



EDUCATION DEPARTMENT CURRICULUM GUIDE TO *THE COMEDY OF ERRORS*

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The mission of the Folger Library is to preserve and enhance its collections; to render the collections accessible to scholars for advanced research; and to advance understanding and appreciation of the Library and its collections through interpretive programs for the public.

About the Folger Shakespeare Library's Education Department

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As You Like It

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For a complete selection of curriculum plans from the Folger Shakespeare Library Education department, visit www.folger.com.

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For nearly 70 years, the Folger Shakespeare Library has been the most respected resource for the scholarship and teaching of William Shakespeare. Designed with everyone in mind—from students to general readers—these editions feature:

- Freshly edited text based on the best early printed version of the play
- Modern spelling and punctuation
- Detailed explanatory notes conveniently placed on pages facing the text of the play
- Scene-by-scene plot summaries
- A key to famous lines and phrases
- An introduction to reading Shakespeare's language
- An essay by an outstanding scholar providing a modern perspective on the play
- Illustrations from the Folger Shakespeare Library's vast holdings of rare books
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Make meaningful learning fun. Shakespeare Set Free workshops model a fresh approach for teaching Shakespeare in grades 3-12. Based on twenty years of best practices, the Folger method inspires teachers with proven activities that address national and local standards. Schedule a one-day workshop for 20-30 teachers at your school. If you teach in New Jersey, you may be eligible for funding from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation. Contact the Folger Shakespeare Library at 202-675-0380 or by e-mail at educate@folger.edu for more information.

Turn the page for sample curriculum plans that you can find at <http://www.folger.com>
Additional plans and tools are available on the website.

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THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Dear Colleagues,

Somewhere along the line, most of my students and probably most of yours have heard about William Shakespeare. Maybe they saw the film *Shakespeare in Love* or heard an answer on *Jeopardy*, but somehow, along with the ozone, they've breathed in that name: Shakespeare. In fact, to many kids Shakespeare is "sposed to be" a part of high-school education, and they expect to read one of his works. If we don't give them that exposure, they feel vaguely cheated or assume we think they're incompetent to meet the challenge of something important.

But when that anticipated moment comes and the teenage eye actually meets the Shakespearean page, then, unfortunately, that early interest too often is followed by . . . "Huh? What is this? Why are we reading this?"

The faces of the bored and defiant can make the best of us dread going into the classroom. It's happened to me, and maybe it's happened to you, but it doesn't have to be that way. Incredibly, teaching Shakespeare can actually invigorate both your class and you. . . . You have an intimate knowledge of your teaching style and of the workings of your class. Use that knowledge to select the exercises [from this packet] that you think will provoke excitement, enhance learning, and help ease your students past the language barrier and into the wonder of the play.

Here's to the magic in the play and to the magic in your classroom.

Judith Elstein

Adapted from *Shakespeare Set Free: Teaching Romeo and Juliet, Macbeth, and A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Each of the five lesson plans in this packet includes:

- Step-by-step instructions
- Materials needed
- Standards covered
- Questions students should be able to answer when the lesson is over
- Suggested related lesson plans with directions on how to find them on the Folger Web site.

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Curriculum Plan #1:

Cross That Line, Antipholus! (Either one of you)

(A Lesson in Theme)

Developed by Steven Christiansen

This introduction to *The Comedy of Errors* gets students thinking about the issues in the play in ways that relate to their own lives and values, accessing prior knowledge of the themes and issues they will read about. It asks students to voice opinions and move around the room to depict those opinions physically.

This activity takes roughly 30 minutes.

NCTE Standards Covered:

1. Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
2. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.
3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).

What To Do:

1. Unroll a big piece of tape (duct tape works well) across the floor, so you divide the room into two equal sides. Move all desks to the edges of the room.
2. Tell the class that today we're going to play a game called "Cross That Line." The teacher will read a statement and students need to choose to stand on one side of the line depending on whether they agree or disagree with the statement. After each statement, ask two or three students on each side why they have chosen to stand where they are. You may choose to let students stand on the line if they are undecided.
3. Use the following statements in the course of the game. Have students who agree with the statement stand on one side of the line, and those that disagree stand on the other.
 - Coincidences happen all the time.

- It's not okay to mistreat those who work for you.
- Promises and deals should always be kept.
- Honor and reputation are everything.
- Love and family heal all wounds.
- Without trust, relationships are doomed.
- Miracles do happen.

