About the Folger Shakespeare Library

The Folger Shakespeare Library houses one of the world’s largest and most significant collections of materials pertaining to Shakespeare and the English and Continental Renaissance. The Folger Shakespeare Library editions of Shakespeare’s plays are acclaimed throughout the world by educators, students, and general readers.

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

"There is much matter to be heard and learned."

As You Like It

Shakespeare's audience spoke of hearing a play, rather than of seeing one. The Folger Shakespeare Library's Education department believes in active learning, using a performance-based and language-centered approach to teaching Shakespeare. Drawing on the Folger's abundant resources and incorporating opportunities provided by the Web, their activities and workshops present innovative ways to engage children, students, and teachers in Shakespeare's work.

***For a complete selection of curriculum plans from the Folger Shakespeare Library Education department, visit www.folger.com.
About the Folger Shakespeare Library’s Publishing Program

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
- Biographical and historical essays

To receive a complete list of available titles, e-mail your request to folger.marketing@simonandschuster.com.

The Shakespeare Set Free Workshops

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.
HAMLET

Dear Colleagues,

In the text of the Folger Shakespeare Library edition of Hamlet you will find 421 questions marks. The play begins with Barnardo asking, “Who’s there?” and the word ‘question’ appears fifteen times in the script. Whenever a play asks as many questions as Hamlet does, we can be sure that audiences, readers, actors, directors, and scholars will expend considerable effort to find answers.

As teachers, we often have the tendency to answer these questions for our students by explaining and interpreting the text. We tell them what the play “is supposed to mean.” [But instead, why not] provide students with an opportunity to discover their own answers to the questions asked in Hamlet? By finding ways for students to make personal connections with Hamlet, we stop being translators, and students take over the role of teaching themselves.

Pat Thisted
Excerpted from Shakespeare Set Free: Teaching Hamlet and Henry IV Part 1

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.

Contributing Editors:
Jeremy Ehrlich    Janet Field-Pickering    Julie Kachniasz
Curriculum Plan #1:

**Cross That Line, Hamlet!**
*(A Lesson in Theme)*
**Developed by Steven Christiansen**

This introduction to *Hamlet* 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 you're going to play a "game" called "Cross That Line." You 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 to ask students in the course of the game. Have those who agree with the statement stand on one side of the line, and those that disagree on the other.
i. It is important to have a good relationship with your parents.
ii. Breaking up with a boyfriend or girlfriend is difficult.
iii. Adultery is always wrong.
iv. Ghosts are real.
v. Revenge is appropriate.
vi. Murder is always wrong.
vii. There is such a thing as a "perfect" family.
viii. There is no way to know if a person is truly "crazy."

4. After sharing opinions on these statements, have students return to their desks. Tell
students that all of these issues are in the play *Hamlet*. 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


**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
*Hamlet*?

**If You And Your Class Enjoyed This Curriculum Plan, You’ll Want To Try:**

“*Hamlet Hook*”: This lesson allows students to discuss their personal reactions to issues
of family relationships in light of the plot, characterization, and themes of the play.

**Where Can I Find This Lesson Plan?**

1. Go to the Web site address: www.folger.edu
2. Scroll down to “Teachers and Students”
3. In the menu that appears, choose “Resources for Teachers” and then “Teaching
   Shakespeare”
4. Click on “Archives”
5. Click on “Lesson Plan Archives”
6. Scroll down until you get to “Hamlet”
7. Choose the lesson plan listed above or browse the other titles for more classroom ideas
Curriculum Plan #2:

**Enter Ophelia: Stage Direction, Promptbooks, and Film**  
*(A Lesson in Performance and Performance History)*  
**Developed by Janet Field-Pickering**

This lesson incorporates activities and ideas explored with high school students with information acquired through research into primary sources at the Folger Library. It offers students and teachers a unique opportunity to use Internet technology to work with rare and very fragile materials from the Folger collection. It will be presented at the Shakespeare Association of America’s annual meeting in 1999 in a session led by Roslyn Knutson entitled “Theater History on the Web.”

The lesson offers students a chance to learn more about Ophelia’s mad scenes in Act Four of *Hamlet* by encouraging them to look at the scene as a script that has both fascinated and inspired actors and directors since the play was first written. The class will examine stage directions, text, pages from the Sothern/Marlowe promptbook (the circa 1911 record of a famous production of the play), and modern film versions of the scene, focusing throughout on the way actors and directors use space to create meaning. Through this multi-level examination, students will acquire a greater understanding of the scene in the text and in production.

