

CHICAGO 2026 SHAKESPEARE SLAM



TEAM RESOURCE GUIDE – ACT 2

CHICAGO
SHAKESPEARE
THEATER

Intro 2.0!

Welcome to the extended edition—Team Resource Guide: Act 2!

Team Resource Guide: Act 2 explores some of the many ways into SLAM. In these pages, you'll find suggestions for structuring your rehearsals, ways to think about your Scene and Dream Rounds, and juicy resources for *Hamlet* and more. Nothing here is meant to be “The “One-and-Only Way” into this program! Much like a script (though a tad less artful), what's here in print isn't anywhere near complete until each team makes it their own.

We want, as always, to create a SLAM environment in which students play with the endless possible interpretations that live inside Shakespeare's words and their own imaginations.

Here are some ideas—for your rehearsals, for approaching your scripts, and for performance—that we hope can make the road ahead a bit easier to navigate.

The ONE SLAM RULE to never, ever forget: each time your team gets together, HAVE FUN!



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Questions?

Get in touch with **Chicago Shakespeare Theater Education**
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Structuring School Rehearsals

Rehearsal is an opportunity for your team to explore the world of the play and the specific scenes you choose. One of the first steps you'll take is creating a rehearsal schedule that works best for your team, keeping in mind your school's, your students'—and, of course, your team coaches'—various schedules.

When, how often, and for how long you choose to meet will be different for every team. Some schools incorporate the SLAM team's work into a class and use in-school time for rehearsals; others hold before- or after-school rehearsals, or even get together during lunch to squeeze in rehearsal time. Some schools hold weekly rehearsals for several weeks; others may structure multiple rehearsals over the course of fewer weeks. Be realistic—and then stick to your plan, holding students responsible for consistent, on-time attendance.

It's best to share a complete rehearsal schedule with your team members early so they are aware of the full scope of the commitment. **Regardless of when, or how often, you meet, make rehearsals fun, productive—and, as much as possible, student-driven.**

Here are some ideas for how you might structure your rehearsals:

BEGINNING YOUR REHEARSAL PROCESS

- * Use ensemble-building activities to help your team get to know each other. Creating a true ensemble from the get-go will enable students to better work together, and will lead to a more fulfilling experience by helping everyone feel they are an important, integral part of the process.
- * Introduce the different components of the Chicago Shakespeare Slam to the team:
 - Team Guidelines (See page 5 of SLAM Team Resource Guide - Act 1)
 - SLAM Categories: Scene Round & Dream Round (See page 6 of SLAM Team Resource Guide - Act 1)
 - 20–30 participating schools from across the region
 - Review important dates—your school rehearsals, your Saturday Team Workshop, your Saturday Regional Bout, and the Final Bout at Chicago Shakespeare
- * Identify the unique resources of your team members. What special talents does your team possess and how might they be incorporated in your scenes? (This will especially come in handy as you begin to think about the Dream Round!)
- * As a team, begin to hone in on choosing text for each round. Pick scenes and text that most resonate with everyone.

For examples of ensemble-building activities see page 8

Examples of special skills that don't require props:

- * Whistling
- * Singing/Rapping
- * Body percussion
- * Dancing
- * Stepping
- * Fight choreography
- * Cartwheeling
- * Speaking another language
- * Miming

- * Cast your scenes. Decide which students will perform in the Scene Round—this round can involve as few as 2 students or as many as 8 students. Start to determine the roles everyone will play in the Dream Round. Your entire team—a maximum of 8 students—will perform in the Dream Round. Think of creative ways to involve everyone, and make sure that each student has the chance to speak Shakespeare’s words!



TEAM COACH TIP:

Consider casting students in Scene Round who can commit to extra rehearsal time since they’ll be working on two different pieces.

THE MIDDLE OF YOUR REHEARSAL PROCESS

- * Continue incorporating ensemble-building activities as a way to start or end each rehearsal. If there is a particularly popular activity, keep revisiting it, and it will help the team become a cohesive ensemble. Students will be impressed by how good they get at working together the more they practice.
- * Stage your two scenes. Decide where the actors will enter, where and how they will move in the scene, if—and how—they will use the eight chairs provided (Can a chair offer more than just a place to sit?...), and how to end the scene. Ideally this is done through on-your-feet exploration. Try a number of different choices, and let all members of the team decide which are the most effective ways to tell the story.
- * Keep in mind that boundaries shift and it is important to encourage an open line of communication. Check in on students’ boundaries as a day-to-day practice, especially if physical contact occurs. A student may be comfortable with a choreographed shove on Monday but may experience an injury in gym that would make the same choreographed movement uncomfortable on Friday.
- * Give your two scenes titles, which you’ll use to introduce each performance piece at the Bout. Titles need not be serious—for example, a scene from *Julius Caesar* might be called “Cassius and Brutus: The Ultimate Bro-mance.” (Thanks to Westinghouse College Prep!) A playful title will definitely catch your audience’s attention right from your first moments on stage!
- * Throughout rehearsals, encourage your team to make BIG choices with their voices and bodies. Even if you’re rehearsing in a smaller space like a classroom, people should practice as if they need to be seen and heard from the back row of a school auditorium. If some coaching is required, try saying, “I see the choice you’re making with your face. How can you make that same choice with your whole body?” Or, “Your volume right now is at a 5. What do you sound like at a 10???”

