

SHAKESPEARE'S
GLOBE

STAGING IT

'if we should fail?...'

Macbeth, Act I, scene 7





Introductory note.

HOW STAGING IT WORKS:

Actors are filmed performing a duologue or monologue on the Globe stage or in Globe rehearsal spaces. Each section of their speech is shot numerous times, each time performed with a different emotional state e.g. happy, angry etc. The virtual 'director' then views each of the ways the actor has performed the line, choosing their favourite reading. They then add their choice to a dynamic storyboard, slowly building the scene with their personally selected clips.

At the end of directing a scene, the user is asked for their name which is seamlessly added to the end credits. Now the scene is complete, the virtual director can watch it back, or download it.

ABOUT STAGING IT:

Staging It is a digital platform that allows anyone to 'direct a scene' at Shakespeare's Globe. It combines specially created footage filmed on location at the world famous Globe stage, with groundbreaking custom-made software. It allows a user to compile a scene by choosing from a selection of clips provided.



Script.

CONTEXT:

King Duncan is about to retire to bed in Macbeth's castle. Meanwhile Macbeth is experiencing doubts about his plan to murder the King and Lady Macbeth urges him to act like a 'man'.

MACBETH

If we should fail?

LADY MACBETH

We fail?

But screw your courage to the sticking-place,
And we'll not fail. When Duncan is asleep
(Whereto the rather shall his day's hard journey
Soundly invite him), his two chamberlains
Will I with wine and wassail so convince,
That memory, the warder of the brain,
Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason
A limbeck only: when in swinish sleep
Their drenched natures lie, as in a death,
What cannot you and I perform upon
Th'unguarded Duncan?



Storyboard.

'We fail? But screw your courage...'



Style:

Comments

'When Duncan is asleep...'



Style:

Comments

'When in swinish sleep...'



Style:

Comments



Explanatory Rehearsals.

NOTES ON EXPLANATORY REHEARSALS:

It is often thought that a rehearsal is simply a chance to 'practise' a play or scene. The running of lines and movement over and over to make sure they go smoothly in the performance. However, there are four basic kinds of rehearsal; Blocking, Exploration, Movement and Performance. Staging It looks at the Exploratory stage of rehearsals; where the actors and director look at interpretation, motivation and emotion. In this stage actors and directors will try playing the characters in many ways to explore the relationships, dynamics and power play within the scene. This is a chance to try alternative approaches and see how that impacts or transforms the dynamic of the text.

GENERAL TASKS FOR EXPLANATORY REHEARSALS:

1. Before approaching the text, pupils can explore intonation, body language, facial expression, posture in a more general way, for example:
 - 'How do we show another person we're bored or interested in what they're saying?'
 - 'How does the face show fear, disgust or anger?'
 - 'What might make a person turn away or not meet another person's eyes?'
2. Pupils could look up the character or characters who speak in this extract and search the 'Adopt An Actor' archive to find insights in the form of blog posts and interviews from actors who have played these parts at the Globe.
3. Pupils could find out more about the other aspects of the rehearsal process and turn this into a flow chart. They should try to find out what they can about how long the entire rehearsal process takes.
4. Place the scene in context within the play as a whole. Use techniques such as tableaux to ensure pupils are clear about what happens before and after each Staging It extract. Discuss characters' emotions and motivations going into this particular scene and this particular extract.
5. Use any of a wide variety of rehearsal room techniques to get used to the lines and explore reading them in different ways, e.g.
 - read the lines in different voices, i.e. as different kinds of person / character types;
 - read the lines over and over again varying pace, volume, tone, etc.
 - experiment with body language
 - if the scene features more than one character, try some different techniques for reading your duologue, e.g. interrupting each other, leaving long pauses, pointing, repeating important words, etc.
6. Share books about actors' preparations for Shakespearean roles such as those by Antony Sher, Harriet Walter and Simon Callow.



Tasks: Key Stage 3.

TASK 1: CHANGING EMOTIONS

Ask pupils to select emotions from the options and add them to the dynamic storyboard at the bottom of the screen. Pupils should start with one emotion and develop the speeches in ways that feel as natural as possible, either adopting a similar tone throughout or with more variation and contrasts. This will depend on pupils' ideas about Lady Macbeth's motivation in speaking at this particular point in the play.

Pupils should reflect on how each thing Lady Macbeth says builds on the one before and about how much her tone should change to convey her meaning and affect Macbeth in the desired way. For example, for the first passage

('Was the hope drunk...?')

- Lady Macbeth might speak angrily throughout.
- She might be furious at first but more sympathetic at the end.
- She might sound patronising at first but excited at the end.