4. After sharing opinions on these statements, have students return to their desks. Tell students that all of these issues are in the play *The Comedy of Errors*. Tell students that you will play the game again once they've finished reading the play, to see if their opinions have changed.

What You Need:

- Thick tape
- Folger Shakespeare Library edition of *The Comedy of Errors* (ISBN 0-7434-8488-6, \$4.99)

How Did It Go?

Were students able to express opinions without attacking others' views? Did standing on the line allow the activity to stay safe for students who did not want to take a stand? Did the activity generate interesting discussion? Did it help introduce the issues in *The Comedy of Errors*?

Curriculum Plan #2:

Guess that Scene: A Review of *The Comedy of Errors* Through Performance **(A Lesson in the Main Idea)** **Developed by Rebecca Field**

As students develop their critical thinking skills, they often struggle with the concept of "the main idea." They can recite everything that has happened in a story, but they have trouble deciding which actions or events are the most important for the furthering of plot. This activity gives students the opportunity to develop this skill through informal classroom performance as they review the play.

This activity should take 1-2 class periods to complete.

NCTE Standards Covered:

2. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.
4. Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.
12. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

What To Do:

1. Write the act and scene number for nine different scenes in the play on note cards. (Use the scene summaries in the Folger Shakespeare Library edition of *The Comedy of Errors* to select appropriate scenes.)
2. Divide your class into nine groups.
3. Have each group draw a card. This card will tell them which scene to prepare. Remind your students not to share the information on the card with the other groups.
4. As a group, have the students create a list of the most important events and main ideas in their scene. They should find one or two quotes from their scene for each main idea. (Some scenes will generate longer lists than others.)

5. Once they have completed their list, have them show you so you can make sure that they have all of the most important elements in the scene. If you think they have all of the essential information, they can move onto the next step; if not, have them think about their scene more. They cannot move on to the next step until they have your approval.

6. Tell students that they will illustrate the main ideas in their scenes by creating a series of tableaux (silent, physical representations of the main events in the scene: living pictures). All students in the group must participate. Students should move into a series of poses that communicate the main ideas of their scenes. Give students about 15 minutes to prepare these. Remember to have them spread out so that their performances remain as secretive as possible.

7. Create a performance space in the classroom. Explain to students that each group will perform their tableaux, and it is the job of the other groups to determine the main ideas and act/scene number of the tableaux. The first group to identify the scene and main ideas receives a point. The group with the most points at the end of the class wins the review game.

8. Have the groups perform out of sequential order, pausing after each performance. Once one of the groups has identified the scene, the performers of the tableaux should read the lines from the scene they selected to illustrate the main ideas. Continue with this process until all of the groups have performed their tableaux.

9. Have students write about why the tableaux were chosen as representative of the main ideas in the scenes. Have them determine which scenes are the most important to the play and why.

What You Need:

- Nine note cards with act and scene numbers written on them (1.1, 1.2, etc.)
- Folger Shakespeare Library edition of *The Comedy of Errors* (ISBN 0-7434-8488-6, \$4.99)

How Did It Go?

Were students engaged in the activity? Did all of the students participate in the tableaux? Were the groups able to guess the scenes as they were performed? Were students able to select lines from the scenes that indicate understanding of the main ideas? Were students able to identify and express in writing the main ideas in the play? Did the students seem to have a good time?

Curriculum Plan #3:

Metaphors in *The Comedy of Errors* **(A Lesson in Metaphors)** **Developed by Paul Clark**

Although students have probably been taught metaphors since grade school, they often have a difficult time grasping non-literal language. This lesson will enable students to identify metaphors in Shakespeare's plays, understand the metaphorical relationships expressed, and place those metaphors in the context of the play as a whole.

The purpose of this lesson is to deepen students' understanding of what constitutes a metaphor and enhance their understanding of how metaphorical language gives a work of literature depth, unity and complexity. This lesson also provides students an opportunity to create their own metaphors and apply higher level thinking skills to language analysis.

This lesson should be done after the entire play has been read. The basic lesson can be completed in one class period.

NCTE Standards Covered:

1. Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
6. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts.

What To Do:

1. Briefly review what constitutes a metaphor. Provide the class with examples of non-literal and metaphorical language and facilitate a general class discussion on the definition of metaphor.
2. Divide students into small groups of two to four and give each student two 3 x 5 note cards.

