspire you, let's hear it for New York...

Jay-Z, "Empire State of Mind," from the album The Black Album 3



# THE COMPLETE WORKS...

**Suggested Activity** NYS LEARNING STANDARDS A, LA

## SHAKESPEARE AND 140 CHARACTERS...

With the advent of email, text messages, and social networking, modern society consumes information at an unimaginable rate. There are approximately 32,241 words in *Hamlet*, but with a service such as Twitter, individuals are expected to share vital information in 140 characters or less. That number – 140 – must include all letters, spaces, and punctuation, and is based on the standard number of characters in a text message. In this activity, students will be challenged to abridge a famous excerpt of Shakespearean text to only 140 characters.

1. Ask the class to read aloud the following two excerpts from *Romeo and Juliet*, Act II, scene ii: to the right.
2. In partners or small groups, ask students to analyze the two texts. It may be useful for students to highlight or underline the sections of the speech they believe to be most important. *What do they express? How do they use metaphor?* As a class, discuss the excerpts and clarify meaning.
3. Explain that students must now choose one of the speeches to abridge. They may use the original words, their own words, or a combination of both. However, the abridged version may be no more than 140 characters.
4. Encourage students to think about how they communicate using a text message or Twitter – *what are the crucial facts?* You may also allow students to use text message shorthand and abbreviations.
5. Students should then share their abridged speeches with one another and the class. If you use Twitter in your classroom or school, this would be a fantastic opportunity to get your students involved and also truly test the 140 character limit.
6. As a possible extension, ask students to read the entirety of Act II, scene ii from *Romeo and Juliet* and imagine the dialogue as a series of text messages.

*What would those messages be? How would that form of communication change the scene?*

*What made this challenging?*

*How did you choose which details to include?*

*What is the value of short, quick communication?*

*What is the value of unlimited characters?*

*How are modern methods of communication the same or different from those of Shakespeare's life?*

*"My words express my purpose."  
— Measure for Measure, Act II, Scene iv*

ROMEO:

*But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks?  
It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.  
Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,  
Who is already sick and pale with grief,  
That thou her maid art far more fair than she:  
Be not her maid, since she is envious;  
Her vestal livery is but sick and green  
And none but fools do wear it; cast it off.  
It is my lady, O, it is my love! O, that she knew she were!  
She speaks yet she says nothing: what of that?  
Her eye discourses; I will answer it. I am too bold,  
'tis not to me she speaks: Two of the fairest  
stars in all the heaven, having some business,  
do entreat her eyes To twinkle in their spheres  
till they return. What if her eyes were there,  
they in her head? The brightness of her cheek  
would shame those stars, As daylight doth a lamp;  
her eyes in heaven Would through the airy region  
stream so bright That birds would sing and think it  
were not night. See, how she leans her cheek upon  
her hand! O, that I were a glove upon that hand,  
That I might touch that cheek!*

*Romeo and Juliet, Act II scene, ii*

JULIET:

*O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?  
Deny thy father and refuse thy name;  
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,  
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.  
'Tis but thy name that is my enemy;  
Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.  
What's Montague? it is nor hand, nor foot,  
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part  
Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!  
What's in a name? that which we call a rose  
By any other name would smell as sweet;  
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,  
Retain that dear perfection which he owes  
Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name,  
And for that name which is no part of thee  
Take all myself.*

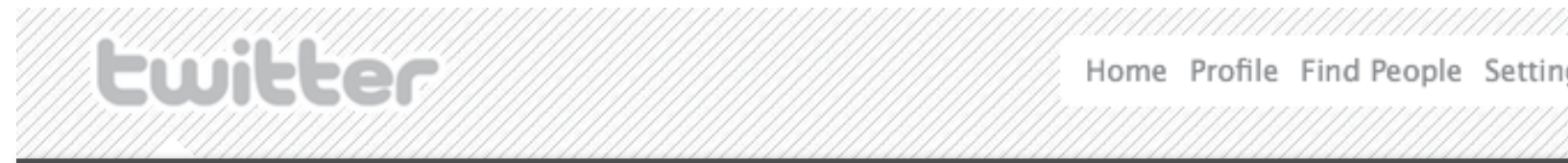
*Romeo and Juliet, Act II scene, ii*

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# SHAKESPEARE: MIXED UP

**Suggested Activity Worksheet** NYS LEARNING STANDARDS A, LA

## SHAKESPEARE AND 140 CHARACTERS...



**R u part of the Twitiverse? We'd <3 to hear from u! Tell us if u r excited for the upcoming show u r about 2 c, & afterward what u thought!**

(p.s. That's 140 characters!)

