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Safe Spaces for Dangerous Minds
Peer-To-Peer Shakespeare

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Content Area: English, Theatre Arts

Grade Level: 4th Grade and up

TEKS: §110.31-34, 47, 51, 57. English Arts, Grade 9-12.

STAAR: Reading/Vocabulary Development, Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text, Drama, Poetry, Persuasive Text, and Sensory Language Grade 4-8

Objective: In keeping with the mission of Main Street Theater’s education department “where professionals serve as mentors”, Peer-To-Peer teaching artists work alongside students to awaken curiosity and stimulate creative and critical thought. Teaching artists work to demystify Shakespeare’s language, making it “user friendly”, and getting students familiar with Shakespeare’s plots and characters in a quick, fun and accessible way.

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Overview:

“Peer-To-Peer is a communications model in which each party has the same capabilities and either party can initiate a communication system.” - Techanswers.com

“No profit grows where is no pleasure ta’en - In brief sir, study what you most affect.”- Shakespeare

Peer-To-Peer Shakespeare is an educational initiative that uses Shakespeare’s plays and language as a conduit to help students develop a curiosity about words and stories. The program has two components. An hour-long, two-person tour performs in schools, introducing Shakespeare’s language, stories, and genres in an interactive way. Peer-To-Peer teaching artists also participate in residencies in the schools, which so far have ranged from two hour workshops to permanent residencies at Depelchin Children’s Center and the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative.

In literature, especially in Shakespeare, students often look for the “right answers” and wait for the teacher to tell them in a top-to-bottom model, or look at Sparknotes and memorize mechanically so they can score well on a test. The student often feels disconnected from the material without any personal investment. Peer-To-Peer Shakespeare is committed to working alongside students in a back and forth model, engaging in best practices that encourage critical thinking and discovery. Each person has a unique relationship with language and Shakespeare’s universality lends itself to a personal reading of the text. The goal is to foster a dialogue between teaching artist and student where both parties explore the “communications model” of Shakespeare’s writing.

Peer-To-Peer focuses on language, genre, and character. While the study of Shakespeare’s life and times (along with Elizabethan culture) can be fun and rewarding, the risk is that students think of Shakespeare as something remote and alien to them. By emphasizing the language, character, and stories, we seek to find the emotional, social, political, and cultural common ground between Shakespeare’s plots and ideas and today’s world. Shakespeare has lasted in popularity primarily due to his entertainment value-the humor, action, romance, and violence. This combined with the fact that Shakespeare also contains perhaps the most prolific and profound collection of words in the English language, make it a very useful “communication system” in the school.

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COMMON WORDS INVENTED BY SHAKESPEARE

- 1) AMAZEMENT (*noun: wonder or astonishment*)
- 2) ASSASSINATION - (*noun: the murder of a prominent person*)
- 3) BANDIT - (*noun: robber or outlaw*)
- 4) BET - (*verb: to wager*)
- 5) BIRTHPLACE – (*noun: place where someone is born*)
- 6) COLD - BLOODED - (*adjective: emotionless*)
- 7) DAWN - (*noun: sunrise*)
- 8) EXCITEMENT - (*NOUN: Stimulation, Enthusiasm*)
- 9) EYEBALL - (*noun: rounded capsule that forms the eye*)
- 10) FORTUNE-TELLER - (*noun: one who professes to see the future*)
- 11) GOSSIP - (*verb: to talk idly, usually about others*)
- 12) HINT- (*noun: suggestion or clue*)
- 13) KISSING - (*participial adjective: touching with the lips, exchanging kisses*)
- 14) LABEL - (*verb: to affix a name or description to*)
- 15) LONELY - (*verb: having no companionship, desolate*)
- 16) LOVE LETTER - (*noun: written message to the beloved*)
- 17) NUMB - (*verb: to deaden or make insensible*)
- 18) NEGOTIATE - (*verb: to confer for the purpose of a settlement*)
- 19) OUTBREAK - (*noun: sudden occurrence; eruption of violence, or illness*)
- 20) PUKE - (*verb: to vomit*)
- 21) PUPPY-DOG - (*noun: a young domestic canine; a lovable dog*)
- 22) RADIANCE - (*noun: brilliant light: splendor*)
- 23) REINFORCEMENT - (*noun: the act of strengthening with added force*)
- 24) RIVAL - (*adjective: competing*)
- 25) TARDINESS - (*noun: slowness of movement, lateness*)
- 26) TORTURE - (*verb: to inflict deliberate pain or suffering*)
- 27) UNREAL - (*adjective: an illusion lacking substance or genuineness*)

