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.

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.
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 The Merry Wives of Windsor, 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.

Contributing Editors:

Jeremy Ehrlich \ Janet Field-Pickering \ Julie Kachniasz
Curriculum Plan #1

Bill’s Allusive Nature
(An Introduction to Shakespeare)
Developed by Jim Curran

As teachers, we often begin a unit on Shakespeare by explaining why we put so much emphasis on a single author. I simply state that Shakespeare is everywhere. Many authors borrow Shakespeare’s plots (A Thousand Acres by Jane Smiley, Mama Day by Gloria Naylor); children’s television reworks his ideas (The Simpsons, Duck Tales); adult television alludes to his work (Star Trek, Frasier); cartoonists play with the Bard’s words ("Frank and Earnest," "Garfield"); he is referred to in films (Renaissance Man, Clueless); and advertisements borrow his snappier phrases for captions and voice-overs. Students miss out on a lot if they are not Shakespeare-literate.

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).

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.

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. Give students a working definition of allusion.

2. Cite examples of allusions to Shakespeare that you have gathered from newspapers, comic strips, magazine articles, books (including titles), songs, or films. *Star Trek IV: The Undiscovered Country* is a great example. Christopher Plummer's declaration that Shakespeare is best in "the original Klingon" and his wonderful use of *Julius Caesar* as he lets "slip the dogs of war" on the valiant crew of the *Enterprise* show how Shakespeare lives in popular culture.

3. After fielding questions from students, give them three weeks to bring in three allusions to Shakespeare to share with the class. Make a few minutes available each day for sharing examples as they come in. Students with CDs, tapes, DVDs, and videos need to notify you a day in advance so that you have the necessary equipment. Audio-visual examples must come cued-up.

4. Students must identify the source of the allusion by citing the play, the act and scene, and the speaker for each submission. (A brief lesson on the use of a concordance, a good dictionary, or on-line searching may help here.)

5. The only major rule: credit is given to the first student who brings in a particular example (in other words, the class will not have to watch the same clip from *Clueless* ten times, and only one student will receive credit for discovering it).

What You Need:

Several examples of allusions to Shakespeare

A good Shakespeare concordance. You may direct students to try searching *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare* at [http://the-tech.mit.edu/Shakespeare](http://the-tech.mit.edu/Shakespeare)

How Did It Go?

The evaluation for this activity is simple: students receive full credit for supplying three allusions to Shakespeare whether all of them are shared in class or not. Extra-credit may be given for one or two extra examples. It usually develops into quite a contest to see who can find the most allusions to Shakespeare by semester's end.

If You And Your Class Enjoyed This Curriculum Plan, You’ll Want To Take A Look At:

“A Choice of Emblemes”: In this 1586 book, students can find historical illustrations including many of the classical allusions found in Shakespeare. The emblems can be used to stir students' imaginations and as a prompt for animating works of literature.
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 “Performance”
7. Choose the primary source listed above or browse the other titles for more classroom ideas
Curriculum Plan #2

Performing Modernized Shakespeare
(A Lesson in Performance)
Developed by Jeremy Ehrlich

Students will use video clips to help them reflect on the issues surrounding updating and modernizing Shakespeare. Then they will prepare their own text for modernizing or updating. Their performances will spark a discussion on the various ways to present effective Shakespeare today.

This lesson will take two to three 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.

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.

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. Show a few short clips from different modern Shakespeare videos so all the students will be able to discuss modernization of the plays. See film recommendations below.

2. Discuss the ways the directors have updated the plays in these clips and in other films or stage plays the students have seen. Which choices did students think were appropriate and effective?

3. Discuss the process of adaptation. How do directors ensure that their updating concept works for their particular text? Which elements of the play need explanation in the updating? For instance, in the Luhrmann *Romeo + Juliet*, the director uses modern feuds and drug experiences to mimic and explain the feuds and dreams in the original play. He also needs to explain certain elements of the text (mentions of swords and daggers) by updating them (using "sword" and "dagger" as brand names for modern firearms).

4. Discuss which elements of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* might require explanation in an updated version. How might students begin to develop a concept for modernizing *The Merry Wives of Windsor*?

5. Divide students into small groups. Have each group pick a place and time in which to set a potential production of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Have them select sets, costumes, and props based on that setting and on the overall text. Be sure students' choices explain any elements of the play that might appear anachronistic (such as swords in a modern setting).

6. Have students select a piece of text from *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and prepare it for performance to the class based on their modern setting. While they may not be able to find the costumes, props and sets that would make their selections stage-worthy, they can still make acting choices that reflect the updated world they are creating.

7. After viewing the performances, follow up with a concluding discussion. Which choices worked well with the text, and why? Which choices were more of a stretch? How would students like to see this play performed or filmed?

What You Need:


TV/VCR

Clips from modernized or updated Shakespeare films. Some suggestions are:

Modern productions:
Modern adaptations:
10 Things I Hate About You (The Taming of the Shrew), Dir. Gil Junger, with Ledger/Stiles, 1999.

Updated productions:

Updated adaptations:
Throne of Blood (Macbeth), Dir. Akira Kurosawa, with Mifune/Yamada, 1957.
Ran (King Lear), Dir. Akira Kurosawa, with Nakadai, 1985.
A Thousand Acres (King Lear), Dir. Jocelyn Moorhouse, with Pfeiffer/Lange, 1997.

How Did It Go?

Were students able to come up with appropriate updating concepts to modernize The Merry Wives of Windsor? Did their performances reflect the new choices that they applied to the text? Were they able to evaluate the effectiveness of the choices they saw? Did they have fun?

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

“Speak What We Feel, Not What We Ought Say”: In this lesson, students will use imagination and performance to understand a particular character.

