



THE WINTER'S TALE

WILLIAM
SHAKESPEARE

EDUCATION ACTIVITIES PACK

The activities in this pack are inspired by Lucy Bailey's 2013 production of *The Winter's Tale* which opened in the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon on 24 January and tours the UK until 20 April 2013. For details about the show and the tour: <http://www.rsc.org.uk/tale>

These activities can be used either as supporting activities for students seeing the production or as stand-alone practical approaches to the play. They have been designed with Key Stage 3, 4 and 5 students in mind, but can be adapted for younger students.

ABOUT OUR EDUCATION WORK

We want children and young people to enjoy the challenge of Shakespeare and achieve more as a result of connecting with his work. Central to our education work is our manifesto for Shakespeare in schools, [Stand up for Shakespeare](#). We know that children and young people can experience Shakespeare in ways that excite, engage and inspire them.

We believe that young people get the most out of Shakespeare when they:

- Do Shakespeare on their feet - exploring the plays actively as actors do
- See it live - participate as members of a live audience
- Start it earlier - work on the plays from a younger age

ABOUT ENSEMBLE

We also believe in the power of ensemble - a way of working together in both the rehearsal room and across the company enabling everyone's ideas and voices to be heard.

Director Lucy Bailey created a rehearsal space where all the actors were encouraged to contribute ideas, unlock the meaning of the text together, answer the unanswered questions in the play, improvise the 'back-story' and flesh out the relationships between the characters until the whole company were deeply immersed in the world of *The Winter's Tale*.

She also worked very closely with the whole creative team as they built the production layer by layer, with design, voice and text, dialect, movement, music and sound, lighting and projection all playing a role in creating a unique interpretation of this play.

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READ

Contextual notes from the 2012 production



ACTIVITY

A classroom or open space activity



LINKS

Useful web addresses

MORE RESOURCES



Visit www.rsc.org.uk/education/resources for more resources on Shakespeare's plays including more teachers' packs like this one.

Use the [Resource Bank](#) to search for images, videos and information about past productions.

More teaching activities to support your active approaches to Shakespeare can be found in our book, *RSC Shakespeare Toolkit for Teachers*, which is available to buy at the [RSC Shop](#).

We also run a range of courses for teachers and students - for more information:

www.rsc.org.uk/education

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BACKGROUND

SETTING THE PLAY



Director Lucy Bailey and designer William Dudley read the play and discussed how they might present the world of *The Winter's Tale* for us now in 2013. One of the challenges for contemporary theatre-makers in staging *The Winter's Tale* is that the action of the play shifts radically in time and space: the first three acts of the play largely happen in Sicilia, and then the action shifts to Bohemia. Sixteen years pass by between Act 3 and Act 4. In Act 5, the action shifts back to Sicilia. Modern audiences have found it hard to accept that shift in time and space, and are sometimes put off by it.

This production meets that challenge by setting the play in 1860s England, with the two worlds of Sicilia and Bohemia separated by class and geography but essentially two halves of the same world, occupying the same physical space. An animated projection of the sea dominates the background of the set, and remains there throughout the production. The sea shifts in mood, reflecting the action of the play, and acting as a barometer of the state of mind of Leontes, King of Sicilia, the central character.

INFLUENCES AND RESEARCH

The decision to set the production in 1860 came about by researching that time in our history, and drawing on parallels which help us to make sense of Shakespeare's play. The world of Leontes and his court in Sicilia has been influenced by researching the lives and philosophy of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, a group of Victorian artists who chose an alternative lifestyle in response to the challenges in the new industrial society in which they lived. Lucy Bailey, the director, explains:

'We realised we were looking for a Sicilia that was really about these people who had formed a community that was very inward looking, very privileged, very remote from their own people.'

The Brotherhood was interested in an idealised version of the past, and embodied a romanticised version of the mediaeval world. They dressed in ornate robes made of rich fabrics; the costumes in this production reflect that style.

As a group, the pre-Raphaelites were tight-knit and they expressed pioneering ideas about human experience. They valued beauty. Through their art, they created a world which was both historical and contemporary. In fact, their art often took moments from Shakespeare's plays as their subject, and focussed on intimate human experiences which are timeless. Lucy and William have used the same idea, drawing on our relatively recent Victorian history so that we can understand the relationships, themes and ideas in the play more easily, bringing the play closer to our own experience now. Lucy explains:

'We found the 1860s was a good equivalent because it offered us the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, which was really a movement of artists who were running away from recognised man, running away from the Industrial Revolution, sort of forming a brotherhood of love.'