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Main Street Theater

Shakespearean "Guesstures"

Odd Words - Pick a word and speak it out loud. Use your voice and body to convey the meaning without literal mime. Audience will guess what the word evokes.

a-birding - hunt small birds

abruption - interruption

a-ducking - swimming

ambuscado - ambush

backbitten - infested with lice

barber-monger - constant patron of
barber shop

bawcock - fine fellow

beslubber - to smear

bodkin - dagger

boiled-brains - hotheaded youths

brabber - quarreler

bugbear - goblin

canker-blossom - worm in the bud

chop-fallen - dejected

chuff - boorish fellow

clapper-claw - to thrash or maul

clodpole - dunce

copulative - persons about to be
married

corky - withered with age

coxcomb - crested cap of a
professional fool

cubiculo - bedroom

dewlap - loose skin at the throat

englut - to gulp down

exceptless - making no exceptions

fadge - work out

fancy-monger - a lovesick man

fardel - burden

fettle - to prepare

flibbertigibbet - demon

foppery - foolishness

fusty - stale, trite

geck - fool

gibbet - gallows

hobby-horse - buffoon

honorificabilitudinitatibus - being
loaded with honors

hugger-mugger - secrecy

irregulous - lawless

jolthead - blockhead

kickshaw - side dish

kicky-wicky - term of endearment

kill-courtesy - rude person

ladder-tackle - rope ladder

legerity - quickness

lewdster - a lecher

logger-headed - stupid

lubberly - crude

malapert - rude

maltworm - heavy drinker

mickle - great

minikin - dainty

minx - saucy wench

mome - blockhead

noddle - slang term for head

noddy - simpleton

nuthook - sheriff's deputy

onion-eyed - tending to weep

oppugnancy - utter chaos

periwig-pated - bewigged

pestiferous - noxious

pickthank - an informer

pignut - peanut

pismire - ant

rampallion - ruffian

reechy - grimy

rudesby - rude fellow

sheep-biter - sneaky fellow

shog - to get going

skains-mate - criminal

skimble-skamble - nonsensical

slubber - to do hastily and carelessly

slug-a-bed - sleepyhead

smatch - taste

swoopstake - indiscriminately

thought-sick - distressed

thrasonical - boastful

tittle-tattle - gossip

unhaired - beardless

welkin - sky

whirligig - a top

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Shakespearean Conversations with Troublesome Words

Find a partner and create a four-line conversation with each line using one (or two) of the words. Audience will try to guess the word's meaning through context.

alarum - call to arms with trumpets

anatomize - to analyze in detail

anon - until later

arrant - absolute

assail - to make amorous siege to

attend - to await

aye - yes

baffle - to hang up (a person) by the heels as a mark of disgrace

baggage - strumpet, prostitute

belike - maybe

brake - bushes

brave - fine, handsome

bum - backside, buttocks

caitiff - a wretched humble person

catch - song

character - handwriting

chuck - term of endearment

cog - to deceive

coil - trouble

cousin - any close relative

dispatch - to hurry

e'en - evening

fare - thee-well-goodbye

fie - a curse

fustian - wretched

grammercy - thank you

halter - noose

heavy - sorrowful

honest - chaste, pure

impeach - dishonor

mayhap - maybe

mess - meal, food

mew - confine

moiety - portion

morrow - day

nay - no

ne'er - never

oft - often

passing - surprisingly, exceedingly

perchance - maybe

perforce - of necessity

politician - schemer

power - army

prithce - i pray thee (please)

recreant - coward

resolve - to answer; reply to

soundly - plainly

stale - harlot

tax - to criticize; to accuse

troth - belief

teem - to give birth

verily - truly

welkin - sky

well-a-day - alas

wherefore - why

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the devil hath power To assume a pleasing shape- **Evil**