This lesson has three distinct sections and will take up to three block periods to complete in its entirety. However, you should feel encouraged to adapt it to the time constraints of your schedule and the needs of your students.

**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).

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:**

**Part I: Stage Directions**

1. Photocopy Handout #1 (attached), “Stage Directions,” for each student. Have students look at Part A of the handout and discuss the stage directions for Ophelia’s entrance from the 1603, 1623, and 1996 texts of the play. Ask volunteers to act out Ophelia’s entrance in front of the class, using the stage directions as given.

2. Part B of Handout #1 is designed to give students some background in discussing blocking and the shorthand used for stage directions. If your students are new to this, discuss and complete the activities. If they are old hands at staging scenes, you can skip or curtail this part of the lesson. The aim is to get students comfortable with stage terms and directions.

**Part II: Promptbooks**

NOTE: The next part of the lesson involves looking at the images of Ophelia’s Act Four mad scene from a 1911 promptbook. The procedure to follow depends on the technological capabilities of your classroom. If you are lucky enough to teach in a networked computer lab, your students can view the images on screen. If not, you can access full-size images by clicking on the thumbnail images included in the “What You Need” section of this lesson plan on the Folger website (see “where can I find this lesson plan” below), printing the screen, and providing your students with photocopies. Either option will work with Handout #2 (attached), “Promptbooks,” which contains information about the promptbook and transcriptions of some of the more illegible passages.

1. Divide students into small groups of five and have the groups look at the Ophelia scene from the Sothern/Marlowe promptbook. Students should have in front of them the promptbook scene, a copy of Handout #2, and the New Folger edition of *Hamlet*. Each group should then compare the text of the promptbook with the modern version of *Hamlet* 4.5 to note where lines have been cut or transposed. Each group should also examine stage directions and speculate as to the interpretation of character that these directions imply. For example, what does it mean that Ophelia is dressed in white? How does having her stand center stage change the scene? When everyone has had sufficient time to complete these tasks, the groups should share their findings with the class.

2. Assign the groups to work on staging the scene. Each group needs to decide how to cut, cast, and block the scene in preparation for performing in front of the class. (You may ask one or two groups to stage the scene as written in Sothern/Marlowe promptbook.) Give the students sufficient time to work on this project in class; also allow them at least one night to find and bring in rudimentary props, costumes, and music from home.
3. Have a scene festival as each group performs its version in front of the class. After all the groups have performed, discuss. How was the staging similar or different? Which lines did the groups cut? Why? What was the effect? How did the students’ staging differ from the Sothern/Marlowe version of the scene? What was the effect of the spatial choices the groups made?

Part III: Film

1. Locate at least three different film versions of *Hamlet*. The Olivier 1948 black and white film, Zeffirelli’s 1990 film (with Mel Gibson), and Branagh’s 1996 version are excellent choices. Cue up the Ophelia mad scene in each film. Begin with the Olivier film and proceed to the most recent version, the Branagh.

2. As the students view each clip, they should take careful notes, paying particular attention to the staging elements that they focused on with the promptbook and their own performances. Ask the class to examine textual cuts and visual elements such as costumes, scenery, and lighting. In particular, students should be aware of how space is used. What blocking choices are made? What kind of physical movement do the actors have? How do the camera angles frame the actors in performance space? At the conclusion of each clip, discuss these findings as a class.

3. After viewing all the clips, discuss the impact of the films on the viewer’s understanding of the scene. Do the students have new ideas about Ophelia’s character? Also examine the historical perspectives of the film. What part does the period in which the film was made play in the interpretation of Ophelia’s character? How does it affect what the viewer sees? Are different versions of Ophelia dependent on different time periods' views of women and madness?

**What You Need:**

- handouts (attached)
- At least three different film versions of *Hamlet*, such as:

**How Did It Go?**

This lesson plan calls on many different skills—reading, performing, and analyzing film—and requires students to use those skills collaboratively. Were the students able to understand and use (both in their own performance and in their analysis of promptbook and film) the information they learned about stage directions? Did they make significant connections between stage movement and character interpretation? Were they able to critically assess what was happening in the film scenes and find important differences and similarities? And—most importantly—did their own performances display an understanding of text? If your students are making dynamic and bold choices in their
performances—and feeling confident when they talk about the choices others have made—you’re on the right track.