SCHOOL REHEARSALS

- * Continue to refine your choices regarding text selection, interpretation, and characterization. Encourage your team to keep trying different choices—and then decide which are the strongest ones based on their interpretation of the scene.



With Shakespeare, there's always more than one way to interpret the text! Play with emphasizing different words or phrases, especially repeated words.

IN YOUR FINAL REHEARSALS

- * Continue those ensemble-building activities! At this point, starting the rehearsal with a favorite activity could be like a ritual as a way to get your Team in a “rehearsal mindset,” helping to focus everybody at the start of any rehearsal.
- * While making small adjustments to your scenes is perfectly fine, at this point, it's time to start finalizing your choices. Your team needs to take ownership of their interpretation and stick with the choices they feel most connected to.
- * Run through your scenes from start to finish without stopping, allowing students to practice what it will be like at the Bout. Time your scenes.
- * Start now to practice how your team will introduce itself at the SLAM. We'll ask that your introduction follow this format:

All members performing in a particular Round take the stage and state (loud and proud):

- **“We are (name of school) and we own our voices!”**
- One person on stage: **“The title of our piece is (title).”**

- * Talk through the structure of the Bout, so the team is as prepared as possible for each aspect of the event.
- * Plan to perform your pieces for other classes, or even at a school assembly. It's great practice, you'll get feedback about what “lands” and what needs more work, and it will help the team get used to having an audience (not to mention offering additional opportunities to share your work)!



REMEMBER! Each scene should be 5 minutes or less.

Sample Rehearsal Schedule

Here is one of many, many possible ways you may put your rehearsal schedule together. Use this as a guide to modify and morph depending on your team’s particular rehearsal plan. This schedule assumes the team meets every Monday, Wednesday, Friday, for 1 hour after school for 4 weeks.

	MONDAY	TUE	WEDNESDAY	THU	FRIDAY
WEEK 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions, icebreakers • Overview of SLAM • Establish Vocabulary • Physical & Vocal warm-ups • Build ensemble agreements • Discuss possible entry points for Dream Round 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm-ups & ensemble building activity • Decide which students will participate in Scene Round • Facilitate the <i>Hamlet In A Snap</i> Activity • Cast Scene Round • Cast read through of scene • Define unfamiliar words 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm-ups and ensemble building • Continue staging your Dream Round and work to gain further insights
WEEK 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm-ups and ensemble building • Finish the first draft of your Dream Round scripts and identify everyone’s role 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm-ups and ensemble building • Text work on your Scene Round script. Work together to find clues • Cut text, if needed • Boundaries check-in • Get on your feet & start establishing blocking 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm-ups and ensemble building • Text work on Dream Round script • Boundaries check-in • Get on your feet & explore blocking • End with a run-through of both rounds • Discuss areas of inspiration & improvement
WEEK 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm-ups and ensemble building • Boundaries check-in • Discuss any revelations about the scene • Continue staging your Dream Round and refining the text 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm-ups and ensemble building • Finish staging your Scene Round • Continue to develop your characters and relationships • End with several run-throughs of the entire Scene Round script • Discuss areas of inspiration & improvement 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm-ups and ensemble building • Boundaries check-in • Finalize your staging for the Dream Round • End with several run-throughs of the Dream Round • Discuss areas of inspiration & improvement • Share your Dream Round with teachers/students outside of SLAM
WEEK 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm-ups and ensemble building • Boundaries check-in • Final run-throughs of Dream Round • Finalize all choices and practice performing the scene without stopping • Continue to refine 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm-ups and ensemble building • Boundaries check-in • Final run-throughs of Scene Round • Finalize all choices and practice performing the scene without stopping 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm-ups and ensemble building • Boundaries check-in • Perform each scene under “performance conditions”—including an audience • Clarify remaining questions about what to expect at your Regional Bout.

Warm-ups & Ensemble-building Exercises

Welcome to the beginning of your rehearsals! Like any good beginning, you need to get ready for the work that lies ahead—**to be seen, to be heard, and to be creative**. Every rehearsal will prepare your team for your upcoming performances.

Each ensemble member should come to rehearsal ready to use these easy-to-find tools:

- * Your **brain** (analysis and creativity)
- * Your **body** (movement and facial expressions)
- * Your **voice** (pitch, volume, pace)...
- * and most important, a commitment to becoming a **respectful** team.

The following warm-ups are designed to help you become a thoughtful, expressive—and respectful—ensemble.

PHYSICAL AND VOCAL WARM-UPS

Warm-ups help the actor prepare for rehearsal or performance both physically and mentally. They give the actor an opportunity to focus on the work at hand, forgetting all the day-to-day distractions of life, and begin to assume the flexibility required to create a character. Warm-ups can include basic stretching (e.g. PE class, yoga), tongue-twisters, or even a popular line dance. If you've never led warm-ups or aren't sure how to get started, here are some YouTube examples of physical and vocal warm-ups. Your team can watch these clips and pull out the exercises you like best to create a warm-up practice that works for you.