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 “General Lessons”
7. Choose the lesson plan listed above or browse the other titles for more classroom ideas
Curriculum Plan #3

Folded Paper Brainstorming
(A Lesson in Character Analysis)
Developed by Linda G. Wolford

Once you and your students have read and discussed *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, take the students back into the text to further analyze individual characters. This activity can be used to demonstrate knowledge of the characters or it can serve as preparation for a character analysis essay. This activity will take one to two class periods, depending on the ability level of the class.

**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. Give the students a piece of unlined paper and have them fold it into quarters to create four squares.

2. Ask students to choose their favorite or least favorite character and write that character's name in the center of the paper.

3. At the top of each of the four squares, have each student write a different personality trait for his or her chosen character. Encourage the students to be exact in their wording.

4. Under each trait listed, students should note three to five scenes in which the trait is demonstrated. Discourage the students from listing the same scene more than once.

5. Next, students must locate a quotation from the play to support each trait. A quotation may be something the chosen character says or something others say about him or her; it can be long or short. Explain how to cite a quotation: Act 1, Scene 1, Line 154 should be...
listed as 1.1.154. My students (with a little encouragement from me) often compete to see who can find the most appropriate citations. If students moan, "I can't find it," remind them to go back to the scenes they have already written down and look for quotations there.

6. Once these steps are completed, have the students flip their papers over to the back. Ask students to describe the appearance of their characters in the first square. Encourage them to cite quotations from the play that support their descriptions.

7. In the second square, have students write the name of the person closest to their characters, explaining the relationship and anything it indicates about the character's personality.

8. Have students fill the third square with any other facts about their character that the students can glean from the play.

9. Finally, in the last square, students should write one sentence to sum up what makes the character unique.

10. Hold small group or class discussions to reveal the students' findings. If you choose to hold small-group discussions, group the students by character. If you prefer a class discussion, write several characters' names on the board and have student volunteers toss out the traits they listed for those characters along with their best supporting quotations. Discuss the validity of choices in character traits and supporting quotations.

11. Assign a character analysis essay, requiring students to use the supporting materials they discovered through the brainstorming process in their essay.

What You Need:

Unlined paper

How Did It Go?

Were the students engaged in the brainstorming activity and in the discussion process? How full of information were their squares? For a more formal, graded evaluation, collect the brainstorming and check for cohesiveness between the quotes chosen and character traits. When you assess the essays, evaluate the entire process, assigning a grade for both the brainstorming and the final product.
If You And Your Class Enjoyed This Curriculum Plan, You’ll Want To Try:

“Mapping Shakespeare”: Each student will focus closely on one character in the play and create a visual representation of that character's language, personality, motivation, and relationships.

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 “General Lessons”
7. Choose the lesson plan listed above or browse the other titles for more classroom ideas
Metaphors in Shakespeare  
(A Lesson in Language)  
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.

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

**How Did It Go?**
To evaluate students' comprehension of the use of metaphorical language, give students examples of metaphors from a Shakespeare play other than *The Merry Wives of Windsor* 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:

Does the student have a basic grasp of the concept of a metaphor? Are the student's examples clear? Is the student analysis incomplete or well-developed and inclusive? Is the analysis superficial or insightful? Can the student differentiate between literal and non-literal language?

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

“Page to Stage”: This exercise will lead students through a series of steps to help them understand the way Shakespearean language works and prepare them to perform it.
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 “General Lessons”
7. Choose the lesson plan listed above or browse the other titles for more classroom ideas
Curriculum Plan #5

Shakespeare Wall
(A Lesson in Story Structure)
Developed by Charles West

This activity is designed to enable students to see *The Merry Wives of Windsor* both as a whole and as a series of scenes. It will get students who won't read or perform out of their seats, and it gets the play out of the "book."

This lesson will take one class period to introduce but will extend throughout the study of the play.

**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.

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.

**What To Do:**

The overall idea of the "Shakespeare Wall" is to make a bar graph out of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. This activity is a way for students to see all of the play at once in a form that reveals the scene structure and changing rhythms of the play.

1. Take a Folger edition of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (because the text is printed on one side of the page), rip the covers off, and tear out all the pages. Cut off the margins at the top and bottom of each page so that only the lines of the play will show when you tape the pages together. Tape the pages of the play together lengthwise so that each scene
is a separate vertical unit. When each scene is taped together, arrange the scene units (in sequence) on the wall so it looks like an upside-down bar graph.

2. Have students highlight various aspects of the play by using different color markers. Choose a word, theme or motif and highlight all instances where it appears in the play. Ask the students to mark various images or symbols, which recur frequently, or mark different characters' lines with different colors so that students can count the number of lines each character speaks. Rhetorical devices and rhyming words (both ending and internal) could be also be highlighted.

3. As the students continue to work on the wall over time, make a key to identify what each highlighted color means.

What You Need:

Scissors
Tape
Colored markers
A wall

How Did It Go?

The easiest way to determine how well the whole thing went is to look at the wall and see how marked up the play is when you are done.

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

“A Picture Is Worth A Thousand Words”: Students design and create photo albums that tell the story of the play.

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 “General Lessons”
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)
The Merry Wives of Windsor (ISBN: 0-7432-7711-1)
Othello (ISBN: 0-7432-7755-3)
Julius Caesar (ISBN: 0-7432-8274-3)
The Taming of the Shrew (ISBN: 0-7432-7757-X)
The Merchant of Venice (ISBN: 0-7432-7756-1)
King Lear (ISBN: 0-7432-8276-X)
The Tempest (ISBN: 0-7434-8283-2)
As You Like It (ISBN: 0-7434-8486-X)
Richard III (ISBN: 0-7434-8284-0)
Twelfth Night (ISBN: 0-7434-8277-8)
Shakespeare’s Sonnets (0-671-72287-5)

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