

11 - WHEN OPHELIA BREAKS UP WITH HAMLET

What exercises do RSC actors do in rehearsal to explore a duologue?

WHAT YOU NEED

- Some pieces of paper, and something to write or draw with.
- A computer with internet connection, ready to visit [this page](#).
- A copy of Act 3 Scene 1 from Hamlet, to read either on the page or onscreen.

ACTIVITY

- Visit the language analysis page of the RSC Learning Zone [here](#) and click on 'Analysing Hamlet and Ophelia's relationship'.
- Read the instructions and watch the film 'exploring a duologue' from the beginning to 0.24 seconds in.
- Ophelia has been told to wait for Hamlet and pretends to read a book. He notices her as he is coming to the end of the 'To be or not to be' speech. Find that point in Act 3 Scene 1.
- Read the first few lines of the duologue between Ophelia and Hamlet which begins with 'Good my lord' until Ophelia says, 'There my lord'.
- Ask yourself the questions that all actors have to ask when tackling this scene: How long do you think Hamlet and Ophelia have known one another? Have they grown up together at Elsinore, or did they meet when they were teenagers? Hamlet has been away from Elsinore at University before the play starts. How long do you think has he been away? How might this have affected their relationship? Ophelia's father Polonius has asked her to break up with Hamlet. Why do you think that is? Hamlet is a prince, but Ophelia is not of royal blood. How might this fact affect their relationship?
- Imagine the 'remembrances' or love tokens that Hamlet might have given to Ophelia. Decide on one that you think he would consider the most special. Draw what you have imagined on a piece of paper.
- Imagine you are Ophelia. How would you give back that special remembrance? Imagine you are Hamlet. How would you react when Ophelia gives you that special remembrance?
- Continue watching the film 'exploring a duologue' from 0.24 to the end.
- Click on 'Questions to consider' and ask yourself the questions that are there.

EXTENSION

- On the same page ('Analysing Hamlet and Ophelia's relationship') on the RSC Learning Zone, use your answers to the 'Questions to consider' and continue to make your analysis of the duologue by filling in the grid. You can print out your analysis once you have completed the grid.