Ideas for a vocal warm-up from a professional voice actor—presented in a fun way!

<http://tinyurl.com/warmingupthevoice>

Four videos from the National Theatre of their actors' vocal warm-ups!

<https://tinyurl.com/nationaltheatre vocal>

Ideas for combined physical and vocal warm-ups from a Buffalo State theater class

<http://tinyurl.com/bodyandvoicewarmup>

More combined physical and vocal warm-ups from Butler Theatre

<http://tinyurl.com/voicefortheactor>

ENSEMBLE BUILDERS

Incorporating community-building activities, along with warm-ups, into your rehearsals can help create an environment that allows for risk-taking, creativity, and active participation. Practicing this type of exercise also sets the tone for “on-your-feet” work as students continue to create their scenes. And it encourages your team to start to work as an ensemble—being open to each other’s ideas and choices, both onstage and off. **Create an environment that allows for risk-taking, creativity and active participation.**

You can find many ideas for these sorts of activities on YouTube. Here are a few we like to get you started, but encourage your team to find others to try out too. You may also ask if team members have activities from other experiences (e.g. teams, camps, childhood games) that might work as community builders. Once you’ve found a few favorites, **keep returning to them.** The more your team practices, the more in sync they’ll become!

CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE THEATER: COMMUNITY BUILDERS

www.chicagoshakes.com/app/uploads/2024/05/TSD_Community_Builders.pdf

SHAKE DOWN

www.youtube.com/watch?v=HP5qcA3ty1w

HEADS UP, HEADS DOWN!

www.youtube.com/watch?v=pGE2PZPqkyU

THE ALPHABET GAME

www.youtube.com/watch?v=daz49laCSMo

JUMP IN, JUMP OUT

<http://tinyurl.com/jumpinjumpout>

KNEE TAG

<http://tinyurl.com/kneetagwarmup>

ZIP ZAP ZOP

<http://tinyurl.com/zipzapzopwarmup>

THE HAND GAME

<http://tinyurl.com/handgamewarmup>

THE HUMAN KNOT

<https://tinyurl.com/humanknot>



Selecting Text for Your Scene Round

One of the first places to spark your team's imagination is in choosing the texts you'll perform. Though this process will look quite different for each of your performance pieces, what's most important for both is choosing text that's exciting to the team and offers opportunities to highlight the unique strengths, interests, and qualities of your team. So, where to begin?

For the Scene Round

GET STUDENTS INVOLVED IN THE DECISION!

Lots of teachers who have gone through this process say the same thing: the more excited students are about the story they get to tell, the better the creative process will be. Buy-in and enthusiasm are the top priority. That might mean choosing a text students have studied and already connected to. Or, introducing a Shakespeare play students haven't yet studied, but perhaps has a story or characters that will resonate. (You might choose to introduce new plays through children's versions, movie clips, songs, modern re-tellings, or your own energy-packed summaries, to get a sense of the story without wading through long texts.) If students connect to the story, they'll connect to Shakespeare's language and make it their own. That's why we recommend that the first thing you do is...

ASK STUDENTS FOR INPUT

You could start by brainstorming a list of all the Shakespearean plays the team has heard of. Which have you studied? Have you seen any Shakespeare plays or movies? Is there a clear favorite? If not, ask more questions. Are you interested in comedy or tragedy? Violence or romance? Villains or heroes? The supernatural or the "real world"? See what piques people's curiosity, and offer up characters or plays that match their interests.

CHOOSE THE PLAY

Hopefully this choice will become clear—and will be a team effort everyone is excited about—as you talk through options together. Be sure to discuss how many students will participate in the Scene Round. It could be the entire team or as few as 2 students.

CHOOSE THE ACTUAL SCENE

When choosing a scene, consider how many—and which—students will be performing in this round. You could use a source like playshakespeare.com—a great place for finding Shakespeare scenes, categorized by the number of characters in the scene.

OPTIONAL (THOUGH STRONGLY ENCOURAGED!)

Make internal cuts to your scene. There are lots of reasons why you may want to make internal cuts to your scene—the 5-minute time limit being just one of them. Keep reading for more guidance on why and how to cut Shakespeare.

This round is a single scene from any Shakespeare play. It could be from *Hamlet*, but would need to be a different scene/text selection than your Dream Round.

For children's versions of the stories, check out *Tales from Shakespeare* by Charles and Mary Lamb, *Brick Shakespeare* (The Lego Shakespeare book), or *Shakespeare Stories* by Leon Garfield.

Or, you might want to talk about movie adaptations of Shakespeare plays (some cleverly disguised) that resonate with the team, such as: *10 Things I Hate About You* (*The Taming of the Shrew*), *O* (*Othello*), *She's the Man* (*Twelfth Night*), *The Lion King* (*Hamlet*).

You can also look up trailers of movie versions of the plays on YouTube to get a sense of what stories are most exciting to the team!

