**The Tempest: Setting the Scene**

1. Play students the video featuring Globe director Bill Buckhurst and have them make notes about the following:

https://player.vimeo.com/video/37597765?h=d2f2fdaece

* How does Bill Buckhurst describe the general atmosphere at the Globe?
* What is it about the theatre space that creates this atmosphere?

1. Display the following quotation to students:

*“In the original Globe theatre, there would have been little in terms of elaborate set design and props, although stage effects were often used. The back of the stage was painted, as were the heavens and the pillars, but there was no particular set that changed with each play.* ***Shakespeare uses language to set the scene for his audience and to ensure they have all the information they need about what is taking place on stage****.”[[1]](#footnote-1)*

Explain that the accompanying extract from Act 1 Scene 1 of *The Tempest* gives an example of this, where Shakespeare uses the language of the scene to give the audience information about the action that is taking place.

Have students read through this scene, and then make notes about the following points:

1. Where Shakespeare is setting the scene.
2. The information Shakespeare gives us about that location (encourage them to focus on details – you could also ask them to draw it)
3. The atmosphere of the location that Shakespeare is describing.

Take feedback, encouraging students to justify their responses with explicit reference to the text.

1. Finally, have students explore the Fact Sheet on special effects, and add further annotations explaining how they could supplement Shakespeare’s language with the special effects that were available in Shakespeare’s time.

***The Tempest*, Act 1 Scene 1 (edited by Shakespeare’s Globe)**

**Master**

Boatswain!

**Boatswain**

Here, master: what cheer?

**Master**

Good, speak to the mariners: fall to't, yarely,  
or we run ourselves aground: bestir, bestir.

*Exit*

*Enter Mariners*

**Boatswain**

Heigh, my hearts! cheerly, cheerly, my hearts!  
yare, yare! Take in the topsail. Tend to the  
master's whistle. Blow, till thou burst thy wind,  
if room enough!

*Enter ALONSO, SEBASTIAN, ANTONIO, FERDINAND, GONZALO, and others*

**ALONSO**

Good boatswain, have care. Where's the master?

**Boatswain**

I pray now, keep below. You mar our labour: keep your  
cabins: you do assist the storm.

**GONZALO**

Nay, good, be patient.

**Boatswain**

When the sea is. Hence! What cares these roarers  
for the name of king? To cabin: silence! trouble us not.

**GONZALO**

Good, yet remember whom thou hast aboard.

**Boatswain**

None that I more love than myself. You are a  
counsellor; if you can command these elements to  
silence, and work the peace of the present, we will  
not hand a rope more; use your authority: if you  
cannot, give thanks you have lived so long, and make  
yourself ready in your cabin for the mischance of  
the hour, if it so hap. Cheerly, good hearts! Out  
of our way, I say.

*Exeunt SEBASTIAN, ANTONIO, and GONZALO*

Down with the topmast! yare! lower, lower! Bring  
her to try with main-course.

*A cry within*

A plague upon this howling! they are louder than  
the weather or our office.

*Re-enter SEBASTIAN, ANTONIO, and GONZALO*

Yet again! what do you here? Shall we give o'er  
and drown? Have you a mind to sink?

**SEBASTIAN**

A pox o' your throat, you bawling, blasphemous,  
incharitable dog!

**Boatswain**

Work you then.

**ANTONIO**

Hang, cur! hang, you whoreson, insolent noisemaker!  
We are less afraid to be drowned than thou art.

**GONZALO**

I'll warrant him for drowning; though the ship were  
no stronger than a nutshell and as leaky as an  
unstanched wench.

**Boatswain**

Lay her a-hold, a-hold! set her two courses off to  
sea again; lay her off.

*Enter Mariners wet*

**Mariners**

All lost! to prayers, to prayers! all lost!

**GONZALO**

The king and prince at prayers! let's assist them,  
For our case is as theirs.

*A confused noise within: 'Mercy on us!'-- 'We split, we split!'--'Farewell, my wife and children!'-- 'Farewell, brother!'--'We split, we split, we split!'*

**ANTONIO**

Let's all sink with the king.

**SEBASTIAN**

Let's take leave of him.

*Exeunt ANTONIO and SEBASTIAN*

**GONZALO**

Now would I give a thousand furlongs of sea for an  
acre of barren ground, long heath, brown furze, any  
thing. The wills above be done! but I would fain  
die a dry death.

1. Creative Shakespeare: The Globe Education Guide to Practical Shakespeare, Fiona Banks [↑](#footnote-ref-1)