



Bite Size Bard – Workshop Detail

Exercise 1 – Warm Up – 5-10 Minutes

We will begin with a drama game or two that are designed to get the students focused and involved in the workshop. Our standard game is as follows:

- Students walk around the space they are asked to stop when the workshop leader says stop. They are asked to go when the workshop leader says go.
- After a few 'stops' and 'go' the leader adds in 'jump' and 'crouch'
- Once the students are used to the 'stop', 'go', 'jump' and 'crouch' the leader reverses the action that corresponds with the words. Students should walk on the word 'stop', stop on the word 'go', crouch on the word 'jump' and jump on the word 'crouch'.

Exercise 2 – Text & Rhythm – 10-15 Minutes

To get the students used to Shakespearean language we will take a short speech, usually Puck's closing monologue from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and portion the speech out to either pairs or individuals one line at a time. The aim is for the students to become confident with saying Shakespearean dialogue. To do this we get the students to speak out the dialogue lines in order. Once the individual students or groups have got to grips with the line or lines that they have been asked to say, we get them to pick the pace up and say the lines faster. When they are ready we ask them to move and say the lines. This will hopefully not only increase the focus of the group, but also allow the group to become confident with the language and be working as a team. Moreover this exercise will also get the students used to rhythm and rhyme within Shakespeare. There is a beat and tempo to Shakespeare's writing that the students should perhaps look out for when they are looking at texts or plays in the future.

Exercise 3 – Themes & Motives– 15-20 Minutes

To get the students now thinking about themes we will ask for a couple of volunteers (or will read from the script if no volunteers come forward). We ask the two volunteers to read plainly from the script and stand still. We don't want them to add anything into the reading of the scene. Once the scene has been read through once we will move on and ask their peers what they think the text was about. Are these characters arguing? Are they in love? Using the suggestions from the group we'll ask the volunteers to try movements and expressions in their next reading. We'll work on the scene until either the suggestions run out, or the time runs out. If there is time we'll move onto a speech or scene and repeat the exercise with that. We want the group to be thinking not just about the

rhythms but the themes and motives within the text. We're trying to get the students to look and be able to think about these themes and motives next time they read or watch a piece of Shakespeare.

Exercise 4 – Characters – 20-25 Minutes

In the final exercise we are hoping to delve deeper into the motives within dialogue and we'll look at a speech or a particular character within a scene read/performed by either a volunteer or an actor. Before getting the volunteer/actor to read the piece we'll get the students thinking about character first. We'll run an exercise asking them to think about someone they know. What trait really makes that person? Do they shuffle their feet? Do they play with their hair? We'll get the students mimicking the person they know as they walk about the room. When ready we'll ask them to add in a voice, by saying hello to every person that they pass in the room.

When ready we'll wind that warm-up down and begin to get the speeches read. We'll mirror the previous exercise and ask the students what they think would make the character jump out. Should the character talk softly? Should they have a booming voice? Should they shuffle their feet? Should they be constantly moving from place to place? As we go along we'll get our actor/volunteer to take on board these things and add them into their performance.

Conclusion

Please attempt to wind up the workshop a few minutes before the end in order to be able to ask the students what they thought. Did they get anything out of it? Were they bored by the workshop? Did it help them understand rhythm? Character? How did the teacher feel about the workshop? Did they want to join in?

The workshop leader should gather this information in a feedback form and/or ask the teacher /tutor if they would be willing to have a brief feedback form e-mailed to them.

Please remember to encourage all participants and thank them for their hard work during the session. Please also apologise to those who did not have a chance to read individual scenes and speeches but remind them that everyone made a great contribution.

Finally, if you as an actor felt uncomfortable, ill-prepared or have any suggestions please feel free to share those problems and suggestions with the workshop leader. Nothing, no matter how hard we try is ever perfect so we can always be trying to do better.