Cutting Shakespeare (Yes, you can!)

Cutting the text is simply standard practice in staging and filming Shakespeare—and has been ever since his plays were first performed. Cutting is actually one of the first steps in any director's process.

As you begin to create your performances, you'll definitely want to get some good, hands-on practice in cutting your text, too. You might...

- * cut individual lines, or parts of lines, from your scene.
- * cut an entire chunk out of a particular scene.
- * cut an entire character or characters from your passage. (If you want to keep lines belonging to a character you've cut, consider giving them to another character if it still makes sense.)

WHY DO YOU CUT?

- * to help make the story more clear
- * because "less" often results in more: more energy in your performance; more engagement by your audience
- * to help set the tone you're going for in the scene, you might cut out the comic bits (if you want serious) or the serious parts (if you're going for comedy)
- * to help guide and engage your audience—Shakespeare knew his audiences and played to them!
- * you have fewer actors than character roles
- * time constraints (your scene must be 5 minutes or under!)
- * sometimes, to create equity among ensemble members' roles

WHAT DO YOU CUT?

KEEP...

- * action and ideas that forward the plot
- * the familiar and famous lines, of course!
- * words that are simply fun to say!
- * the meter, or rhyme scheme (whenever possible)

CUT...

- * repeated information or ideas
- * extraneous information
- * archaic, or offensive, problematic language
- * obtuse references
- * convoluted phrasing

Be sure to read the note on page 13, "Discussing Shakespeare's Racialized Language"

Annotated Examples of Cutting Shakespeare

These annotated examples are simply that: examples. Every single cut represents a choice that is neither “right” nor “wrong.” In the notes to the right of the script, we’ve tried to make our thought process transparent.

Be brave! In performance, Shakespeare’s script is almost always cut. (And in pretty much any Shakespeare film you’ll ever see, there’s typically no more than half the text left intact!) In other words, you’ll be in good company...

EXAMPLE 1 *Hamlet, Act 1, scene 5*

TYBALT

This by his voice, should be a Montague.
Fetch me my rapier, boy. ~~What dares the slave
come hither, cover’d with an antic face,
to the floor and seem at our solemnity?~~
Now, by the stock and honor of my kin,
to strike him dead, I hold it not a sin.

Here, we cut the text by approximately 50%. Tybalt speech has a lot of opinion in it, which we can do without.

With this cut, we interrupted the meter, but chose to do it here because the command “Fetch me my rapier, boy” stands on its own.

See the note below about racialized language in Shakespeare.

EXAMPLE 2 *more Hamlet, Act 1, scene 5*

CAPULET

Content thee, gentle coz, let him alone;
~~He bears him like a portly gentleman;—
And, to say truth, Verona brags of him
To be a virtuous and well-govern’d youth:—~~
I would not for the wealth of all the town
Here in my house do him disparagement:
Therefore be patient, take no note of him:
It is my will, ~~the which if thou respect,—
Show a fair presence and put off these frowns,—
And ill-beseeming semblance for a feast.~~

Here is an example of cutting a bit of archaic language: “portly” now means something quite different from Capulet’s intent!

This is a debatable cut, we know. It removes information that might be useful for an audience getting to know Romeo more “objectively”- from other townspeople’s point of view.

Here again, we break the meter by ending with the midstop “It is my will.” And you could certainly make an argument for cutting those four syllables, as well, and ending his speech with the previous line. But that four-syllable, monosyllabic line says so much about Capulet’s status, so we made an interpretive choice to leave it in, even though it breaks up the meter.

Discussing Shakespeare’s Racialized Language
Here is where cutting can lead to important discussions about racialized language. In example 1, we chose to cut the line that includes the word “slave” --but not without a team discussion about its meaning, its potential impact on an audience hearing the word spoken, and its impact on the performer speaking it. We talked about what the word “slave” means to us now and what it might have meant then in England when the international slave trade was emerging. Ultimately, we chose to cut this difficult and loaded word --but, again, not without a discussion that highlighted our different perspectives on this choice.



EXAMPLE 3
Hamlet, Act 1, scene 2

EGEUS

Full of vexation come I, with complaint
Against my child, my daughter Hermia.
Stand forth, Demetrius. ~~My noble lord,~~
This man hath my consent to marry her.
Stand forth, Lysander: ~~and my gracious duke,~~
This man hath bewitch'd the bosom of my child;
~~Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes,~~
~~And interchanged love-tokens with my child:~~
Thou hast by moonlight at her window sung,
With feigning voice verses of feigning love,
~~And stolen the impression of her fantasy~~
With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gawds, ~~conceits,~~
~~Knacks, trifles, nosegays,~~ sweetmeats, ~~messengers~~
~~Of strong prevailment in unhardened youth:~~
With cunning hast thou filch'd my daughter's heart,
Turn'd her obedience, which is due to me,
To stubborn harshness: ~~and, my gracious duke,~~
~~Be it so she; will not here before your grace~~
~~Consent to marry with Demetrius;~~
I beg the ancient privilege of Athens,
As she is mine, I may dispose of her:
Which shall be either to this gentleman
Or to her death, ~~according to our law~~
~~Immediately provided in that case.~~

Here, we've cut approximately 40% of the original.

