



NAME: _____

Reading Performance as Text: *Romeo and Juliet*

Performing Mercutio

In this activity, you'll read, interpret, and make choices about Mercutio's character as you prepare a brief scene to perform for your classmates.

Step 1. In a small group, choose one of the following scenes that features Mercutio:

- *Act 1, scene 4.* Mercutio tries to convince Romeo to cheer up and go to the Capulet's party. Romeo mentions his foreboding dream, and Mercutio responds by describing Queen Mab.
- *Act 2, scene 1.* Romeo's friends can't find Romeo after the Capulet's party. Mercutio tries to "conjure" him.
- *Act 2, scene 4.* Mercutio describes Tybalt's swordsmanship skills and teases Juliet's nurse.
- *Act 3, scene 1.* Mercutio fights Tybalt and is killed.

Step 2. Cut your scene so that your performance lasts between 2:30 and 3:00 minutes (or whatever time limit your teacher suggests). Some tips when cutting...

- You won't be able to perform the entire scene that you've selected. Instead, look through the scene and choose an interesting, logical point at which to begin and end your scene, given your time constraints.
- Think about what words/lines you can omit and still have the action make sense.

Step 3. Cast your scene, deciding which students will play which characters. Some tips when casting...

- Be creative! You can split a character between multiple people (role-sharing) or have the same person play more than one character (double casting). For instance, if you're going to perform part of the Queen Mab speech, you might divide up parts of the speech between all the members of your group.



- Be open-minded. Remember that actors' identities don't need to match characters' identities. For instance, you might choose to have a female-identifying student play a male-identifying character.
- Be intentional. Think about why you're casting the scene the way you are.

Step 4. Make artistic choices that will impact the audience's understanding of Mercutio.

- Review the many ways that artists and directors help us get to know characters on stage, including blocking, gestures, and costumes. (For a list of common characterization tools, see Chicago Shakespeare's "Characterizing Mercutio" worksheet.)
- Make *at least 5* artistic choices that will inform your group's unique performance of Mercutio. For instance, you might decide how Mercutio is going to say a particular line, how he is going to walk on "stage," or how the other characters in your scene are going to interact with him.
- Use the back of this worksheet to record your group's choices. How do these choices help us understand Mercutio's character?

Step 5. Rehearse your scene. Then perform your scene for your classmates!



Plan Your Performance: Graphic Organizer

Name(s) _____

Which part of the play are you performing? _____

Act number _____ Scene number _____ Line numbers _____

Use the graphic organizer below to record how your artistic choices will help your audience understand Mercutio's character. We provided an example to get you thinking. (Note: This is just an example—your scene does *NOT* need to include this choice unless it makes sense with your artistic vision!)

<p>In this column, identify one of the characterization tools that you'll use in your scene. Then describe the specific artistic choice that you made.</p>	<p>In this column, explain how your artistic choice helps characterize Mercutio.</p>
<p><i>Example:</i> Characterization tool: MOVEMENT Description: In our scene, we're going to have Mercutio play fighting with the other characters on stage and running around while he's talking.</p>	<p><i>Example:</i> We want to give the idea that Mercutio is a very energetic person, whose energy sometimes seems kind of violent.</p>
<p>1. Characterization tool: Description:</p>	<p>1.</p>



<p>2. Characterization tool: Description:</p>	<p>2.</p>
<p>3. Characterization tool: Description:</p>	<p>3.</p>
<p>4. Characterization tool: Description:</p>	<p>4.</p>
<p>5. Characterization tool: Description:</p>	<p>5.</p>



Shakespeare and the art of theater open exciting, creative paths of learning. One of the largest arts-in-education programs in the country, Team Shakespeare brings Shakespeare's plays to life for middle and high school students. Team Shakespeare's expansive efforts to share Shakespeare with young people aims to empower them as interpreters, widen the scope of their imagination, and offer authentic opportunities to explore the complexities of human nature.



Chicago Shakespeare Theater
800 East Grand Avenue on Navy Pier
Chicago, Illinois 60611

LEAD TEAM SHAKESPEARE PARTNERS



The Jentes Family

MAJOR TEAM SHAKESPEARE SUPPORTERS



LLOYD A. FRY
FOUNDATION

The Hearst Foundation, Inc

Kimberlee Herold



Anna and Robert Livingston



POLK BROS
FOUNDATION
A FOUNDATION FOR CHICAGO THEATERS

Neal and Jennifer Reenan

The Harold and Mimi Steinberg
Charitable Trust

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT PROVIDED BY

Arts Midwest, BP, Helen Brach Foundation, Butler Family Foundation, Crown Family Philanthropies, Fifth Third Bank, First Midwest Bancorp, The Grover Hermann Foundation, James and Brenda Grusecki, The Malott Family Student Access Fund, Mazza Foundation, Pritzker Foundation Team Shakespeare Fund, and The Segal Family Foundation Student Matinee Fund