Just make sure to include @NewVictory so we know you are tweeting about us!

✓ Following

Lists Settings

**Use the space below to write out your thoughts and ideas and come up with a 140 character (that includes spaces) tweet!**



-----  
 -----  
 -----  
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 -----  
 -----  
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 -----  
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Name  
Location  
Web  
Bio

1,492  
following

Tweets

Favorites

Lists

View all

Actions  
block Behan  
report for sp

Following

# THE COMPLETE WORKS... ..



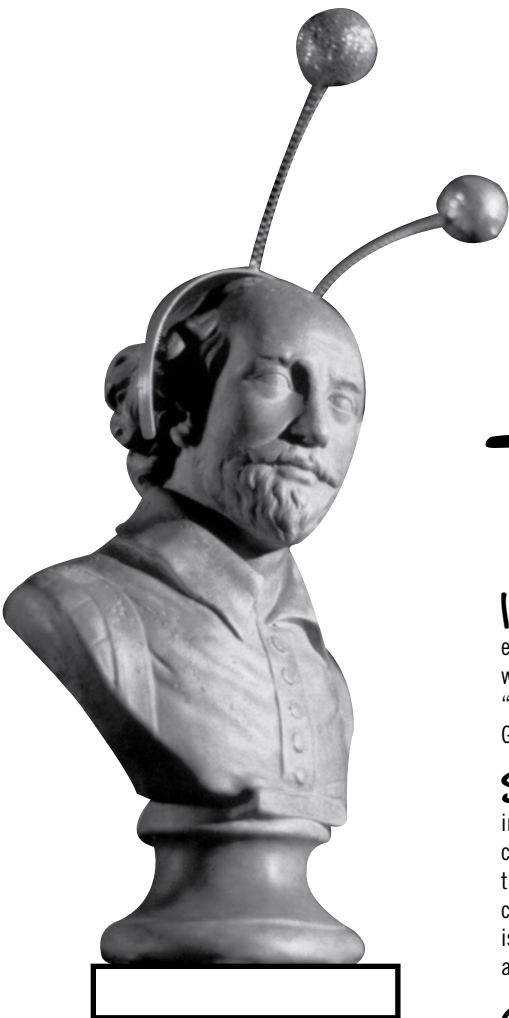
The performers in *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)* pull as much source material from Shakespeare as they do from the classic physical comedy of Charlie Chaplin or The Three Stooges. The antics, hijinks, and pratfalls they perform are carefully developed and meticulously rehearsed to receive the most laughter as possible. But these skilled performers also adjust the show for different audiences in different locations and are highly skilled improvisers who can adjust to the needs or requests of an audience in the blink of an eye. In this theme, your students will explore the tools of comedy to develop the multiple intelligence, physicality, and spontaneity of comedians.

### Blueprint Focus:

**Theater Making:** Students express personal vision and demonstrate an understanding of context

**Theater Making:** Students explore the physical, characterization, and staging components of acting by developing the actor's instrument, the body and mind

**Developing Theater Literacy:** Students develop an understanding of dramatic structure and theater traditions



## Tools of Comedy

**Imagination** – Comedians must be able to imagine entire physical worlds that may not be present on stage, as well as imagine absurd scenes or characters. Kristen Wiig of “Saturday Night Live” has developed such silly characters as Gilly and Penelope by pulling from the depths of her imagination.

**Surprise** – The power of surprise is more apparent in comedy than perhaps anywhere else. Performers are constantly attempting to unbalance the audience or catch them off guard to get a laugh. As a Jewish-American woman, comedian Sarah Silverman addresses social and political issues by incorporate surprising representations of sexism and racism in her comedy routines.

**Character** – Many comedians develop individual characters that they then embody on stage or film. The character may be happy, sad, cowardly, foolish, or serious but is always very specific. Sacha Baron Cohen creates highly developed characters (Borat, Alie etc.) before then placing them in outlandish situations while always maintaining the characterization.