Some of the pre-Raphaelites, among them Lord Byron and Shelley, used mind-altering drugs (such as laudanum), seeking ways of perceiving the world differently than the new industrial society around them. In the opening scene of this production, the members of Leontes' court are smoking ornate pipes and drinking absinthe, which was popular in Paris at the time of the Brotherhood.

FAIRYTALES

The creative team were also influenced by the iconic world of fairy-stories. In the production, the court of Sicilia exists at the top of an ivory tower, inward-looking, removed from the world that exists beneath them. The imagery deliberately provokes the audience's expectations of a fairytale world, with echoes of the stories of Sleeping Beauty, Blue Beard and Rapunzel. Lucy explains:

'In many ways *The Winter's Tale* is a fairytale. It's not a naturalistic play, it's not literal. It's a story that touches on many things: it's a thriller, a romance, an adventure story.'

Here are some of the pre-Raphaelite images of 'Sleeping Beauty' which Lucy and William put up on the wall of the rehearsal room to remind the company of the fairytale world which Shakespeare is exploring in the play:



The Council Chamber from The Briar Rose series (1870-90) Edward Burne-Jones



The Sleeping Beauty from The Briar Rose series (1870-90) by Edward Burne-Jones

CREATING BOHEMIA



When Leontes realises that his actions have destroyed his perfect alternative world, the marble dais transforms into a tall tower centre stage, with Leontes isolated on top. The courtly characters initially wear rich fabrics made in the pre-Raphaelite style, but when their world crashes, they strip off their finery to reveal simple functional 1860s clothing. The colourful world of Sicilia at the opening of the play becomes monochrome.

Sixteen years pass between the catastrophic events ensuing from Leontes' actions in Sicilia and the post-interval part of the play, which happens in Bohemia. During the interval, the animated projection of the sea washes high and low tides over the tower of Leontes' isolation, eroding it as time passes.

In contrast to Sicilia, Bohemia is set in working class Victorian England, 16 years later. Throughout the scenes in Bohemia, Leontes is present but removed. Lucy explains:

'In our production we'll see Leontes at the top of the tower during the Bohemia part of the play. It's like a Tower of Penance; he's like the hermit in the desert, crying out for salvation, for forgiveness. There's a sense that his punishment will go on forever and ever.'

The events in Bohemia happen on and around a beach inspired by images of the Wakes holidays for working people in Lancashire. Other productions have imagined Bohemia as a rural idyll, but this production challenges those expectations, seeking a much more believable, down-to-earth world.

Autolycus, the brilliant conman who preys on the holiday-makers of Bohemia, is loosely based on music hall performers of mid to late 1800s.



Again Lucy and William put up images on the walls of the rehearsal room walls to inspire the company – do a web images search for ['william heath robinson seaside'](#) to find similar images.

EXPLORING PLOT, CHARACTER & THEMES



During the first few days of rehearsals, director Lucy Bailey invited the cast to show her what they thought the play was about. Rather than sitting and reading the play, the actors were up on their feet, negotiating meaning together.

The company collaborated to understand the plot, character and themes inside out. They worked in groups to re-tell the story of the play as a series of still-images. Then they used this experience to stimulate discussion about the themes and ideas in the play.

They looked at the triangular relationships in the play by making still-images depicting the dynamics between the characters, and they improvised short scenes which explored the 'back-story' or history between the characters. In the following activity, your students will explore the play in a similar way.

ACTIVITY 1 – STILL-IMAGES OF RELATIONSHIPS



Divide your students into small groups of three and explain that they are going to make still-images ('tableaux') which map the relationships between three characters in the play.

Give each group one of the cue cards (on the next page). Give the students no more than five minutes to make their image, then share and discuss them.

Now ask each group to imagine something that might have happened between the three characters at some point in their history together. This event might have happened several years ago or recently. Ask the students to improvise a very short scene showing this event. Each character is only allowed to speak once, and their short scene must have a clear beginning, middle and end. Give them no more than ten minutes to prepare.

Ask each group to show and share the short scenes they have created, and use the sharing as an opportunity to discuss the quality of the relationships.