If You And Your Class Enjoyed This Curriculum Plan, You’ll Want To Try:

“Folger on the Ramparts”: Students will use the Web site “Hamlet on the Ramparts” to investigate different ways of producing the ghost scenes 1.4 and 1.5 of Hamlet. They will use this information to help them develop their own ideas on staging these important scenes.

Where Can I Find This Lesson Plan?

1. Go to the Web site address: www.folger.edu
2. Scroll down to “Teachers and Students”
3. In the menu that appears, choose “Resources for Teachers” and then “Teaching Shakespeare”
4. Click on “Archives”
5. Click on “Lesson Plan Archives”
6. Scroll down until you get to “Hamlet”
7. Choose the lesson plan listed above or browse the other titles for more classroom ideas
Curriculum Plan #3:

If I Want Your Advice, I’ll Ask For It
(A Lesson in Comparing Historical and Contemporary Culture)
Developed by Jane Purcell

Students will parody Polonius's speech to his son by writing a script of unsolicited advice that they then deliver to a fellow classmate. They learn that Polonius isn't necessarily original or profound simply because he speaks in iambic pentameter.

This lesson takes up to two class periods.

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).

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.

5. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of 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.

7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and nonprint texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.
11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

**What To Do:**

1. Divide students into pairs.

2. Have the students select a situation in which parents might give children advice: leaving home for school, camp, or marriage are good choices because they have parallels to Polonius's advice.

3. Give the students ten minutes to write down as much advice as possible for a student in that situation.

4. For each pair of students, select a student to be the recipient of the advice. Seat that student in front of the classroom and have the "parents" bombard the student with their prepared advice.

5. Solicit student reaction: what did it feel like to be the brunt of unsolicited advice? Did they find themselves talking like their parents?

6. Pass out a copy of the handout (attached), Polonius's advice to Laertes from 1.3. For homework, ask students to evaluate each individual piece of his advice as good or bad.

7. The following day, conduct a discussion in which you compare the advice the students developed with Polonius's speech. Which rankles more, Polonius's advice or modern parents’?

8. Direct students to Laertes's advice to Ophelia, 1.3.13-48, and to Polonius's advice to Ophelia, 1.3.98-144. Have students compare and contrast the different sets of advice, either in discussion or as a writing assignment.

9. Have students consider Polonius's advice in light of his actions in 2.1.1-83. How far does he follow his own advice? Again, have students analyze in discussion or in writing.

**What You Need:**

Copy of the attached handout of *Hamlet* 1.3.60-89.

**How Did It Go?**

Did students engage in the discussions? Did those discussions lead them back to the text? Did they come to understand Polonius better? Did they understand the analogous situations of Polonius's and Laertes's advice?
If You And Your Class Enjoyed This Curriculum Plan, You’ll Want To Try:

“Remains, Concerning Britaine”: This is a primary source from 1614 that provides a long list of maxims and advice popular during Shakespeare’s time. You can download and print pages of this text for your students. Helpful suggestions on using this material in the classroom are also provided.

Where Can I Find This Lesson Plan?

1. Go to the Web site address: www.folger.edu
2. Scroll down to “Teachers and Students”
3. In the menu that appears, choose “Resources for Teachers” and then “Primary Sources.”
4. Click on “Archives”
5. Click on “Primary Sources Archives”
6. Scroll down until you get to “Hamlet”
7. Choose the primary source listed above or browse the other titles for more classroom ideas
Curriculum Plan #4:

**Like, Wow**  
*(A Lesson in Language)*  
Developed by Mary Beth Libbey

The theme and motif of reality versus perception gallops—no, stampedes—through *Hamlet*. Nearly every character in the play has a problem figuring out what they know and how they know it. They cannot discern whether the things they see, hear, and touch are real. Students enjoy exploring the issue; this lesson gets them thinking about it from the very first moments of the play. The lesson focuses the students' exploration on one key word: "like."

This lesson should take three 45-minute periods to complete.

**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:**

**DAY ONE**

1. Ask students to read the scene out loud, with each student taking one line of text in a round robin. Follow the reading with a brief discussion of what is happening in the scene so that everyone knows the skeleton of the story thus far. You may wish to read the scene out loud a second time to clarify the discussion.

2. Then assign homework: ask the students to read the scene to themselves that night and go on a word hunt. Tell the class that there is a simple word that appears four times in this scene. It is a word we use today and its meaning (at least in this context) is exactly the same today as it was in Shakespeare's time. You may or may not want to tell the students
that it is a four-letter word. Ask the students to circle the word each time it appears; you will be checking their books the next day.