In each case, pupils could think about how the way that Lady Macbeth speaks will affect the way Macbeth replies to her when he says 'Pr'ythee, peace...'

For more tasks on Lady Macbeth, download the KS3 Character Lesson Plans on teach.shakespearesglobe.com/ks3-macbeth-characters.

TASK 2: THOUGHT-TRACKING

Support pupils as they make their film(s) for the two Act 1 Scene 7 extracts according to pupils' own interpretations and preferences as a director. Encourage them to keep reviewing their work until they are happy. Then, using the storyboard sheet, pupils should write down what Lady Macbeth – and also Macbeth – are thinking during this dialogue. This may be in tune with the emotion they chose or work against it. Working in this way will help to explore the subtext. For example, pupils could argue that Lady Macbeth tries to appear happy in order to mask her own fear, or that she is scared but trying to calm Macbeth's nerves by acting unafraid and 'bold'. Students could then explain more fully how the characters' motivations and behaviours are portrayed through actions and speech, commenting on the effects of language or performance on an audience. Pupils might benefit from a teacher-modelled example of this before attempting to write their own 'thought-track'. This exercise could be extended to be an examination of the entire scene with groups of pupils focusing on particular sections of the scene. The exercise could also be the basis of some creative writing in the first person, e.g. diary extracts.

For more tasks on character motivations, download the KS3 Character Lesson Plans on teach.shakespearesglobe.com/ks3-macbeth-characters.



TASK 3: THE MACBETHS' RELATIONSHIP

Pupils could make notes individually about how they would describe the Macbeths' relationship at the beginning of the play. They can refer to any part of Act 1 to assist them in this task. Pupils should then pool their ideas and work in pairs to construct a back story for Macbeth and Lady Macbeth: their ages, the length of their relationship, whether it is a loving relationship, their child(ren), etc. Finally, consider what the implications of this would be for directing the actors playing Macbeth and Lady Macbeth in these extracts, e.g.

- to what extent are they 'in this together'?
- is one half of the couple more dominant than the other?
- how devoted / loving are they?
- is one of them more ambitious than the other?
- has something happened in their past to make them want to grasp this opportunity / feel they deserve the crown?

For more tasks on the relationship between Lady Macbeth and Macbeth, download the KS3 Character Lesson Plans on teach.shakespearesglobe.com/ks3-macbeth-characters.

TASK 4: DIRECTOR'S CUT

Encourage pupils to read the two passages closely and to identify what the director has cut from the script. Ask pupils to discuss why they think these edits were made. Pupils could attempt the task of editing themselves, deciding on cuts for a different section of the play for performance. What are the factors that influenced their decisions? Pupils could compare their decisions with the decisions of other pupils who have looked at the same extract and also other parts.

For more information on director edits, download the KS3 Text in Performance Lesson Plans on teach.shakespearesglobe.com/ks3-macbeth-text-performance-0.

TASK 5: IAMBIC PENTAMETER

Ask pupils to compare the ways in which Macbeth and Lady Macbeth use iambic pentameter within these passages and across this scene as a whole. A good way to start is to count the number of syllables in each line and to keep track of this information in a table or – better still – a cardiogram-style graph.

- What kinds of effects are created by variable line lengths?
- Where do the stressed and unstressed syllables fall?
- What does Shakespeare's use of iambic pentameter suggest or reveal about the mental state (temper, mood, stress, etc.) of the two characters at this point in the play?

For more information on director edits, download the KS3 Language Lesson Plans on teach.shakespearesglobe.com/ks3-macbeth-language



Tasks: Key Stage 4/5.

TASK 1: PERSUASIVE LANGUAGE

What persuasive techniques does Lady Macbeth use in the 'Was the hope drunk...?' extract? Pupils could divide her words into sense units using asterisks. Annotate each sense unit to show both the technique(s) used (on the left hand side of the passage), and the desired effect of each sense unit on her listener Macbeth (on the right hand side of the passage).

Now practise performing her speech. At the end of each sense unit, the pupil playing Lady Macbeth should ask the pupil playing Macbeth to talk about what Lady Macbeth has made him think and feel. You may wish to use the following word bank to support pupils' reflections and discussions: *afraid, belittled, bullied, convinced, courageous, cowed, inspired, ready, spurned, tempted, unconvinced*. Can pupils add to this bank of adjectives?

Pupils could rehearse the scene a few more times. How might the actor playing Macbeth react non-verbally as Lady Macbeth speaks? Try performing Lady Macbeth's speech so that each sense unit is performed as a reaction to Macbeth's non-verbal feedback to her.