CUE CARDS

Make a **still-image** which shows the relationship between **Leontes, Hermione** and **Polixenes**. Use these facts to help you:

- Leontes is King of Sicilia and Polixenes is King of Bohemia.
- Leontes and Polixenes have trained and grown up together.
- Leontes and Polixenes are good friends.
- Hermione came to Sicilia from Russia, where she grew up. She is married to Leontes, and queen of Sicilia.
- Hermione is pregnant with her and Leontes' second child.
- Leontes calls Hermione 'my dearest' and 'my love'.

Make a **still-image** which shows the relationship between **Leontes, Polixenes** and **Camillo**. Use these facts to help you:

- Leontes is the King of Sicilia and Polixenes is the King of Bohemia.
- They 'trained together in their childhoods' and are good friends.
- Sicilia and Bohemia have enjoyed many years of peace because of the friendship between their kings.
- Camillo has been Leontes' faithful advisor for many years.

Make a **still-image** which shows the relationship between the **Old Shepherd, Perdita** and **Florizel**

Use these facts to help you:

- They live in Bohemia.
- The old shepherd has found Perdita when she was a baby, abandoned on the shore. He has raised her as his own daughter.
- With the baby, the old Shepherd found gold, so the family has become rich.
- Perdita does not know where she has come from and has grown up believing the Old Shepherd to be her father.
- Perdita has met Florizel whilst out in the fields and they have fallen in love.
- Florizel is the Prince of Bohemia, but he

Make a **still-image** which shows the relationship between **Antigonus, Paulina** and **Leontes**

Use these facts to help you

- Paulina and Antigonus both faithfully serve the royal family of Sicilia. Leontes is their king.
- Antigonus and Paulina are married, with three daughters.
- Antigonus is a close personal servant of Leontes, Paulina is a close personal servant of his queen, Hermione.

Make a **still-image** which shows the relationship between the **Young Shepherd, Mopsa** and **Dorcas**.

Use these facts to help you:

- They live in Bohemia
- The Young Shepherd is wealthy
- He has promised his heart to both Mopsa and Dorcas
- Mopsa and Dorcas fight for his attention

ACTIVITY 2 – STILL-IMAGES OF THE WHOLE PLAY



Now ask the students to join with another group to form small groups of six. Distribute the synopsis of the play (see next page).

Ask each group to read the synopsis and then make a series of five still-images which tell the whole story of the play. Give the students no more than 10 minutes to prepare.

Ask the students to give each of their still-images a title, which someone in each image will say out loud.

After time to prepare, ask each group to share their images, and use this sharing as an opportunity to discuss the reasons why your students highlighted particular aspects of the story, particular moments of particular relationships within the play.

Ask students why these things interested them.

ACTIVITY 3 – THE PLAY IN ONE WORD



Ask each group to think of six words: themes, ideas and feelings which describe what the play is fundamentally about, and to write these down. Then ask each group to choose just a single one of those words which seems to them to be the most important.

Ask the group to imagine that they are illustrators, but that they are only allowed to use one image to illustrate what *The Winter's Tale* is about. Ask the students to make a still-image of that illustration, in which someone will speak out loud the single word which they have chosen.

Throughout these three activities, as the students present their still-images, take a digital photograph. You could use these photographs for display purposes, or to establish a rehearsal diary for each student, in which they are encouraged to write down their findings, thoughts and feelings, and collect images from their work together.

ACTIVITY 4 - CREATE A WORD-CLOUD



You could also use this website which the company of *The Winter's Tale* used in rehearsal to make a word-cloud from your students' reflective discussions: www.wordle.net/create



Assistant Director Elle While noted the key points from the discussion between the director and actors while they did the activities outlined above, and simply typed those notes directly onto the page which this link takes you to. Then, with a click of the mouse, Wordle turned the notes into a 'cloud', with the most high frequency words highlighted in larger and bolder font.

The company used this in rehearsals as a visual reminder of the key themes and ideas they wanted to focus on. The word-cloud created from the *The Winter's Tale* company's discussions foregrounds these words as the key themes and ideas which interested them: *jealousy, forgiveness, class, love, loss, paranoia, tyranny* and *re-birth*. They referred to those themes throughout rehearsals.



You could do the same thing with your students.

