

Drama Scheme of Work

Romeo & Juliet

Lesson 1

Choral speaking in groups, showing the tension between the Capulets and the Montagues.

(If possible, write the following Shakespearean swear words on the board before the lesson begins, or ask a member of the group to do this while you take the register and discuss swearing.)

Shakespearean Swear Words

Taffeta punk	Scurvy lord	Threadbare juggler	Mad-headed ape
Scolding chuff	Red-tailed bumble bee	Bloodsucker of sleeping men	False caterpillar

1. Introduction

In a circle, discuss swearing, how the impact/acceptance of certain words has changed since you were at school. Look at the words on the board and say that these were used by Shakespeare before the existence of many of today's swear words.

- Do they look bad? offensive? (most of them don't)
- Choose an example (red tailed bumble bee) and say it in a nice way.
- How could this become an insult? (take direction from them – shout, point, facial expression etc.)

Tell them to choose one insult from the board and remember it but don't tell anyone.

2. Role plays (pairs)

Move into pairs and stand back to back.

- A invited B to their house but saw B kicking their little puppy when they thought A was out of the room.
- B leant A their homework and A was caught copying it but said that B copied them and B got a detention.

Consider these things then turn to face each other.

Say your swear word to your partner in different ways (stop after each to discuss the effect).

smiling speaking sneering whispering shouting

A and B move to opposite ends of the room. As are now Capulets and Bs Montagues.

3. Choral speaking

Explain a little about the concept of a 'chorus' instead of a narrator in Greek theatre (ten or so men who spoke together to narrate parts of the story, to explain setting and to give volume.)

In their new groups, they are to devise a piece of choral speaking where they move in a line towards the other family, shouting out things like "Down with the Capulets!", "The Montagues are bloodsuckers!"

They must decide how to say each insult and create a movement to go with each. They must move forward each time they speak.

The end result should be a choreographed piece where each group speaks in turn and where they end up facing each other in the centre of the room.

The next stage, to complete the piece is to silently walk forward from this point so that the two lines cross. As they cross, whisper your original swear word to the enemy then walk silently to the other side of the room and stand facing each other again.

Lesson 2/3

Feuding Families

Warm up – walk round and freeze, showing different emotions, ending in anger. Consider facial expression.

1. Modern feuding families

In groups of 5, show some members of modern day feuding families meeting in a supermarket. What happens? What is the outcome? End in a freeze.

Show some of these to the rest of the group.

2. The causes of the feud

Now in same groups, imagine two of the people involved in the supermarket incident have returned home. Show the reaction of other family members. This scene leads into an older family member narrating the cause of the feud, which began many years ago. As s/he narrates, other members of the group mime the story. This can be practised and performed to the rest of the group.

Lesson 4

Learning how to stage fight. This can be an effective lesson and as long as it is taken step by step, should be no more difficult to manage than a normal Drama lesson.

1. Introduction to stage fighting

To get the group into pairs, write out pairs from the play on pieces of paper and get them to find their partner. E.g. Romeo- find your true love (Juliet); Capulet – find your enemy (Montague); Mercutio – find the man who is your murderer (Tybalt)...

In pairs, (A&B), stand back to back. Think of things which can cause people to fall out (see lesson 1). Imagine your partner has done something to really annoy you. You are not normally a violent person but they have done something to make you really angry (teacher can give examples or leave it to the pupils to come up with their own).

The teacher should demonstrate the following activity before getting the pupils to do the same.

Stand 1 metre apart, facing each other. Use facial expression to show how you feel about the person standing opposite you.

The following actions should be really exaggerated.

- A throws a punch at B (it will not touch B if the couple are standing 1m apart).
- B counts to 5 in his/her head then reacts, according to where the punch would have landed.
- A counts to 5 then throws another punch, B reacts in the same way.
- A counts again and punches/kicks again, B reacts.
- Now swap. B is the fighter, A the reactor.

When this is done, formulate a slow motion, non-contact fight between A&B, perhaps a particular gesture starts the action...

Show some to the rest of the group.

2. The fight scene

Now move into groups of 4. Devise a sketch where two people are fighting at the opening of the scene and the other two, who are passing, join in. (This should be done using the fighting technique they have just learned, but reduce counting time to 2.)