**Physicality** – Comedians and other performers use every part of their body to show the impact of objects, places, or emotional states and are trained to use his or her body in surprising or strange ways. Actor Jim Carrey rose to fame in part due to his ability to contort his body while creating outrageous characters such as Ace Ventura or the Grinch.

**Facial Expression** – While comedians use words, the often use their faces to express what they are thinking or feeling about a situation, to great comedic effect. Rown Atkinson, the creator of the character Mr. Bean, is well-known for his ability to contort his facial expressions and is often called “the man with the rubber face.”

### Suggested Activity NYS LEARNING STANDARDS A

## COMEDY & IMPROV APPETIZERS

Comedy and improvisation enjoy a rich history in the United States, from television shows like “In Living Color” or “Saturday Night Live” to notable sketch comedy groups such as Second City, Upright Citizens Brigade, or The Groundlings. When comedians or actors work together, they often employ some form of group warm-up to begin their process. Try one of the following activities as a warm-up in your class to encourage students to think about the tools of comedy.

### WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

(An activity to explore Imagination & Physicality)

1. Ask the class to stand in a circle. Explain that the class will use their imagination and physicality to show an everyday activity.
2. Modeling the activity, step into the circle and mime an action. The next person in the circle steps into the center of the circle and asks “what are you doing?” The person miming the action answers with an entirely different action. For example, if the person in the center were miming brushing his or her teeth, he/she might respond “I’m reading the newspaper.”

3. The new person must then mime the action that has been suggested. The next person in the circle steps in and asks “what are you doing?”, and so on.
4. Continue the game until everyone has participated.
5. As a possible extension, propose a challenge to the group, such as it moving more quickly around the circle or miming and proposing even sillier or more outrageous actions.

*How was the activity challenging?  
What physical skills did you use to portray the action?*

### IT’S NOT A....

(An activity to explore Surprise & Imagination)

1. Ask the class to sit or stand in a circle. Explain that the class will use their imagination to transform an every day object. The object could be anything in the classroom – a string, pencil, piece of paper, etc.
2. Modeling the activity, show the prop to the group and then demonstrate how the prop might be a different object entirely by miming an action and telling the class what the object has become. For example, “It’s not a piece of string, it’s floss” or “It’s not a pencil, it’s a fork.”
3. Pass the object around the circle allowing every student to use their imagination and transform the prop.

*How did we transform the object?  
What skills were used to make the transformation specific or dynamic?*



## HONEY, IF YOU LOVE ME, WON’T YOU PLEASE SMILE?

(An activity to explore Physicality, Surprise & Facial Expression)

1. Ask the class to stand in a circle. Explain that the class will play a game with only one goal – to make their classmates smile and laugh.
2. Modeling the activity, repeat the only two lines of dialogue that are allowed. “Honey, if you love me, won’t you please smile?” and “Honey, I love you, but I just can’t smile.”
3. Encourage students to think about how they could make another person laugh using silly voices, facial expressions, body language, etc.
4. Begin the game. The person in the middle must approach one other person and ask, “Honey if you love me, won’t you please smile?” If the person they approach can respond by saying “Honey, I love you but I just can’t smile” without smiling, the person in the center of the circle must try to make someone else smile. If the person they approach does smile, that person must then take the role of the person in the middle.
5. As a possible extension, there may be more than one person in the center of the circle. Or the new rule may be that once you are in the center you stay in the center until everyone has smiled or laughed.

*What made you smile? What did you do to make others smile?  
What skills did you use to be funny or to keep from smiling?*

# THE COMPLETE WORKS...

**Suggested Activity** NYS LEARNING STANDARDS  
A

## FIND YOUR FUNNY BONE

Comedians and performers carefully craft the characters they portray on stage. In *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)*, the performers must embody a number of different characters from a variety of different plays. But in the show, they must not only portray many characters, they must find a way to make many humorous characters. In this activity, students will create a character of their own using voice, physicality and props.



1. Ask the students to begin walking around the classroom at a moderate pace. Next, request that they vary their speed – slow and then fast.



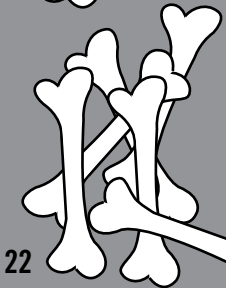
2. Now ask that students begin to explore what it feels like to “lead” with different parts of their body – meaning that as they walk, that body part advance first. As a group, ask that the class lead with their head. *How is this different? What does it feel like?* Characters who lead with their head are often intellectuals.