The "love tokens" will be described a few lines later, so we don't lose any content or clarity by cutting these lines.

This cut maintains the meter and edits out some of the old-fashioned lovers' gifts that might not ring true to a modern audience. Oh, and we had to keep either "conceits" or "sweetmeats" to maintain the meter. You could keep either one, but we thought "sweetmeats" was more fun to say!

If you want to emphasize Egeus's relationship with the duke, rather than his daughter, you could cut these lines instead.

Note that this cut interrupts the meter, which is not ideal. It happens, though--sometimes making the scene move faster justifies the choice.

We made the choice to end this speech with the strong statement that Egeus is willing to send his daughter to her death. Imagine delivering the line with an exclamation point after "death," or maybe letting that last word linger quietly in the air...

You'll probably notice we cut all the direct references to the "noble lord" / "gracious duke," who is being addressed in this speech. That character would still be onstage. Cutting these verbal references to him focuses the speech's attention on Egeus's relationship with his daughter. Of course, if you wanted to present Egeus as a pandering politico, you could keep the references to the duke.

The Story

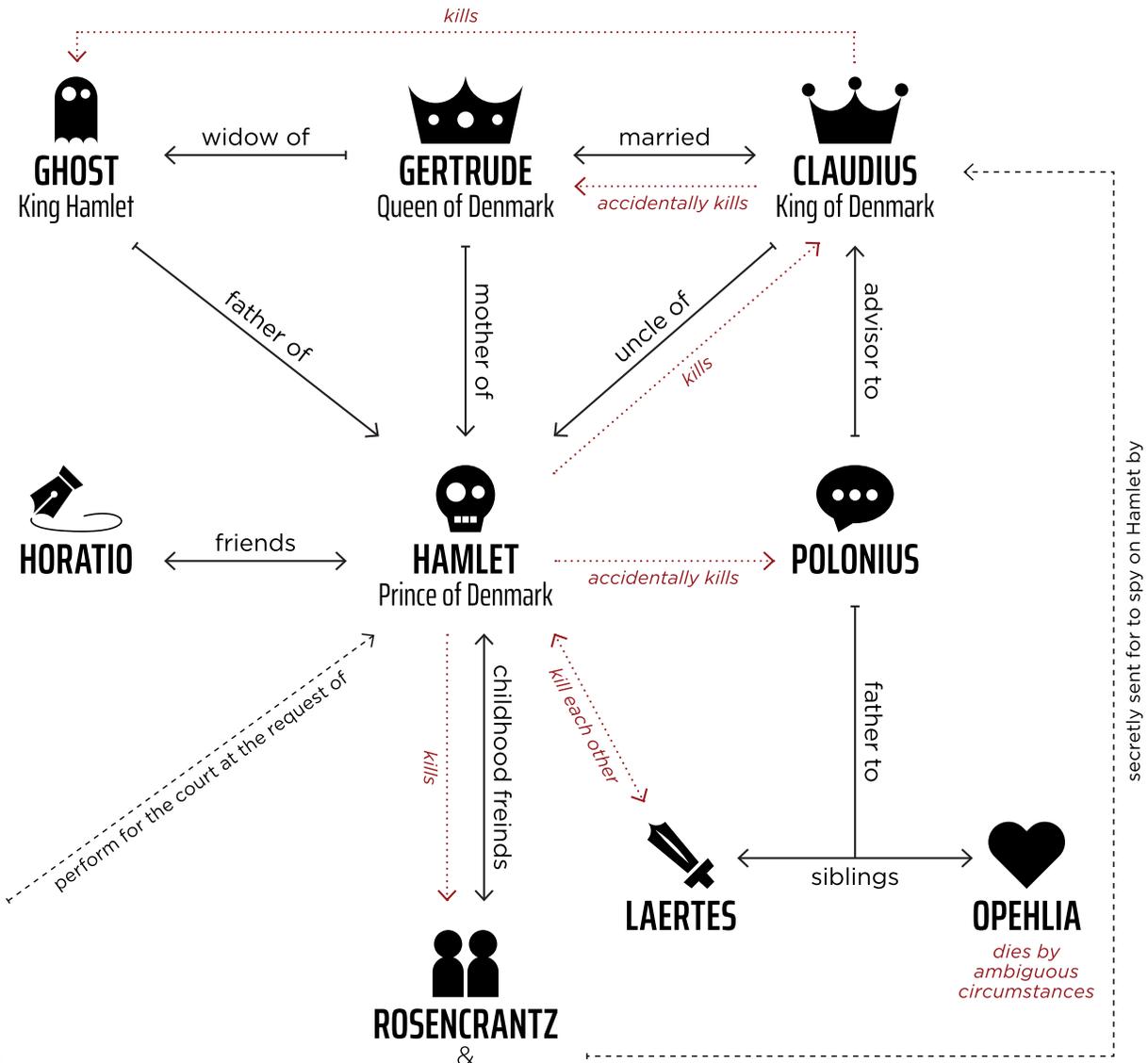
The Tragical History of Hamlet is one of the most famous and captivating revenge tragedies. Before the play begins, King Hamlet, the king of Denmark and Prince Hamlet's father, suspiciously dies. Within a month, his brother Claudius assumes the throne and marries his widow, Queen Gertrude. And so, the play begins.