SYNOPSIS



Leontes, King of Sicilia, accuses his pregnant queen, Hermione, of adultery with his life-long friend, Polixenes, King of Bohemia. He suspects that the baby his wife is carrying is Polixenes' child.

Leontes asks his faithful advisor Camillo to poison Polixenes. But Camillo is concerned about the mental health of his king, so instead he tells Polixenes what Leontes has asked him to do. Polixenes and Camillo flee together to Bohemia. Leontes then accuses them of plotting with Hermione against him, imprisons his wife and separates her from their first-born son, Mamillius.

Antigonus, a faithful Lord of Sicilia, pleads the queen's innocence, but Leontes will not listen. He sends messengers to the Oracle at Delphi to find out the truth.

While in prison, Hermione gives birth to a baby girl.

Paulina, Antigonus' wife and lady in waiting to Hermione, takes the baby to her father, but Leontes orders that Antigonus take the baby girl be abandoned.

Hermione is put on trial for treason and adultery. During the trial, the messengers from the Oracle return and proclaim that Hermione is chaste; Polixenes blameless; Camillo a true subject, and that Leontes will live without an heir if 'that which is lost is not found'.

Then comes the news that Mamillius, distressed by the events in his family, has died. Hermione collapses and Paulina announces that the queen has died. Leontes repents his jealousy and goes into mourning.

Meanwhile, Antigonus, sailing away to abandon the baby princess is visited by a vision of Hermione, who tells him to take her daughter to Bohemia and to call her Perdita, which means 'lost'. Antigonus abandons baby Perdita on the shores of Bohemia during a terrible storm, and is chased (and we assume eaten) by a bear.

An Old Shepherd and his son find the abandoned child, along with gold, a 'bearing-cloth' (shawl) and papers which prove her identity. They decide to adopt Perdita as their own and celebrate their new found wealth.

Sixteen years pass. Perdita has grown up and fallen in love with a young man, who turns out to be the heir of Bohemia, Florizel, King Polixenes' only son. They keep his identity secret, knowing that a prince cannot marry a shepherdess.

Camillo has served Polixenes for 16 years and has become the king's most trusted adviser. They are concerned about Florizel, so they disguise themselves, follow him and find him at a festival to celebrate the end of sheep-shearing. He is calling himself Doricles, and enjoying himself dancing and feasting with Perdita's family and friends.

The Old Shepherd's son, Perdita's adopted brother, has promised his affections to two local women, Dorcas and Mopsa, and they fight for his attention. A travelling entertainer called Autolycus provides songs and trinkets for the festival, but tricks the Bohemians out of their money and picks their pockets. They are all enjoying themselves so much, they don't notice his cheating ways.

At the height of the celebrations, Florizel declares his love for Perdita and his intention to marry her. Polixenes, outraged, throws off his disguise, threatens death for the Old Shepherd and Perdita and disowns his son. Camillo, watching all of this, sees an opportunity for reconciliation, so he sends Florizel and Perdita over the sea to Sicilia, to seek refuge with Leontes. Polixenes follows them.

The Old Shepherd, seeking to prove his innocence, remembers the papers and shawl that prove that Perdita is not a shepherd's daughter. So he follows, taking with him the proof of her birth.

Back in Sicilia, when everyone gets together, the true identity of Perdita is revealed. The heir of Sicilia, who was lost, is found and all are reconciled. Leontes, Polixenes and Camillo forgive each other and Florizel and Perdita can be married.

But Paulina has a surprise to celebrate Perdita's homecoming: she unveils a lifelike statue of Hermione. When Leontes touches it, the statue breathes and Hermione and Leontes are re-united.

ACTIVITY 5 – CREATING AN ACTION-MAP



The creative team went through the play and split it up into chunks or ‘units’ of action. Sometimes scenes were divided into several units. Then they named each unit by asking themselves: ‘What is the action? What happens in this unit?’

In rehearsal, this functions as a shorthand way of communicating with each other and organising rehearsals. Naming the action of the play in this way is the beginning of starting to own, understand and interpret it, and can be a useful activity to do with your students.



Explain to your students that their task is to split up the text of the play into units of action.

Share with them the example (below) which shows how *The Winter’s Tale* company split up Act 1 Scene 2 of the play, and what they called each unit.