Pupils could also compare Lady Macbeth's language and rhetorical techniques with other examples of persuasion in Shakespeare plays, e.g. Iago in *Othello* and Antonio in *The Tempest*.

For more tasks on language in Macbeth, download the KS4/5 Language Lesson Plans on teach.shakespearesglobe.com/ks45-macbeth-language.

TASK 2: HOW MACBETH CHANGES

Jasper Britton played Macbeth at the Globe in 2001. Pupils could read this extract from one of his Adopt An Actor blog posts, making notes about how and why Macbeth changes in the course of the play.

'I think that Macbeth must start off as a charming character. Macbeth has to go on a long 'journey' in the play, in the way that his character changes and develops. If he starts off as an evil character, then his character has 'nowhere to go'; he has nothing to develop and change into.

The question that I have been concentrating on is why Macbeth takes such actions. I think it revolves around the idea of temptation. A director once told me that Macbeth and Lady Macbeth would do anything out of love (for each other). This idea also seemed to be emerging from our improvisations. Their relationship seemed to be very visceral, virile and powerful. They are very attached to each other. However, there is obviously something wrong in their relationship. Eve [Best] who is playing Lady Macbeth is very open; she does not make any judgements or limitations. It is great to be working with her.

The important themes in rehearsal at the moment are love and temptation. Macbeth has to decide whether he will surrender to temptation. What are the consequences of surrendering to temptation? There may be unforeseen consequences.'

Ask pupils to think about how these insights contribute to their understanding of Act 1 Scene 7 and to these two passages in particular.

To listen to interviews with actors from Globe productions, visit shakespearesglobe.com/discovery-space/adopt-an-actor.



TASK 3: BEING A MAN

Begin by asking pupils to look at Macbeth's words to Lady Macbeth: 'I dare do all that may become a man; / Who dares do more is none'. Ask pupils to explore what Macbeth seems to mean by the word 'man' here.

Now read Lady Macbeth's language in the two extracts and build a picture of what Lady Macbeth says about the qualities she wants Macbeth to show her. The following 'qualities' could be given to pupils as headings to focus their search: HOPE, COURAGE, AMBITION, CONFIDENCE, DARING.

Consider to what extent the two sets of ideas about 'being a man' contradict each other. Finally, pupils could expand this area of enquiry to look at the scene as a whole particularly the section that links the two extracts. Pupils could then prepare a rehearsed reading of the entire scene or the long passage from lines 35–73, which includes the two Staging It extracts.

For more tasks on characterisation in Macbeth, download the KS4/5 Character Lesson Plans on teach.shakespearesglobe.com/ks45-macbeth-characters.

TASK 4: INTERACTIONS AND REACTIONS

Before carrying out the Staging It activity, read the 'Was the hope drunk...?' speech in different ways as a warm up and to become more familiar with the extract. Pupils could try reading it in the following ways:

- together as a chorus from different places in the classroom
- one speaker at a time, taking one question each
- experimenting with different ways of posing the questions, e.g. as rhetorical questions, impatiently waiting for an answer, like an interview, in the style of an interrogation
- with someone pretending to be Macbeth unsuccessfully trying to interject during each question Lady Macbeth asks
- with someone pretending to be Macbeth reacting to what Lady Macbeth is saying through his body language, facial expressions and movements
- varying Lady Macbeth's intention, emotion and motivation each time

Now complete the Staging It activity focusing just as much on how Macbeth reacts as on what Lady Macbeth says and how she says it. In turn how does this impact / reaction affect how Lady Macbeth delivers her next line?

For more tasks on approaching the text, download the KS4/5 Language Lesson Plans on teach.shakespearesglobe.com/ks45-macbeth-language.



TASK 5: EXPLORING KEY IMAGES

Investigate the use of the following images in this extract. Ask pupils to consider the effects and whether the imagery recurs within the sections they are looking at:

- clothing and other adornments (N.B. look at the preceding lines 32–34 as well as the extracts themselves)
- drunkenness and sleep
- weapons and fighting

How does Shakespeare make use of these ideas both literally and figuratively in the play and what is the effect of this? For example:

- figuratively: Lady Macbeth uses personification, describing hope as being 'drunk' and therefore 'green and pale' and sleepy.
- literally: she says a little later that inducing drunkenness and therefore sleepiness is a key element of her plan for dealing with the 'chamberlains' who guard Duncan.

Ask to pupils to think about where else these images recur within the play as a whole.

For more tasks, download the KS4/5 Language Lesson Plans on teach.shakespearesglobe.com/ks45-macbeth-themes