3. Next, ask students to lead with their chest. *What has changed?* Characters who lead with their chest are often heroic or egotistical. Lastly, ask students to explore leading with their gut or pelvis. *How is this character different?* Character who lead with their gut or pelvis are often silly or carnal.

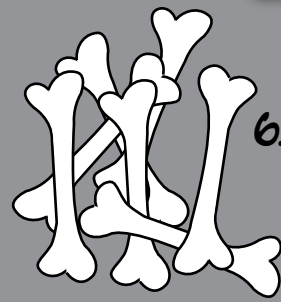


4. Ask the class to now explore leading with other body parts. *What changes?*



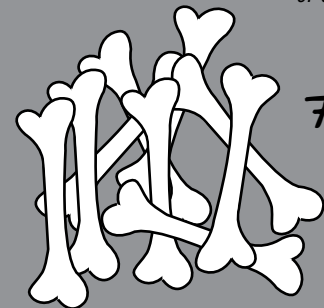
5. Once the class has had the opportunity to explore on their own, ask the students to choose one form of walking that they enjoy or are interested in exploring more.

**KEYWORD: Prop**  
Any physical object held or used by an actor on stage.



6. After every student has settled on one form of walking, ask that every student choose a single prop to explore. It may be any everyday object. Students should explore different ways of using the object while still moving about the room.

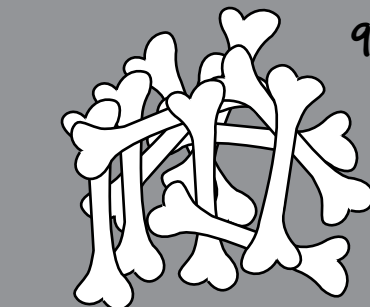
Suggest that the class investigate different ways of using the prop. *What happens if you discover the prop or drop the prop?*



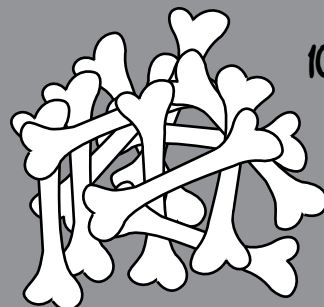
7. Next, ask that students choose one action with the prop that they particularly enjoy and that can be repeated. Ask that the class rehearse this action in character several times.



8. Now that every student has a specific walk and action with a prop, ask them to explore various ways the character could speak. As students move about the room repeating an action with a prop, ask that they greet one another in a variety of different voices.



9. Encourage students to explore a variety of accents, pitches, and tempos while speaking until they find a voice that they think is specific and fun. Allow a few minutes to students to converse with one another in character.



10. As a possible extension or culminating activity, create a space for further exploration. Students could write a monologue that is then performed in character. Alternatively, a pair or small group of students could be given a setting and then asked to improvise a scene in character.

*What kinds of characters did you see or hear emerging around the room?  
How did the different elements (walk, prop, and voice) change the character?  
Was it difficult to stay in character? If so, why?*

# COMEDY AND IMPROV

**Suggested Activity** NYS LEARNING STANDARDS  
LA, A

## SHRINK AND EXPAND

In *The Complete Works of Shakespeare (abridged)* the company manage to condense 37 plays and numerous sonnets into just two acts, and although this is an impressive feat, the concept of receiving and sending out information in an abridged format is hardly new to your students. Everyday people around the world communicate by sending text messages, instant messages, emails and tweets all while abbreviating their meaning.

In the following activity, your students will have the chance to do the opposite and take a sound bite that has been abridged and expand it into a full scene.

1. In small groups, assign each one with one of the following headlines below. These can either be labeled as headlines from an online newspaper, blog or tweet.

- a. Teen couple found in suicide pact
- b. Four lovers remember nothing after drug fueled night in the woods
- c. Army General murders his wife in a jealous rage
- d. Party boy prince goes to war over tennis balls

2. First, ask each group if they can guess which of Shakespeare’s plays these headlines could be describing.

3. Next, explain that each headline actually describes one moment from that play and their challenge is to retell that moment in an improvised scene.