Ask them to work in pairs. Assign each pair a scene from the play. (There are 15 scenes in the play. You can differentiate according to ability: some scenes in *The Winter’s Tale* are much longer and more complex than others!)

Ask your students to read through the scene together and then ask themselves: ‘What is the action? What happens in this scene?’ (They can jot notes.)

Ask them to split the scene into units of action, in whatever way makes sense to them. Then, ask each pair to name the units of action in their scene.

Finally, as a whole group, piece together an ‘action map’ of the whole play.

EXAMPLE: ACT 1 SCENE 2

Scene 2A: The Trio / Time to go
Scene 2B: First schism
Scene 2C: Leontes covers up
Scene 2D: Second schism
Scene 2E: Leontes orders Camillo to kill Polixenes
Scene 2F: Camillo tells Polixenes

EXPLORING THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY IN THE PLAY



Throughout rehearsals, Director Lucy Bailey encouraged the actors to explore what ‘family’ means. This is a very useful route into the play for our students. There are plenty of family dynamics to explore in the play, and many unanswered questions which can only be answered by exploring the action on our feet and making interpretive choices informed by the clues in the text. Act 4 Scene 4 is an opportunity to explore what family means to Florizel and Perdita.

ACTIVITY 6 – ANSWERING UNANSWERED QUESTIONS



Ask your students to work in pairs. Give them the lines below in which Florizel and Perdita describe how they first met and how they feel about that (from the opening of Act 4 Scene 4) and ask them to answer the questions below.

EXTRACT FROM ACT 4 SCENE 4

FLORIZEL I bless the time
When my good falcon made her flight across
Thy father’s ground.

PERDITA Even now I tremble
To think your father, by some accident,
Should pass this way as you did.

QUESTIONS

Who do Florizel and Perdita think is Perdita’s father?

Who is Florizel’s father?

Why does Perdita tremble at the thought of Florizel’s father passing their way?

Where exactly were Florizel and Perdita when they first met?

What was Florizel doing? What was Perdita doing?

Explain that in rehearsals, Director Lucy Bailey introduced some social and historical context for the actors to consider. Working-class country girls would have been suspicious of rich young men from town and their intentions, much more so than we might be today. It would have been unthinkable for a prince to marry a shepherdess.

Ask each pair to imagine the **first meeting** between Florizel and Perdita, and to improvise that meeting. They must decide whether Florizel reveals that he is a prince or not. The students are allowed to speak, but they must decide on the action of that moment.

Ask the students to **take out the words** from their meeting, but keep the action, so that someone watching from a distance could understand exactly what was going on between them.

To show and share these meetings, discuss with your students what sort of music would be appropriate as a **‘soundtrack’** to underscore the action. You could then find that music on the internet and play it while each pair of students shares their meeting.

After sharing the meetings, ask each student to write a **diary extract** as the character they have been representing, in which they describe the meeting and share their thoughts and feelings about it.

Ask the students to **read the edited extract** from Act 4 Scene 4 with their partner (page 13) and identify at least three things that we know about the relationship between the two of them from the clues in the text.

Ask each student to add another **diary entry**, this time describing the moment when Florizel and Perdita decided to get married. Ask them to decide:

Who asked who?

What were they worried about?

How do they feel about keeping their plans a secret from Florizel's father?

Now ask the students to change partners to form a new pair. Ask the students to **make a statue** which shows Prince Florizel and his father Polixenes when Florizel is at home. Ask them discuss: Does Polixenes worry about where his son keeps disappearing to? Why hasn't Florizel told his father about Perdita?

Show and share the statues. Use the sharing as an opportunity to discuss the exact nature of the relationship between father and son.

Explain that the statue they have just made is going to be the last in a **series of five**. The other four will show the story of Polixenes and Florizel's relationship, about which there will be questions which are not answered by the play. Ask the students to **consider these questions** while constructing their statues:

- What has happened to Florizel's mother, and how does this affect their relationship?
- We know that Polixenes spent at least nine months away from home in Sicilia with Leontes and Hermione when Florizel was a boy. How has this affected their relationship?
- How does the destruction of Leontes' family affect Polixenes?
- What sort of expectations will a king have for his only son?
- What sort of father is Polixenes?
- What sort of son is Florizel?

Ask the students to make a list of qualities for a **good father**. Are there any characters in the play who display these qualities?