3. Assign each group a scene, act or specific number of pages of the play, depending on the size of the class. Ask each group member to identify two metaphors and write them on the cards. They should note the speaker, the line numbers, the two things compared, the speaker's purpose in using this metaphor and the effectiveness of the metaphor on the reader (students should not focus only on familiar soliloquies or passages).

4. Students should share and discuss their metaphors within the group. Then, ask each student to choose one metaphor to share with the class.

5. In the class discussion, begin to focus the students' attention to the repeated use of metaphors throughout the play. Encourage the class to identify these patterns and discuss their purpose and effectiveness in the play.

What You Need:

- 3x5 note cards
- Folger Shakespeare Library edition of *The Comedy of Errors* (ISBN 0-7434-8488-6, \$4.99)

How Did It Go?

To evaluate students' comprehension of the use of metaphorical language, give students examples of metaphors from another Shakespeare play or other sources and ask students to analyze the examples.

To further check student understanding, ask students to create their own metaphors. Students may simply write out their own metaphorical constructs on paper.

You can extend the assignment by having each student bring an object to class that can be used to clarify or enhance any metaphor they created on their own or found in the play. Finding something concrete and physical may enhance their perceptions of the nature of abstract and concrete uses of language in a non-literal context.

When evaluating their responses consider the following:

Do the students have a basic grasp of the concept of a metaphor? Are the student's examples clear? Are the student analyses well-developed and inclusive? Are their analyses superficial, or are they insightful? Can the students differentiate between literal and non-literal language?

Curriculum Plan #4:

17th Century Pick-up Lines: "Your words like musick please me"

(A Lesson in Language)

Developed by Steve Williams

Even in the 17th century, people used lines to get dates and inspire love. Students will examine a chapter from a mid-17th century handbook, *The Mysteries of Love & Eloquence, Or the Arts of Wooing and Complementing*, which offers to "young practioners [sic] of Love and Courtship set forms of expressions for imitation." Reading 17th century pick-up lines will give students an opportunity to practice reading a 17th century text and perhaps inspire their own success in love. The handbook also provides an interesting glimpse at language as a tool of persuasion; students can easily see how this relates to the language of *The Comedy of Errors*.

NCTE Standards Covered:

- 9. Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.
- 11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.
- 12. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

What To Do:

- 1. Pair up the students and give them copies of the passages from *The Mysteries of Love and Eloquence*.
- 2. Have the students stand several feet away from their partners and speak the lines alternately to each other.
- 3. Discuss as a class what images, words, ideas, or figures of speech they heard. Were the lines more comic than persuasive? How have 350 years changed the language of love?
- 4. Assign parts and read aloud *The Comedy of Errors* 3.2.31-76.
- 5. Discuss the similarities and differences between *The Comedy of Errors* and the handbook. Which words and images appear in both?
- 6. Divide the students into groups of three or four and have them rewrite a few of the handbook's more persuasive passages into modern English, trying to retain the essence of the original. Would any of these lines work today?

What You Need:

- Copies of the handout from *The Mysteries of Love and Eloquence* (attached)
- Folger Shakespeare Library edition of *The Comedy of Errors* (ISBN 0-7434-8488-6, \$4.99)

How Did It Go?

Did the students participate fully? Did they observe differences and similarities between Shakespeare's love lines and those from the handbook? Which passages did the students find more persuasive? Were their translations into contemporary English appropriate? Did they have fun?

Curriculum Plan #5:

Lights, Camera, Action **(A Lesson in Performance)** **Developed by Leigh Lemons**

In this lesson students will interpret *The Comedy of Errors* by creating a silent movie, requiring them to think creatively and enhance their storytelling skills in verbal, nonverbal, and written form.

This lesson will take approximately three class periods.

NCTE Standards Covered:

4. Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
6. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts.
8. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

What To Do:

1. Divide the class into five groups and assign each group one act of the play.
2. Tell students it is their task to create a silent movie of different tableaux to represent the most important developments in their act of the play. The movie must have 5-10 "slides," frozen images that represent individual moments in the text. Each group member must participate.
3. Emphasize the importance of heightened nonverbal communication. Discuss facial expressions, gestures, stance, interaction, and pose.
4. Have students begin by brainstorming ideas for the most important moments in the text, then choose a selective group of those moments for their movie.
5. Next, students should explore ways to represent each moment. Encourage them to experiment with different ideas before settling on one.
6. Allow students time to rehearse their tableaux.

7. Showtime: if your school has a video camera, record the performances. If you have access to a scanner, you could photograph the slides and scan them as well.