DAY TWO

1. Ask students to show you the circled words in their books. They may have identified many different words which fit the assignment. If so, positively reinforce the effort by creating a list of those words on one side of the blackboard. However, center stage—or at least the center of the board—should be reserved for the most important word: "like."

2. Hand out some modern dictionaries and a couple of copies of C. T. Onions' *A Shakespeare Glossary*, and have the students look up definitions of "like." Have two volunteers write these meanings on the board, and ask all students to record the definitions in their notebooks.

3. Ask five volunteers to act out the scene in front of the class; assign parts so that the observing students can focus on individual characters and their perceptions of reality in the scene.

4. Once the scene is over, have the class resume discussion. Here are some questions that might get comments rolling and keep them lively:

   - What is each speaker's point when they use "like"?
   - What do they mean when they say, "It was like the king"?
   - What do you do when someone tells you something you find beyond belief? Do you ask for more details?
   - When you hear a story from a person about something they've seen, how do you know what they're describing is real?
   - How do you know the story is true?

5. For homework, ask the students to search the scene for possible synonyms of "like": for example, "appear" or "seem." Also ask the class to underline any passages in which characters talk about their senses. Tell them to bring their passages in the next day to discuss.

DAY THREE

1. Ask two or three students to read the passages that they've identified.

2. Now ask all the students to close their eyes and imagine that they are directing this play for either stage or film. Go around the room and ask each student to name one thing they see in the opening scene—a prop, a character, a costume. Now ask the students to open their eyes and take a vote on the following issues, tracking the votes on the board:

   - Do you believe the ghost is there?
   - Is he the king?
   - Who believes that Horatio saw the ghost?
Who believes that Marcellus saw it?
Who believes that Barnardo saw it?

Ask students to write down the results of the vote in their notebooks for future reference. As the class reads the play and the issue of the "reality" of the ghost becomes murkier, ask them to refer to these notes.

**What You Need:**

- Dictionaries
- *A Shakespeare Glossary* by C. T. Onions

**How Did It Go?**

This exercise does not demand formal assessment; it's more of a discussion starter. What I look for is engagement and evidence that the students have started to think about this central idea in *Hamlet*: how do we know what we know? And how do we express uncertainty about what we know through our language?

**If You And Your Class Enjoyed This Curriculum Plan, You’ll Want To Try:**

- “‘Touching this Vision’: Imagery in *Hamlet’*: This lesson allows students to identify literary elements and techniques in the play and then to create original poetry based on the images and associations inspired by Shakespeare’s language.

**Where Can I Find This Lesson Plan?**

1. Go to the Web site address: [www.folger.edu](http://www.folger.edu)
2. Scroll down to “Teachers and Students”
3. In the menu that appears, choose “Resources for Teachers” and then “Teaching Shakespeare”
4. Click on “Archives”
5. Click on “Lesson Plan Archives”
6. Scroll down until you get to “Hamlet”
7. Choose the lesson plan listed above or browse the other titles for more classroom ideas
Curriculum Plan #5:

**Spirit Stalks Elsinore**  
*(A Lesson in Plot)*  
**Developed by Barbara Bennett**

Students will be introduced to essentials of *Hamlet* as they answer the main questions of newspaper writing: who, what, when, where, why, and how. When the lesson begins, students will know that the play's setting is Elsinore, castle of the king of Denmark. They will discover the rest of the facts: details of the appearance of the ghost and the attitudes of those who observe it. By the end of the lesson, students will understand the reason for battle preparations and, in so doing, will prepare themselves to understand the play's conclusion, in which Fortinbras claims the throne.

This lesson can be completed in two periods, although it may also be extended—with parts of the lesson given as homework—over several days.

**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).

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.

5. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of 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.

**What To Do:**

1. Students should have read *Hamlet* 1.1 before coming to class.
2. Divide the students into groups. Groups of four to six students work best.

3. Assign each group one of the selections:

   Group 1: 1.1.22-80
   Group 2: 1.1.91-124
   Group 3: 1.1.138-180

   If there are more students in the class, assign the same section to multiple groups. Each group will have a different approach.

4. Students should read their group's assigned text aloud.

5. Groups should then analyze the situation from a news reporter's point of view. They should identify those questions of who, what, when, where, why, and how; and they should find answers to those questions that are as clear as possible—and rooted in the text. Some of the answers—particularly to "why?"—may be ambiguous. Students must find their answers in Shakespeare's language, not in speculation.