Remind the students that in Lucy Bailey's production of the play, Polixenes finding Florizel with Perdita would be the equivalent of the king finding Prince Harry in a small Northern town promising to marry a girl he had met in the pub. What do the students think the king's response to that should be?

EDITED SCENE – ACT 4 SCENE 4

Enter Florizel [wearing shepherd's clothes] and Perdita

- PERDITA** Sir, my gracious lord,
I should blush
To see you so attired, swoon, I think,
To show myself a glass.
- FLORIZEL** I bless the time
When my good falcon made her flight across
Thy father's ground.
- PERDITA** Even now I tremble
To think your father, by some accident,
Should pass this way as you did. O, the Fates!
- FLORIZEL** Apprehend
Nothing but jollity. The gods themselves,
Humbling their deities to love, have taken
The shapes of beasts upon them:

Their transformations
Were never for a piece of beauty rarer,
Nor in a way so chaste, since my desires
Run not before mine honour, nor my lusts
Burn hotter than my faith.
- PERDITA** O, but, sir,
Your resolution cannot hold, when 'tis
Opposed, as it must be, by th'power of the king.
- FLORIZEL** Thou dearest Perdita,
I'll be thine, my fair,
Or not my father's. For I cannot be
Mine own, nor anything to any, if
I be not thine.

Lift up your countenance, as it were the day
Of celebration of that nuptial which
We two have sworn shall come.
- PERDITA** O lady Fortune,
Stand you auspicious!

EXPLORING A COMIC SCENE



The company spent a good deal of time in rehearsals for *The Winter's Tale* exploring the language. Director Lucy Bailey explains:

'I've never read any of Shakespeare's plays where every single character is defined so clearly by the way they use language. And the language is knockout.'

To fully understand the play and their characters, the actors first put the things that they say in the play into their own words. Emma Noakes who plays Perdita explains:

'Really and truly understanding what you are saying gives you all the details of every moment. For me, translating the text into my own words is the only way of understanding it.'

Then the company worked with Michael Corbidge from the RSC Voice and Text department. He advised the company during main rehearsals, and ran parallel rehearsals with the actors to explore the language. Michael explains:

'I ask the actors to imagine there are three people in the audience at the back of the circle: someone who doesn't speak or understand English, someone who is visually impaired and someone who is hearing impaired. All three of these people will be able to access the play if we remember to use every feature of the language that Shakespeare has offered.'

The words have to be aurally engaging, with texture and variety, the audience have to be able to hear the emotion and tone, the quality of the spoken word. But the language also has to be visually engaging, with a clear story, and the physical ideas expressed in the text made manifest.

If we pay attention to these things in rehearsal, we can reach every one of those audience members.'

Our students can engage with Shakespeare's language if they work in a similar way.

ACTIVITY 7 – DESCRIBING THE ACTION



Ask students to work in pairs. Ask them to **read through the edited scene**, Act 4 Scene 3, standing back to back. Explain that this is the first time that Autolycus and the Clown appear in the play.

(If you are working with younger or less able students, you might choose to split the scene up into shorter sections so that they have less text to read.)

When they have had chance to read it, ask: Can anyone work out where the Clown is going?
(Answer: He's going to buy spices for his sister to use in preparing a feast to celebrate the end of sheep-shearing.)

The Clown is the Old Shepherd's son, and Perdita is his adopted sister.

Ask the students: What does Autolycus do in the scene?

(Answer: He pretends he's been robbed and when the Clown goes to help him, Autolycus picks his pocket.)

Explain that one of the things that the actors did when rehearsing this scene was **focus on the action**. Talk through the scene, and write up a list of what your students understand to be the action of the scene. Ask them to describe the scene as a **series of events**, for example: 'Autolycus picks the clown's pocket', 'The clown offers Autolycus some money'.

When you have negotiated a complete list of the action of the scene, display the list of events so that the students can all see it.

Ask students in their pairs to create a **silent version** of the scene, showing all the details of what happens. Remind your students of silent films, where the actors exaggerate their gestures and facial expressions, making very deliberate step-by-step moves, so the audience know exactly what's going on. Encourage the students to make their scene as-over-the-top as they can.