8. Using PowerPoint or other presentation software, have students add narration to the slides they have created. Finally, have students complete their movies with slides that introduce their work and its cast.

9. Present the completed movie to the class and print a hard copy for public display. Conclude by discussing the differences in the choices made by the different groups, and the lessons students learned in the creative process.

What You Need:

- Video camera or still camera and scanner
- Computer lab access
- Technician or support teacher if necessary
- Folger Shakespeare Library edition of *The Comedy of Errors* (ISBN 0-7434-8488-6, \$4.99)

How Did It Go?

Did your students come to understand the most critical components of each act? Did they read the text closely and discuss it thoroughly did they learn any new technology? Did they learn kinesthetically? Did they work collaboratively? Did they respond positively?

Also Available from the Folger Shakespeare Library

Shakespeare wrote more than twenty plays*, and many are terrific for students. Whether tragedy or comedy, all will teach students about the age of Shakespeare, about the subtle manipulation of language and image, and about the dramatic construction of character in a new and exciting way. Additional titles include:

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*For a complete list of available titles, please e-mail your request to folger.marketing@simonandschuster.com

If you found this curriculum guide useful, there are many more lesson plans available on the Folger Shakespeare Library website, at: <http://www.folger.edu>.

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He pay the tribute of my love to you.
 Welcome, as light to day, as health to sick men.
 Let me share your thoughts.
 Let men that hope to be beloved be bold.
 You have a face where all good seems to dwell.
 My duty binds me to obey you ever.
 I sacrifice to you the incense of my thanks;
 You wear a snowie livery.
 I will repay your love with usury.
 Vertue go with you.
 You are the star I reach at.
 I am engaged to business craves some speed.
 You speak the courtiers dialect.
 Inherit your desires.
 Your are my counsels consistory.
 Your title far exceeds my worth.
 He bathe my lips in rosie dewes of kisses.
 I wear you in my heart.
 You are the miracle of friendship.
 You are the usurer of fame.
 My genius and yours are friends.
 I will unrip my very bosom to you.
 My tongue speaks the freedom of my heart.
 Give me leave to waken your memory.
 Of late you are turn'd a parasite.
 With your Ambrosiack kisses bathe my lips.
 Sure winter dwells upon your lip, the snow is not more cold.
 Mine eyes have feasted on your beauteous face.
 Your favors have faln like the dew upon me.
 Oh ! I shall rob you of too much sweetness.
 You have the power to sway me as you please.
 Your goodness wants a president.
 Your acceptance shall be my recompence.
 The Sun never met the Summer with more joy.
 You wrap me up in wonder.
 You temporize with sorrow, mine's sincere.
 You have made me sick with passion.
 Oh ! suit your pittie with your infinite beauty.
 There is no treasure on earth like her.
 Your breath casts sweeter perfumes.
 Goodness and vertue are your near acquaintance.

You

The Arts of Wooing and Complementing, &c. 186

You understand not the language of my intent.
 My entertainment hath confirmed my welcome.
 Your words have charmed my soul.
 Make me companion of your cares.
 I want no part of welcome but your wished presence.
 It is no pilgrimage to travel to your lips.
 I am proud to please you.
 By you, like your shade, He ever dwell.
 The unblown rose, the crystal, nor the diamond, are not more
 pure then she.
 He chronicle your vertues.
 As white as innocence it self.
 As constant as the needle to the adamant.
 You are the onely anchor of my hopes.
 I am as mute as night.
 Women are angels clad in flesh.
 My arms shall be your sanctuary.
 You, like a comet, do attract all eyes.
 As kinde as the Sun to the new born Spring.
 As glorious as the noon-tide Sun.
 Your eyes are orbs of stars.
 You make my faith to stagger.
 You are too much an adamant.
 As you have vertue speak it.
 You are a noble giver.
 Let me seal my vowed faith on your lips.
 It is a paradise enjoying you.
 You are a white enchantress, Lady, you can enchain me with
 a smile.
 I have no faculty which is not yours.
 You are full of fair desert.
 Your purse is my Exchequer.
 Your example steers me.
 Her name, like some celestial fire quickens my spirit.
 You cannot tempt me Syren.
 Let me perish in your presence.
 Your love out-strips my merit.
 Your complements call your faith in question,
 My wish requires you.
 Midnight would blush at this.
 There's musick in her smiles.

The

You guild my praises far above my acents.
 My boldness wants excuse.
 Reward stayes for you.

He

Handout for 17th Century Pick-Up Lines