

Lesson Plan
Nakeisha Daniel

What's in a Word? (An Introduction to Shakespearian Language through Sonnets)

Students will develop independent and critical thinking skills, imagination, aesthetic awareness, creativity, communication skills, knowledge of self, and the ability to work with others. Students will build a working knowledge of the vocabulary and terminology associated with theatre and acting through games, brainstorming together, straightforward instruction and rehearsal practices. Students will foster respect for language, the art of theatre, their fellow students, and teachers.

Scheduling Requirements:

Flexible

Materials/Resources/Space Requirements for Schools:

A library or classroom where desks can be pushed to the side.

Project Length:

The project will take approximately 5 class sessions and can be tailored to the teacher's needs.

Anticipated Student Outcomes/Products:

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Daily Activities: 5 days, 50 minutes each session

Day 1:

- Artist introduces self and gives a brief introduction on William Shakespeare, the history of his sonnets.
- Artist recites a sonnet and for the class. Students discuss the differences between the language and rhythm of sonnets vs other forms of poetry, iambic pentameter, and rhyming couplets.
- Students learn warm-up and ensemble building exercises focused around the Three Actor Tools: voice, body, and imagination, learn acting vocabulary.
- Students divided into groups, given an example of a sonnet translated into modern day language and asked to act out the sonnet using the Three Actor Tools for the class.

Day 2:

- Student's warm-up the Three Actor Tools. Students review acting vocabulary.
- Students choose from a selection of sonnets a piece to work on or base their self-written work on for the remainder of the workshop.
- Students are introduced to the use of tableau as a form of non-verbal storytelling. Building on word creation from Day 1, artist guides students in creating tableaus based on Shakespearean words. Students are encouraged to make specific choices, think on their feet, and trust their instincts.
- Artist divides students into small groups and they collaborate on tableaus with (beginning/middle/end) to create stories out of the sonnets.
- Students share sonnets stories and the class practices giving constructive observational feedback.

Day 3:

- Student's warm-up the Three Actor Tools. Students review acting vocabulary.
- Artist introduces words created by Shakespeare and students are encouraged to create their own descriptive words.
- Artist gives examples of using language and key words within a sonnet to develop a character.
 - Students improvise character traits through emotional vocabulary.
 - Students learn the importance of word choice in character development with Who/What/Where/Why.
- Artist divides students into small groups to improvise characters with their chosen sonnets.
- Students recite sonnets using their created characters for the class and artist gives feedback.

Day 4:

- Student's warm-up the Three Actor Tools. Students review acting vocabulary.
- Students work in small groups to complete character/tableau work on sonnets and show their work to the artist for feedback.

Day 5:

- Student's warm-up the Three Actor Tools. Students review acting vocabulary.
- Students rehearse sonnets in small groups.
- Students perform sonnets for classmates and give constructive observational feedback.

Additional Activities

Warm-Ups: A series of exercises designed to strengthen the Voice, Body, Imagination.

Pop Writing: A timed writing exercise where you write stream of consciousness without stopping.

Machine: Ensemble and imagination building.

Stop, Go: Improves physicality, listening for cues, and enhances focus

All Hands on Deck: Teaches theater terms and stage directions

Oops Wrong Door: Imagination and improv exercise

Hitchhiker: Improv game that encourages working off the other person, critical thinking, and imagination

Tableau: Storytelling through frozen pictures using body language and facial expressions

What are you Doing?: Critical thinking and imagination building improv games