4. Provide each group with an excerpt from the actual script to examine and ask them to look for the following things:

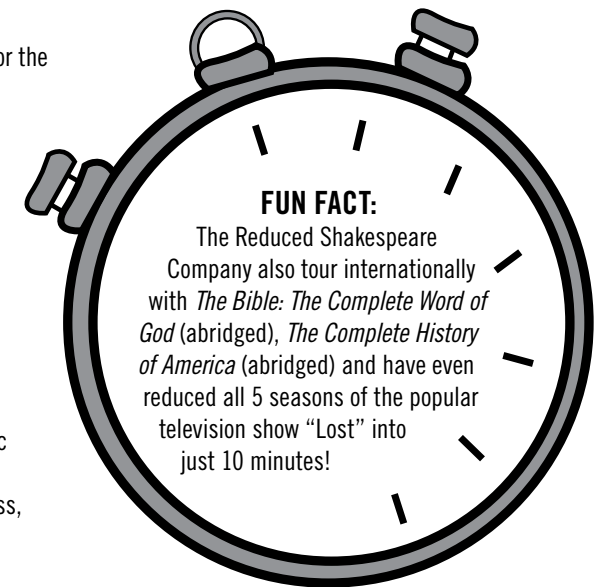
- Who else is in the scene?*
- Where does the scene take place?*
- Who in your group is going to act and who will direct?*
- How can you show a beginning, middle and end to your scene?*

5. Finally, encourage them to include at least one line of text from the actual script.

6. Once each group has rehearsed their scenes, invite them to share them with the class.

7. During the RSC performance, one of the actors explains that it is much easier to find comedic moments in Shakespeare’s tragedies than in his comedies, which is where you would expect to find them. Once your students have worked on their scenes and presented them to the class, now challenge them to make them funny.

*How did the performers in The Complete Works of Shakespeare (abridged) make the tragedies funny?  
How did they incorporate the audience into the comedy?*





# SOURCES CONSULTED AND FURTHER RESOURCES

Below are some resources that will help you and your students further explore the ideas within this guide. For your convenience, the resources are grouped according to the themes of this packet.

**Blueprint for Teaching and Learning**  
 The definitions for the theater keywords are adapted from the Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts: Theater.  
[www.schools.nyc.gov](http://www.schools.nyc.gov)

**Shakespeare's Language & Plays:**  
 William Shakespeare Complete Works by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen  
 Shakespeare's Words: A Glossary and Language Companion by David Crystal and Ben Crystal

**Websites:**  
<http://shakespeare.mit.edu/>  
<http://www.folger.edu/>  
<http://nfs.sparknotes.com/>  
<http://www.reducedshakespeare.com/>


**Shakespeare's Impact:**  
 Shakespeare and Modern Culture by Marjorie Garber

**Shakespeare's Life & Times:**  
 Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare by Stephen Greenblatt  
 Shakespeare the Thinker by A.D. Nuttall  
 Shakespeare's England: Life in Elizabethan & Jacobean Times by R. E. Pritchard  
 The Shakespeare Wars: Clashing Scholars, Public Fiascoes, Palace Coups by Ron Rosenbaum



IN BOTH THE NEW 42ND STREET STUDIOS AND IN THE NEW VICTORY THEATER, WE'RE DOING EVERYTHING WE CAN TO CREATE AN ECO-FRIENDLY, ENERGY-EFFICIENT ENVIRONMENT.


**Reduce, Reuse, Recycle**


 We use environmentally-friendly cleaning products and paint with low VOC (volatile organic compounds) to reduce the use of toxic chemicals.

 All of our printed materials (programs, New Victory School Tools, brochures, flyers, etc) are made with paper from renewable sources and printed with soy-based inks.

 We keep our cool with new roof insulation, solar reflective film on windows and high-efficiency fan motors in our heating/air-conditioning system.

 In our restrooms, we use automatic turn-off switches (when unoccupied), low-flow aerators on all faucets and recycled bathroom tissues and paper towels.

 We let it shine with fiber optic lighting in The New Victory Theater's ceiling dome and LED lighting on the New 42 Studios building façade.

 And of course, we reduce, reuse and recycle copier paper, newspapers and magazines, cans and bottles, fluorescent tubes and batteries.

The New 42nd Street is proud to have received two awards from the Environmental Protection Agency: a 2003 Small Business Energy Smart Award and a 2004 Environmental Quality Award.



**“Brevity is the soul of wit.”**

*Hamlet Act II, scene ii, William Shakespeare*

