



EXERCISE: SHAKESPEARE SHUFFLE!

Objective:

This exercise provides an opportunity for students to use appropriate decoding strategies to identify Shakespeare's use of iambic pentameter and explain why he changes rhythm and rhyme at the end of the play in the Epilogue.

Materials:

- Handout of lines from Act 5, scene 1

Directions:

1. Ask the class the following: What is verse? What is prose? Who do you think speaks in prose? Who do you think speaks in verse and why would they speak that way?
 - a. Verse is usually spoken by the upper class (i.e. noble, educated and wealthy) and it's also often spoken by someone experiencing a strong emotion.
 - b. Prose is usually spoken by characters more likely to be from the lower classes – it's regular speech.
 - c. A Shakespearean verse frequently uses the iambic pentameter – a line with five metrical feet. Each foot consists of two syllables: one short (which is weak or unstressed) and one long (which is strong or stressed). The five feet make up a ten syllable line. Ask students what the rhythm is similar to (i.e. a heartbeat, a gallop):
u ___ u ___ u ___ u ___ u ___
de-dum, de-dum, de-dum, de-dum, de-dum.

Example: (see Handout: Example 1c)

u ___ u ___ u ___ u ___ u ___
Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes, and grove

- d. Shakespeare also writes lines with more or fewer than ten syllables – this is something we will explore further.
2. Next, ask for volunteers to come up in front of the class and hold up a card. Note: depending on how many words are in the line, only that number of students will be called up to the front.
 3. Each student holds up a card and the rest of the class will help unscramble the words and put them in the correct order to create the line.

- a. The first one will be modeled in the correct order.
 - b. Ask the students with the stressed syllables to raise their card up high. Note: a two syllable word, such as “standing” will be raised but tipped at an angle with “stan” being higher than “ding.”
 - c. Then, have the class read aloud the entire phrase emphasizing the raised words.
e.g. Ye ^{elves} of ^{hills}, brooks, ^{stan}ding ^{lakes}, and ^{groves}.
 - d. Reverse this and have the other students raise their words.
e.g. Ye ^{elves} of ^{hills}, ^{brooks}, ^{stan}ding ^{lakes}, and ^{groves}.
 - e. Ask the class what made the most sense and why?
 - f. Challenge the students to see if there is another way they can rearrange the words to keep the same meaning.
4. Repeat this activity using a line of prose:
e.g. I have been in such a pickle since I saw you last, that I fear me will never out of my bones.
 - a. What did you notice about the line? Was there a structure in place like there was with the verse?
 5. Now, go back to the verse line and shuffle the following lines, then challenge them to rearrange the words to keep the meaning: (see Handouts: Example 5a; 5b; 5c; 5d)*
 - a. Be free, and fare thou well. Please you draw near.
 - b. His mother was a witch, and one so strong.
 - c. O brave new world that has such people in't!
 - d. And on this couple drop a blessed crown.

*= you may either do all of these or pick and choose the filmed examples.

6. Next, show them parts of the epilogue: (see Handouts: Example 6a; 6b; 6c; 6d)**
 - a. Now my charms are all o'erthrown,
 - b. And what strength I have's mine own
 - c. Which is most faint. Now 'tis true
 - d. I must be here confined by you,

**= if you do not wish to demonstrate the first four lines of the epilogue, do the first two to demonstrate the change in rhythm and rhyme.

Debriefing Questions:

- a. What did you notice about the rhythm in a regular iambic pentameter and then the Epilogue?
- b. Where are the stressed words in the Epilogue? Why do you think Shakespeare placed them there?

- c. Why is Shakespeare using only seven or eight syllables in a line in Prospero's Epilogue?
- d. Could a shorter rhythm (in this case tetrameter, meaning four feet of 8 syllables) be used ? What do you think it might be?
- e. What does it tell us about Prospero's magical power or ability to be in control?
- f. What did you discover by doing these exercises?

Example 1c.

Ye

elves

of

hills,

brooks,

standing

lakes,

and

groves.

Example 5a.

Be

free,

and

fare

thou

well.

Please

you

draw

near.

Example 5b.

His

mother

was

a

witch,

and

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so

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Example 5c.

O

brave

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that

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people

in't!

Example 5d.

And

on

this

couple

drop

a

blessèd

crown.

Example 6a.

Now

my

charms

are

all

o'erthrown,

Example 6b.

And

what

strength



have's

mine

own

Example 6c.

Which

is

most

faint.

Now

'tis

true

Example 6d.



must

be

here

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by

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