Hamlet wears his grief like a cloak, while everyone else seems to have forgotten about the king's death.

Meanwhile, his friend Horatio shares that he has witnessed a ghostly figure that looks just like the late King Hamlet. The Ghost of King Hamlet visits the prince and details his untimely death. The ghost claims Claudius murdered him and begs Hamlet to avenge his death. Hamlet contemplates the meaning of life and his ability to act on his father's wishes. Caught up in the politics of the royal court, deep sorrow, and his moral code, Hamlet faces a profound internal struggle, leading to irreparable consequences for himself and those around him.



Who's Who in Hamlet



FIRST PLAYER

actor visiting Elsinore



OTHER PLAYERS

actors visiting Elsinore



GRAVEDIGGER



Hamlet: In A Snap!

In A Snap! is a fun, summarizing activity where students play with Shakespeare's language and create clarifying gestures for each line. Students will create gestures to accompany their assigned lines, to clarify the meaning of the line. The final script will be read, with each student jumping in to add their line and gesture at their moment in the script.

INSTRUCTIONS

Teachers will print out the sheet of lines, with their numbers, and cut them into strips. Then, pass out the strips giving each student one line to work on.

Students will read their lines aloud a few times and may work with other students to discuss what questions they have about the lines. Students will use resources in the Further Reading section (pg. #) such as "Shakespeare's Words" to clarify any confusing words.

Then, students will decide how they want to physicalize their line to help bring its meaning alive for the class. Choices don't need to be literal, but they should help the class to better understand it as students play with the words' meaning or sounds.

To side coach students on embodying the language, suggest emphasizing a verb, juicy word, or imagery.

Students will practice saying their lines with gestures. When everyone is comfortable and ready, get the class to stand in a circle (in numerical order). As the story is read, the teacher will point to each student as their number comes up for them to read their line and perform their gesture.

Hamlet: In A Snap!

NARRATOR SCRIPT

The events before the play are a bit complicated, but here's the short version: the king of Denmark, King Hamlet, dies suddenly, and his brother Claudius takes the throne and marries Gertrude, King Hamlet's widow. Scandal! So, The Tragedy of Hamlet starts out the way any good story starts: Knock, knock. **[1]** A ghost! And not just any ghost, but The Ghost of King Hamlet, Prince Hamlet's father.

Hamlet's not a fan of his new blended family and spends his days dressed in black, making snarky asides about his new stepdad. **[2A]** Meanwhile, Polonius, Claudius' Counselor, warns his daughter to stay away from the young prince. **[2B]**

The Ghost of King Hamlet reappears and lays it on pretty thick with Prince Hamlet: **[3]** Hamlet, shocked, says, **[4]** The Ghost commands: **[5]** and **[6]**. (That's what Mufasa said, right?) The son swears to avenge his father's murder, but would rather not. **[7]**

Back to that other family, Ophelia runs to her dad in tears: Hamlet's acting strange. OMG, thinks Polonius: **[8]** and he runs off to tell Claudius.

Claudius and Gertrude invite Hamlet's old school buds, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, to do some friendly spying to figure out what's up with him. Claudius and Polonius spy on Hamlet, too, overhearing maybe the most famous line in all of Shakespeare: **[9]**. Ophelia walks in, love letters and stuff in hand to return to Hamlet **[10]**. But Hamlet doesn't take it well, and tells Ophelia **[11]**.

When Hamlet hears about a troupe of traveling actors heading to Elsinore, inspiration strikes: **[12]**. It's about to get real. At Hamlet's instruction, they'll stage an old story with some brand-new lines, penned by the Prince: a king and queen in love, the king poisoned, his assassin marries the queen. Sound familiar? Claudius thinks so, too, and he's pretty upset, and wants Hamlet out of Denmark—NOW.

Claudius falls to his knees to repent. **[13]** Hamlet sneaks in, ready to kill, when he realizes: if he kills this guy praying, won't his soul go straight to heaven? Deciding it's better to confront his mother **[14]**, Hamlet heads for her bedroom—where Polonius is spying behind a curtain. Hamlet confronts Gertrude about her actions, Gertrude cries out for help, Polonius starts yelling—and blows his cover. Thinking it's Claudius, Hamlet plunges his sword in and kills...Polonius! Gertrude is distraught. **[15]** But Hamlet has something to say about that: **[16]**.

Gertrude runs off to tell Claudius what just happened and Claudius plans to send Hamlet packing—to England, with letters to the king, demanding Hamlet's death.

In the meantime, Laertes returns, sees his sister gone mad with grief over her father, and blames Claudius—who blames everything on Hamlet. Hearing of Hamlet's return from England, Laertes is ripe for revenge. The king arranges an "innocent" fencing match between Hamlet and Laertes. The catch: Laertes' sword will be dipped in poison—and, for good measure, Claudius will offer the prince a cup of wine, laced with more poison. At this very moment, Gertrude enters the scene with awful news: **[17]**. Bad timing.

