



## Choral Speaking: Round the Witches' Cauldron (Act IV, scene 1)



### Overview

To help create the mood and atmosphere of a particular scene, students will work together and take a piece of text from the play using choral speaking techniques.

| Grade Level | Subject Area             | Curriculum Expectations and Learning Outcome                           |   |   | Time Needed   | Space                  | Materials               |
|-------------|--------------------------|--|---|---|---------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| All         | English, Language, Drama | Interpret oral texts by using stated and implied ideas from the texts. | Analyse the text and explain how their particular characteristics help communicate meaning. | Plan and shape the direction of the dramatic piece by introducing new perspectives and ideas both in and out of role. | 30-45 minutes | Adaptable to any space | Handout of edited scene |

## Setting Up the Activity

- ❖ This activity turns any monologue, speech or section of dialogue into an ensemble activity that can involve an entire class.
- ❖ The teacher may act as ‘director’ while soliciting input from the students or may divide the class into small groups and have the students be self-directed.
- ❖ If the students are self-directed, they will decide how to divide up the lines; which to speak chorally; where and what sound effects and movements to add, and so on.
- ❖ Then the groups will present their work to each other. This can lead to lively discussion of the similarities and differences in treatment.
- ❖ **NOTE:** This approach is probably best tried after the class has worked together under teacher “direction”.

## Activity

*(These instructions are intended only as an example or a guide and need not be followed precisely)*

- Start with the entire class standing in a circle. Start by going through the individual lines in call and response fashion with you reading a line, or part of a line, and the students repeating it after you. Break up long or difficult lines so that students can easily follow you, and deliver the lines with energy, physicality, generosity and commitment.
- Hand out copies of the text. Get the students to circle any words that are unfamiliar and figure them out together. There is already a partial glossary to help them through the more difficult words or phrases.
- Go through the excerpted text with the students line by line, checking to see that they understand everything that is being said.
- Go through the text again in call and response fashion now that everyone knows what is being said.
- Go through the text with the students in order to decide who will say which lines. Ask the students to find opportunities for individual speech, choral speaking and groups. Ask them which lines they think they should say all together; ask if anyone has a line or phrase that they'd really like to say etc. Note that this is just a preliminary assignment; you and the students may decide on changes as you play with the speech. Make notes of all the decisions on your text.
- Go through the text, with the students saying their lines. Review the results with them, soliciting ideas for improvements. Try out each of these new ideas and go through the whole text again.
- Work with the students to add a) staging b) gestures c) sound effects.
- Rehearse and perform the edited scene.

## Choral Speaking: Round the Witches' Cauldron – Act IV, scene 1 (Edited)

| #          | Lines  |
|------------|--|
| <b>1</b>   | FIRST WITCH<br>Thrice the <u>brinded</u> cat hath mewed. <span style="color: red;"><i>striped</i></span>             |
| <b>2</b>   | SECOND WITCH<br>Thrice, and once the <u>hedge-pig</u> whined. <span style="color: red;"><i>hedgehog</i></span>       |
| <b>3</b>   | THIRD WITCH<br><u>Harpier</u> cries "'Tis time, 'tis time!" <span style="color: red;"><i>name of familiar</i></span> |
| <b>4</b>   | FIRST WITCH<br>Round about the cauldron go;  |
| <b>5</b>   | In the poisoned entrails throw.  |
| <b>6</b>   | Toad, that under cold stone  |
| <b>7</b>   | Days and nights has thirty-one   |
| <b>8</b>   | <u>Sweltered venom</u> sleeping got, <span style="color: red;"><i>poisonous sweat</i></span>                         |
| <b>9</b>   | Boil thou first i' th' charmèd pot.  |
| <b>ALL</b> | ALL<br>Double, double toil and trouble;<br>Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.   |
| <b>10</b>  | SECOND WITCH<br>Fillet of a <u>fenny</u> snake <span style="color: red;"><i>slimy</i></span>                         |
| <b>11</b>  | In the cauldron boil and bake.   |
| <b>12</b>  | Eye of newt and toe of frog,   |
| <b>13</b>  | Wool of bat and tongue of dog,   |
| <b>14</b>  | Adder's <u>fork</u> and <u>blindworm</u> 's sting, <span style="color: red;"><i>split tongue / slow worm</i></span>  |
| <b>15</b>  | Lizard's leg and <u>howlet</u> 's wing, <span style="color: red;"><i>young owl</i></span>                            |

|     |  |  |
|-----|--|--|
| 16  | For a <u>charm</u> of powerful trouble,                                    | <i>magical rhyme</i>                         |
| 17  | Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.   |  |
| ALL | ALL<br>Double, double toil and trouble;<br>Fire burn, and cauldron bubble. |  |
| 18  | THIRD WITCH<br>Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf,                             |  |
| 19  | Witch's <u>mummy</u> , <u>maw</u> and <u>gulf</u>                          | <i>mummified corpse / stomach and throat</i> |
| 20  | Of the <u>ravined</u> salt-sea shark,                                      | <i>full of devoured prey</i>                 |
| 21  | Root of <u>hemlock</u> digged i' th' dark,                                 | <i>poisonous plant</i>                       |
| 22  | Add thereto a tiger's <u>chaudron</u>                                      | <i>stomach entrails</i>                      |
| 23  | For th' ingredience of our cauldron.                                       |  |
| ALL | ALL<br>Double, double toil and trouble;<br>Fire burn, and cauldron bubble. |  |
| 24  | SECOND WITCH<br>Cool it with a baboon's blood.                             |  |
| 25  | Then the charm is firm and good.   |  |
| 26  | THIRD WITCH<br>By the <u>pricking</u> of my thumbs,                        | <i>tingling</i>                              |
| 27  | Something wicked this way comes.   |  |
| 28  | Open, locks,   |  |
| 29  | Whoever knocks.  |  |



### Reflection Questions

- ◇ What thoughts and feelings came up?
- ◇ What surprised you?
- ◇ What do you think has happened before this scene with the three witches?
- ◇ What's happening in the play at this point?
- ◇ What might happen in the next act?