With the group sitting on the floor, discuss the logistics of the fight scene in Act 1 Scene 1 of Romeo & Juliet:

- Two Capulet servants walking in a public place
- Two Montague servants come along
- One of the Capulets bites his thumb at the Montagues
- They start to fight
- Benvolio comes along and tries to keep the peace
- Tybalt arrives on the scene - declares that he hates peace and all Montagues and fights with Benvolio.
- Others get involved in the fighting
- Officers of the watch try unsuccessfully to stop the fighting
- The Prince arrives and eventually stops the fighting.

Split the group into two halves.

With some reference to the text, pupils should improvise this action and the fighting should continue, in mime until the teacher stops the fight.

Lesson 5

1. Warm up

In pairs, expressing body language A= parent, B= teenager

Pairs improvise conversation between the two in the following situations:

- teenager wants to go to an all night party
- teenager has to go to stay with an aunt for the Summer and doesn't want to
- teenager being told the family is moving home and they will be changing schools but doesn't want to.

Some of the emotions we should see are: anger, fear, hate, disgust, smugness, delight

Watch a selection of these.

2. Group discussion

- Why do parents try to control their children's lives? Think of situations where this might happen.
- When it comes to marriage, why might parents think that an arranged marriage is best? (family support, parents' wisdom, money, status, family friend, same culture / religion...)
- Why might the teenager think it is better to choose their own partner? (love, personal choice, physical attraction, parents may be wrong...)

3. Arranged marriage

Explain that in pairs (or in threes using a director or a third character, the wife), they are going to devise a scene in which a father is pleased with himself because he has arranged a marriage for his daughter. He assumes that she will be pleased as he sees her as being his property until she is passed over to her husband.

The daughter is dismayed at the news, but is also a little afraid of her father. Show this through body language.

Pupils will probably have realised that this is the scene between Capulet and Juliet and she cannot marry Paris because she is already married to Romeo.

Once these scenes are devised, add the 'time-out' / 'thought – tracking' technique to freeze the action and have the character speak their true thoughts to the audience. Each character must speak thoughts at least once.

4. Extension task: hot-seat characters to find out more about their true thoughts.

Lesson 6

1. Introduction

To end this scheme of work, use Friar Lawrence's speech from the end of the play, which recounts in brief the tragedy of Romeo & Juliet. (see page 6)

Sitting in a circle, read one line each, round the group, then teacher read whole thing. Explain the text to them so that they have a good idea of meaning. (Ensure they know about Paris' death as this is not in the film which they will have watched)

2. Narrate / mime the Friar' speech

In groups of 4/5, devise a narration of Friar Lawrence's speech where one person narrates and the others mime the action being described. The best way to do this is to have each person narrating a different section of the text and to have people directing to ensure that the action is clear to the audience.

Pupils will probably have to take on several roles and characters involved in the mime can become a narrator.

To end, show all performances to the rest of the group.

If there is not time for this, give each group a section to perform.

3. Extension / alternative task – devise 6 freeze frames which sum up the action of the play.

Drama Scheme of Work

Romeo & Juliet

Resource: The Friar's speech, Act 5 Scene 3

I will be brief, for my short date of breath
Is not so long as is a tedious tale.
Romeo, there dead, was husband to that Juliet;
And she, there dead, that Romeo's faithful wife:
I married them; and their stol'n marriage-day
Was Tybalt's dooms-day, whose untimely death
Banish'd the new-made bridegroom from the city,
For whom, and not for Tybalt, Juliet pined.
You, to remove that siege of grief from her,
Betroth'd and would have married her perforce
To County Paris: then comes she to me,
And, with wild looks, bid me devise some mean
To rid her from this second marriage,
Or in my cell there would she kill herself.
Then gave I her, so tutor'd by my art,
A sleeping potion; which so took effect
As I intended, for it wrought on her
The form of death: meantime I writ to Romeo,
That he should hither come as this dire night,
To help to take her from her borrow'd grave,
Being the time the potion's force should cease.
But he which bore my letter, Friar John,
Was stay'd by accident, and yesternight
Return'd my letter back. Then all alone
At the prefixed hour of her waking,
Came I to take her from her kindred's vault;
Meaning to keep her closely at my cell,
Till I conveniently could send to Romeo:
But when I came, some minute ere the time
Of her awaking, here untimely lay
The noble Paris and true Romeo dead.
She wakes; and I entreated her come forth,
And bear this work of heaven with patience:
But then a noise did scare me from the tomb;
And she, too desperate, would not go with me,
But, as it seems, did violence on herself.
All this I know; and to the marriage
Her nurse is privy: and, if aught in this
Miscarried by my fault, let my old life
Be sacrificed, some hour before his time,
Unto the rigour of severest law.