It's time for the match. Gertrude drinks to her son as Claudius warns her **[18]**. Laertes' poisoned sword wounds Hamlet—moments before Hamlet grabs it and fatally wounds Laertes.

The Queen falls **[19]**. Laertes shares Claudius' plan **[20]**, and Hamlet stabs Claudius with Laertes' blade, then forces the poisoned drink down his throat **[21]**. Karma, man. Hamlet's time has arrived, too, BUT... not before asking his friend Horatio, **[22]**.

And, as they say, **[23]**.

Numbered Lines for *Hamlet*: In A Snap!



1: Who's there?

2A: A little more than kin, and less than kind.

2B: Do not believe his vows Ophelia, for they are brokers...

3: The serpent that did sting thy father's life now wears his crown.

4: O villain, villain, smiling, damnèd villain!

5: If thou didst ever thy dear father love...

6: Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

7: The Time is out of joint O cursed spite, / That ever I was born to set it right!

8: This is the very ecstasy of love.

9: To be, or not to be, that is the question.

10: My Lord, I have remembrances of yours/That I have longed long to re-deliver.

11: I loved you not.

Numbered Lines for *Hamlet*: In A Snap! (continued)



12: The play's the thing / Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.

13: Oh my offense is rank, it smells to heaven.

14: I will speak daggers to her, but use none.

15: O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!

16: Almost as bad, good mother, / As kill a king, and marry with his brother.

17: Your sister's drown'd, Laertes.

18: It is the poison'd cup: it is too late.

19: The drink, the drink! I am poison'd.

20: The king, the king's to blame.

21: Here, thou incestuous, murderous, damnèd Dane.

22: In this harsh world, draw thy breath in pain to tell my story.

23: The rest is silence.

What to Watch for in *Hamlet*

Questions to help get the wheels turning and the creative juices flowing as you watch a production of *Hamlet*...

As your team is starting to figure out how you'd like to approach the Dream Round, you may want to watch a performance of *Hamlet*—to get familiar with the story, and to start thinking about some of the language, characters, and/or themes you'd like to focus in your performance.

WHAT WORDS, PHRASE, LINES JUMP OUT AT YOU?

WHICH CHARACTERS RESONATE WITH YOU? WHY?

HAMLET

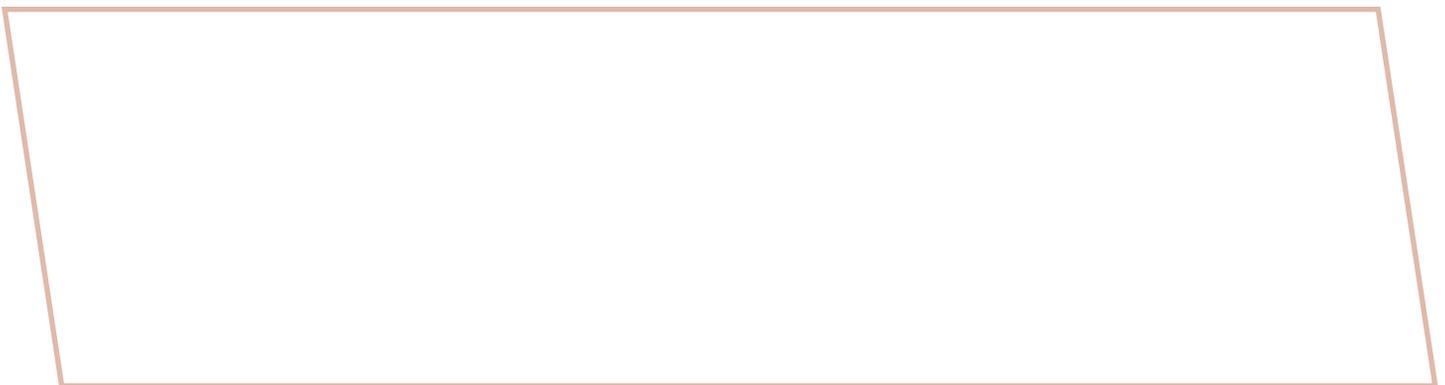
ARE THERE EXPERIENCES IN YOUR OWN LIFE THAT COME TO MIND AS YOU WATCH THE PERFORMANCE?



DOES THE PLAY REMIND YOU OF ANY MODERN-DAY EVENTS?



WHAT QUESTIONS DOES THE PLAY LEAVE YOU WITH?



Advice from the Field

Check out some helpful tips from teachers who participated in the SLAM over the years. We know that every school community is different, but many teachers encounter the same stumbling blocks (ahem, opportunities for learning) when preparing for the SLAM. We hope, by sharing some of their tips here, that what one teacher found helpful could be helpful for you too!

HOW DO YOU RECRUIT STUDENTS?