I would with such perfection govern, sir, To excel the golden age- **Leadership**

And this our life, exempt from public haunt,
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything.- **Life Purpose**

Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought;
And enterprises of great pith and moment,
With this regard, their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action.- **Taking a stand in life**

Vain pomp and glory of this world, I hate ye!
I feel my heart new open'd. O, how wretched
Is that poor man that hangs on princes' favours!
There is, betwixt that smile we would aspire to,
That sweet aspect of princes, and their ruin,
More pangs and fears than wars or women have;
And when he falls, he falls like Lucifer,
Never to hope again.- **Society/Celebrity**

.Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow,
A poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage, and then is heard no
more:
it is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.-**Meaning of life**

Be not afraid of greatness: some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some
have greatness thrust upon 'em.-**Success**

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Poor naked wretches, whereso'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you
From seasons such as these? O, I have ta'en
Too little care of this! -**Homelessness**

Balk logic with acquaintance that you have,
And practice rhetoric in your common talk;
Music and poesy use to quicken you;
The mathematics and the metaphysics—
Fall to them as you find your stomach serves you.
No profit grows where is no pleasure ta'en.
In brief, sir, study what you most affect.-**Education**

Upon my tongue continual slanders ride,
The which in every language I pronounce,
Stuffing the ears of man with false reports- **Gossip**

My bounty is as boundless as the sea,
My love as deep; the more I give to thee,
The more I have, for both are infinite-**Love**

In the corrupted currents of this world
Offense's gilded hand may shove by justice,
And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself
Buys out the law. But 'tis not so above.
There is no shuffling. There the action lies
In his true nature, and we ourselves compelled,
Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,
To give in evidence-**Justice**

She is a woman, and therefore to be woo'd:

She is a woman, and therefore to be won-**Gender politics**

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About Main Street Theater

For 36 years, Main Street Theater has been a professional theater company and magnet for Houston's most creative theater artists. We have built a large and loyal audience of curious and intelligent people hungry for theater that takes them beyond the ordinary. In naming MST the recipient of its **Best of Houston - Best Theater Company Award in 2010**, the *Houston Press* said, "Throughout the season, Main Street has produced all its shows with a lustrous dexterity that belies its pint-size venue, keeping us close and thoroughly enthralled... Main Street's abiding professionalism — its ability to do so much within a space that's so little — is the essence of great theater. It creates worlds where none exist." While there are many outstanding theaters in the Houston area, we offer challenging, engaging programming for all Houstonians.

- Our Equity MainStage programs new works, rediscovered classics, thoughtful revivals, and neglected musicals in the intimate setting of our Rice Village location, reaching **nearly 20,000 people**.
- The professional Theater for Youth offers a similarly wide-ranging repertory for children 4 – 18 and served **nearly 140,000** children last season (2010-2011).
- MST's Education Department provides creative opportunities for **almost 3,000** children at our two locations and at area schools, community centers, and residential treatment facilities.

Main Street Theater has created a thriving organization by nurturing these three distinct programs whose individual successes combine to forge one healthy company through a thoughtful allocation of manpower and resources. The larger community may know us only through one program, but all three together are essential to the company's identity and fiscal well-being. The professional Equity MainStage primarily occupies the company's smaller stage but is the flagship program which gains local and national media attention for its provocative, passionate, thoughtful productions. The professional Theater for Youth performs in the larger theater space to accommodate the tens of thousands schoolchildren and family groups who fill the theater throughout the school year. The Education Department fills the unused hours of both theaters with classes for children ages 4 – high school and performing arts camps during longer holidays and also increasingly supplies arts education programs to area schools, community centers, and youth programs. Each arm of MST employs and provides a substantial source of income to hundreds of Houston-based theater artists, who in turn choose to live in Houston and contribute to the local economy in numerous other ways. A full-time staff of twelve carries out the day-to-day planning and operations needed to sustain this activity, and many staff members have responsibilities in all three programs.