6. Students should write up their findings as if they were composing a major article for the front page of a newspaper. They must include specific quotations from the play. For example, they may quote any of the characters as if they had actually interviewed them as witnesses.

7. Each group should give its article a title that will create interest and attract readers. Each group should also select an appropriate name for its newspaper; they may wish to create an editorial staff page that will identify the reporters. They may also choose to include graphics if those graphics will enhance the article.

8. Publish and display the papers.

9. Begin class the next day by having each group explain to the others how they chose their facts. They should guide classmates through the text that they chose for information and evidence in preparing their news articles. After each presentation, allow time for questions and discussion. The groups should discuss how their news articles fit together in the drama.

**What You Need:**


**How Did It Go?**

Were the students able to pick out the facts and answer all five questions? Did they find textual support for their answers? How did they fare when answers were ambiguous? Grading should be a group score. Base grades on accuracy of information and relevancy of direct quotes from the text, as well as on writing skills and creativity.
If You And Your Class Enjoyed This Curriculum Plan, You’ll Want To Try:

“Horatio’s Story”: After reading the book, the students will write a summative essay from Horatio’s point of view.

Where Can I Find This Lesson Plan?

1. Go to the Web site address: www.folger.edu
2. Scroll down to “Teachers and Students”
3. In the menu that appears, choose “Resources for Teachers” and then “Teaching Shakespeare”
4. Click on “Archives”
5. Click on “Lesson Plan Archives”
6. Scroll down until you get to “Hamlet”
7. Choose the lesson plan listed above or browse the other titles for more classroom ideas
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:

Macbeth (ISBN: 0-7432-7710-3)
Romeo and Juliet (ISBN: 0-671-72285-9 until 12/01/03; then ISBN: 0-7432-7711-1)
Julius Caesar (ISBN: 0-671-72271-9 until 12/01/03; then ISBN: 0-7432-8274-3)
The Taming of the Shrew (ISBN: 0-671-72289-1 until 12/01/03; then ISBN: 0-7432-7757-X)
The Merchant of Venice (ISBN: 0-671-72277-8 until 12/01/03; then ISBN: 0-7432-7756-1)
King Lear (ISBN: 0-671-72272-7 until 12/01/03; then ISBN: 0-7432-8276-X)

*For a complete list of available titles, please e-mail your request to folger.marketing@simonandschuster.com
Handout #1 for Enter Ophelia

Handout #1: Stage Directions

A. THREE DIRECTIONS FOR OPHELIA’S ENTRANCE, HAMLET 4.5

“Enter Ofelia playing on a Lute, and her haire downe singing.”
*Hamlet* Quarto 1, 1603

“Enter Ophelia, distracted.”
First Folio, 1623

“The lowered mirrored door to OPHELIA’S ‘cell’ is opened and she now lies on the floor. She pushes her squashed face along the floor, unable to get up, still in the straitjacket”
Screenplay—Kenneth Branagh *Hamlet*, 1996

B. STAGE DIRECTIONS

A stage is divided into two major playing areas or directions—upstage and downstage. Away from the audience is considered upstage (U); towards the audience is downstage (D).

The stage is further divided up into Left (L), Center (C), and Right (R), with the directions corresponding to the actor standing on stage’s point of view. The stage can therefore be divided up into fifteen playing areas:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Up Left (UL)</th>
<th>Up Left Center (ULC)</th>
<th>Up Center (UC)</th>
<th>Up Right Center (URC)</th>
<th>Up Right (UR)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Left (L)</td>
<td>Left Center (LC)</td>
<td>Center (C)</td>
<td>Right Center (RC)</td>
<td>Right (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Down Left (DL)</td>
<td>Down Left Center (DLC)</td>
<td>Down Center (DC)</td>
<td>Down Right Center (DRC)</td>
<td>Down Right (DR)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*****AUDIENCE*****

Directors use the shorthand listed on the chart to indicate where actors move on stage; deciding and recording where an actor moves on stage is called *blocking*. For example, if a director wanted an actor to *enter* up right and walk or *cross* down left center, the shorthand symbols for the stage directions would look like: *Enter UR X DL*.