- “ Personal invitations and the **PROMISE OF LOTS OF FUN!** ”
- “ Students who participated last year spread the word! They loved it! ”
- “ I highlighted the **CHANCE TO MEET STUDENTS** from all over the region! ”
- “ We advertised to our theater group. ”
- “ I used in-class announcements. ”
- “ I asked other teachers to recommend students. ”
- “ We shared **THE FLYER THAT CST PROVIDED**, and made announcements over the school PA. ”
- “ We looped this into our audition process for the fall play. ”
- “ We recruited from **OUR POETRY CLUB.** ”
- “ We showed students videos from last year’s Bout! ”

HOW DO YOU GET STUDENTS TO CONTINUE THEIR COMMITMENT THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS?

- “ Having a set rehearsal schedule at the top of the rehearsal process. ”
- “ Keep empowering them to be responsible for stepping up—and **LOTS OF TEXT REMINDERS!** ”
- “ My kids held one another accountable. ”
- “ I invited students to participate during lunch. ”
- “ I worked around students’ schedules...and lots of positive encouragement. ”
- “ Regular meetings. And our students did everything—the cutting and the writing—so **THEY HAD OWNERSHIP.** ”
- “ Our theater program has a policy that students who drop can’t audition again for a full year. ”
- “ **LIMITING REHEARSALS** to one day a week allowed students to be in other activities as well. ”
- “ Constant reminders...and **SNACKS!** ”
- “ Letting them know that they were **COMPLETELY INDISPENSABLE**...that kept them accountable. ”

HOW DO YOU INVOLVE STUDENTS AS PEER COACHES?

- “They would jump in for missing students, and they **WORKED ON THE DREAM ROUND SCRIPT.**”
- “They led the scene cutting, and gave notes during practices.”
- “They were the **LEADER IN THE ROOM.** They worked on scene cutting, reminded kids of rehearsal times, and ran short rehearsals while I was off grading.”
- “They helped with blocking, were on-book for the performers, and **GAVE FEEDBACK.**”
- “**AS DIRECTOR AND UNDERSTUDY.** They jumped in when one student dropped.”

HOW DID THE TEAM CHOOSE A SCENE FOR THE SCENE ROUND?

- “**GROUP DISCUSSION.** We first decided we wanted a comedy and went from there!”
- “We started with the plays that were **MOST FAMILIAR TO THE TEAM.** And we knew we wanted a 2-person scene.”
- “They chose Othello because they had read it in class and felt comfortable with the story.”
- “They wanted a comedy, so I read some summaries to them.
THEY CHOSE THE PLAY; I THEN PICKED THE SCENE.”
- “One student suggested the play. I found a scene appropriate for the number of students we had.”
- “I suggested three options, and they chose one.”
- “Our **PEER COACH PRESENTED A LIST OF OPTIONS.** We narrowed these down as a group, and voted.”

HOW DID YOU DEVELOP YOUR DREAM ROUND?

- “We explored themes as a group, and **PULLED OUT LINES THAT CONNECTED.**”
- “We wanted to show how Shakespeare can explore peer pressure issues with teens.”
- “The **KIDS PICKED** something to focus on. Then they went through the text and selected lines they thought fit well. It developed organically from there.”
- “We **BRAINSTORMED THEMES AND CONCEPTS,** then I wrote a script draft, and the team helped revise it.”
- “They felt there was a lot of persuasive language in this play (*Macbeth*) and decided to turn it into commercials.”

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE A NEW TEAM COACH WHO IS JOINING THE SLAM FOR THE FIRST TIME?

- “Stay organized and get things done as soon as possible.”
- “Get energized kids—especially underclassmen. They will feel connected.”
- “Have fun with the text. Play with the sounds of the words. **BE PHYSICAL WITH THE TEXT.**”
- “Create a Team of students not involved in other shows in the fall.”
- “**LET THE KIDS** lead and take ownership.”
- “Get as many students as possible to attend the workshop.”
- “Don’t be afraid to reach out for help. It is such a **SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY** that every student will achieve success.”
- “Start early. Pick one ‘all in’ rehearsal a week. **MAKE IT FUN.**”
- “Take the time to really understand the language.”
- “Seek support from others (parents, teachers, other students) who love theater, speech, or Shakespeare.”
- “Shorter text is better. Memorization isn’t required, but advised because the story needs to flow.”
- “**RELAX! CST EDUCATION DEPT. WILL GET YOU THROUGH THIS!**”

You can reach us at
312.595.5678 or at
csteducation@chicagoshakes.com



• GRATITUDE •

In the theater, we give a big “Standing O” for amazing work we’ve loved seeing on stage. This Standing O is for each of you—students and teachers alike—who have stepped forward and said “Yes!” to participating in this year’s Chicago Shakespeare Slam. Each year we learn more and more about this program’s boundless potential—through your creativity and your ideas. This Guide is a reflection of everyone’s contributions from past years. We hope it can serve as a helpful resource as you work to develop your performance. And remember, always, the two most important ingredients of a truly successful SLAM experience: your team members’ creative encounter with Shakespeare and language—AND having so much fun in the process!

WE CAN’T WAIT TO SEE YOUR TEAM AT THIS FALL’S EVENTS!





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