Ask the students to **show and share** the silent versions of the scene that they have created. Ask students who are watching to identify the exact moment that the audience realises that Autolycus is a crook. Asking this question in rehearsal helped actors Pearce Quigley and Nick Holder to decide exactly what the action of the scene should be.

You could **play music** while the students show and share their work. Director Lucy Bailey often asked musical director Rob Harbron to play some music when she was trying out ideas in the rehearsal room, and this encouraged discussion about how the music affected the way in which the audience see the action.

ACTIVITY 8 – EVERY WORD COUNTS

Explain that action is only part of making the scene effective. Every word counts.

Ask every student to empty their bag or pencil-case, so that they can use the contents.

Ask the students to work in their pairs and decide who's A and who's B. A has to read aloud the Clown's first speech in the scene, but while reading, A must **use objects** from their bag or pencil-case to represent everything that the Clown is talking about, including the things on his list and the people he refers to. Ask B to listen and watch carefully to see what difference this makes to their partners reading of the speech. Now ask A and B to swap roles so that B becomes the speaker and A the listener.

Ask the students to discuss what difference using the objects made.

Did it help them make the speech more specific?

Did they have a clearer picture in their mind of what they were talking about?

Ask a volunteer to do the speech for the rest of the group, **placing objects** as they speak, sharing what they are saying with the other students. Ask: What difference does it make to the speech when it's shared with an audience?

Finally, ask the same volunteer to speak the speech, this time **without the objects**. Ask: Has this exercise helped them understand and communicate the speech?

USING A REGIONAL ACCENT



The actors playing working-class Bohemian characters in this production had an additional challenge in using Shakespeare's words, because their scenes were set in Lancashire. The actors worked with dialect coach Zabarajad Salem, who enabled them to speak Shakespeare's words using a Lancashire accent, known locally as the 'Lanky Twang'. Zabarajad explains:

'The key is not to have all the actors sounding the same. The shape of the accent is the same for everyone from Bohemia, but each actor uses different resonance, tone, pace, all depending on their character choices and what the text tells them.

When I was working with the company, the starting point for the accent was the man in the audio-clip 'Lancashire Accent Inspiration 1' [available: www.rsc.org.uk/education/resources] The man has a soft rhoticity* and ease of delivery.

The clip 'Lancashire Accent Inspiration 2' [available as before] provided us with an older generation sound and demonstrated to the actors that they don't have to downward inflect the text as they speak it, which is a common mistake when trying to put on a generic Northern accent. This woman uses lots of range and energy. In fact, this accent works very well with Shakespeare's words.'

[* For more about 'rhoticity': http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhotic_and_non-rhotic_accents]

Zabarajad has kindly provided a breakdown of the features of the accent (on page 18) and picked out some practice words and phrases from *The Winter's Tale* which cover the full range of sounds required to achieve the Lancashire accent. You can use these to challenge your students to try speaking Shakespeare in 'Lanky Twang'.

ACTIVITY 9 – 'LANKY TWANG'



Ask your students to **read** the breakdown of the Lancashire accent (page 18).

Listen to the **audio files**: Lancashire Accent Inspiration 1 and 2 at www.rsc.org.uk/education/resources

Ask students to work in pairs and read aloud to each other the **practice words and phrases** from the *The Winter's Tale* using the 'Lanky Twang'.

Now ask students to **apply the accent** that they have been practising to the edited version of Act 4 Scene 3 (page 17).

Ask volunteers to share their reading of the scene in a Lancashire accent.

Discuss: What difference does adopting the accent make to the scene?

What difference does it make to the reader?

What difference does it make to the listener?

Does speaking Shakespeare in an accent make it easier or harder to understand?



For further practical strategies for exploring Shakespeare's language: www.rsc.org.uk/education/resources/shakespeares-language.aspx

EDITED SCENE – ACT 4 SCENE 3

Enter Autolycus

AUTOLYCUS My father named me Autolycus, who being, as I am, littered under Mercury, was likewise a snapper-up of unconsidered trifles. My revenue is the silly cheat. A prize, a prize!

Enter Clown

CLOWN Let me see, what am I to buy for our feast? Three pound of sugar, five pound of currants, rice — what will this sister of mine do with rice? But my father hath made her mistress of the feast, and she lays it on. I must have saffron to colour the warden pies. Mace, dates? — none, that's out of my note. Nutmegs, seven; a race or two of ginger, but that I may beg. Four pound of prunes, and as many of raisins o'th' sun.