Translate the following stage directions:

Enter L X URC X DL
X C X ULC X UR X DC
Enter DR X UL Exit L
Enter UL X DLC X UC X DR Exit

Get up and move around! Volunteer to move about in the playing area while other students call out these stage directions. Or make up your own!
The pages that appear in this lesson come from a special type of book. A *memorial promptbook* celebrates and records a production after it is over and includes blocking, detailed notes, drawings of costumes or scenery, and/or photographs of the production.

This memorial promptbook was made by the actor Lark Taylor, circa 1911, and records the Sothern/Marlowe production of *Hamlet* that was directed by Charles Frohman and toured the United States and England during 1901 to 1911. Taylor played Polonius, Guildenstern, and Claudius at different times during the ten years of the tour. The promptbook, stamped “King Claudius Prompt Book” on the spine, includes, in Taylor’s words, “Sevral [sic] amusing anecdotes of an intimate nature not possible to obtain from any other source.” The famous Shakespearean actor E. H. Sothern played Hamlet; another famous actor Julia Marlowe played Ophelia for much of the tour.

Ophelia’s mad scenes occur in the first scene of Act Four in E. H. Sothern’s acting edition, which was the text for the Sothern/Marlowe tour of *Hamlet*. Lark Taylor’s handwriting is often difficult to read, particularly when you try to read the image on a computer screen rather than in the original promptbook. Transcriptions of some of the longer notes and their location in the text are offered below. These notes are transcribed with the spelling and punctuation that appeared in the original. Question marks indicate an educated guess as to the word and spelling when the handwriting proves too difficult to decipher.

*Ophelia is dressed in long white robe—Marlowe wore a stone raw [?] crepe-de-chine.—which took off the glare of white. with some weeds—wild-flowers and leaves in her hair.—which hung in disarry [sic] about her shoulders.—*

(opposite page 97)

*Ophelia gives piercing scream off R.—Rushes on to Center. as tho [sic] terrified—stands looking at Laertes—vacantly—smiling.—she has her dress gathered up—and filled with flowers—and weeds—*

(opposite page 101)

*Oph. walks slowly down C. as she sings.—*

(top, page 102)

*She takes any flower from dress—and offers them to imaginary persons.—letting them fall to floor—*

(bottom, page 102)

*When she gets to C. arch—she looks wildly about.—gives wild shriek—which goes in to insane laughter—she rushes out L. upper. laughing wildly.—*

+(—King motions Queen to follow after Ophelia—Laertes has buried face in hands in grief.—King approaches him after Queen’s exit.*

(opposite page 103)
One final note—although this doesn’t indicate much about blocking in the scene, Lark Taylor includes an amusing anecdote about the scene in production:

*During this scene one night in Brooklyn—when playing King Claudius—I was taken violently ill with nausea—I had to leave the stage twice while the scene was in progress—and come back—I faked it—as tho [sic] I was going out to look for an expected attendant—and I am quite certain the audience never knew the difference.— E.H. was quite alarmed—and had me come into his room and dosed me with medicine. He has remedies for all ills.— Virginia Hammond [?] was playing Ophelia—and it happened that Julia Marlowe was in the audience at this performance—and she didn't notice anything wrong with me—or the scene—and said she thot [sic] I gave a very good performance of *Claudius*. (opposite page 99)*

Further activities:

1. Investigate the careers and influence of both E. H. Sothern (1859-1933) and Julia Marlowe (1866-1950).

2. Ask your school drama teacher, or local community or professional theater company if you can look at some of their promptbooks and note the difference between a working promptbook and a memorial one.

3. After you have spent some time with promptbooks, look at screenplays to discover how a whole different vocabulary of terms describing film production and actors’ movements needs to be recorded in a film script.

4. Direct a scene and create your own promptbook.

References:


The First Folio of Shakespeare, 1623.


Films:


HAMLET 1.3.60-89

POLONIUS
Yet here, Laertes? Aboard, aboard, for shame!
The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,
And you are stayed for. There, my blessing with thee.
And these few precepts in thy memory.
Look thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportioned thought his act.
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.
Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them unto thy soul with hoops of steel,
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new-hatched, unfledged courage. Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel, but, being in,
Bear 't that th' opposèd may beware of thee.
Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice.
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not expressed in fancy (rich, not gaudy),
For the apparel oft proclaims the man,
And they in France of the best rank and station
Are of a most select and generous chief in that.
Neither a borrower nor a lender be,
For loan oft loses both itself and friend,
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
This above all: to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.
Farewell. My blessing season this in thee.

LAERTES
Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

POLONIUS
The time invests you. Go, your servants tend.