AUTOLYCUS O, that ever I was born! I am robbed, sir, and beaten. My money and apparel ta'en from me!

CLOWN Lend me thy hand, I'll help thee. Come, lend me thy hand.

AUTOLYCUS O, good sir, tenderly, O!

CLOWN Alas, poor soul!

AUTOLYCUS O, good sir, softly, good sir! I fear, sir, my shoulder-blade is out.

CLOWN How now? Canst stand?

AUTOLYCUS (*Picks his pocket*) Softly, dear sir. Good sir, softly. You ha' done me a charitable office.

CLOWN Dost lack any money? I have a little money for thee.

AUTOLYCUS No, good sweet sir. No, I beseech you, sir. Offer me no money, I pray you. That kills my heart.

CLOWN What manner of fellow was he that robbed you?

AUTOLYCUS I knew him once a servant of the prince. Some call him Autolycus.

CLOWN Out upon him! Thief, for my life, thief. He haunts wakes, fairs and bear-baitings.

AUTOLYCUS Very true, sir. He, sir, he. That's the rogue

CLOWN Not a more cowardly rogue in all Bohemia; if you had but looked big and spit at him, he'd have run.

AUTOLYCUS I must confess to you, sir, I am no fighter. I am false of heart that way, and that he knew, I warrant him.

CLOWN How do you now?

AUTOLYCUS Sweet sir, much better than I was. I can stand and walk. I will even take my leave of you, and pace softly towards my kinsman's.

CLOWN Shall I bring thee on the way?

AUTOLYCUS No, good-faced sir. No, sweet sir.

CLOWN Then fare thee well. I must go buy spices for our sheep-shearing. *Exit*

AUTOLYCUS Prosper you, sweet sir! Your purse is not hot enough to purchase your spice. *Exit*

INFO SHEET – THE LANCASTER ACCENT

Lancashire is a county on the North West coast of Britain. The region emerged during the Industrial Revolution as a major commercial area where the main industry was cotton.

The Lancashire accent is an active accent using the muscles of the lips and jaw. This muscularity developed as a way to communicate over the sound of the machines in the cotton mills. In the mills, cotton workers would communicate by 'mee-mawing', a cross between mime and lip reading, with exaggerated movements so that a mee-mawer would be able to communicate over distances of tens of yards. It was said that each mill had its own unique dialect.

The rhotic accent which developed as a consequence is found to the North and East of Manchester, extending towards the coast across Preston and over to Blackpool.

Physical setting

The jaw is very flexible and not held.

The lips work hard to shape the sounds and tend towards over articulation.

The tongue is high at the back to accommodate the dark /l/ sounds but also very active at the front.

The soft palate is low.

Resonance

The sound resonates at the back of the throat due to all the back of tongue activity and can also bounce off the hard palate. Can sound quite dark and far back but also can be bright and chattery depending on character and muscular use of the lips.

Intonation

This accent doesn't have a particular set rhythm, so you can move it wherever the text takes you.

Practice words and phrases

These are all taken from *The Winter's Tale*:

thy, undone, churl, thee, afeard, labour, sheep-shearing, remembrance, ancientry, sea-side, bodkin, firmament, flap-dragoned, squire, child, gold, findings, fairy, secrecy, changeling, faith, straining, plucking, following, fourscore, father, brother, gentleman, ay, preposterous, prating, homely, foolery, anon, wench, whither, oath, thither, goest, merrily, dibble, hot lavender, thou

'have I not told thee how I was cozened by the way and lost all my money'

'she shall bring him that which he not dreams of'

'we had the tune on't a month ago'

'bless from marrying a usurer'

Further listening



A female millworker from Waterfoot near Rawtenstall, born 1898:

<http://sounds.bl.uk/Accents-and-dialects/Millennium-memory-bank/021M-C0900X08003X-0500V1>

A male mill engineer describes the decline of the Lancashire textile industry:

<http://sounds.bl.uk/Accents-and-dialects/Millennium-memory-bank/021M-C0900X05544A-1100V1>

Actress Jane Horrocks (who plays 'Bubble' in the BBC TV series *Absolutely Fabulous* is from Rawtenstall in Lancashire.

Cricket commentator David 'Bumble' Lloyd is from Accrington in Lancashire.