

Macbeth Witches Media Lesson (media comparison, drama)

Objectives and outcomes:

- To introduce students to the play Macbeth by William Shakespeare
- To work on dramatic skills, especially use of voice and body to express emotions and convey character
- To compare the experience of a scene three different ways
- To promote the accessibility of Shakespeare to students

Materials: scripts, projector, computer, video of scenes

Grade level: 5th to 8th

Duration: 45 minutes

I. Introduction (five minutes)

- A. Introduce the general plot of Macbeth and the role of the witches to the students.
- B. Split the class into groups of three.
- C. Hand out scripts of the first witches' scene from Macbeth.

II. Reading (ten minutes)

- A. Instruct students to decide who is which witch, and have them read through the script once in their groups, telling them to keep an eye out for words they may not know.
- B. After the students have finished reading the scripts, ask the students if there are any words that they don't know.
- C. Instruct the students to read through the script again, thinking about what the witches are talking about in the scene, and where the witches might be in the scene.
- D. After the students have finished, call on students to suggest where they think the witches are and what they're talking about.
- E. Instruct the students to read through the script one more time, this time thinking about what the witches might look like or sound like, and ask the students to play with the characters a little more.

III. Staging (fifteen minutes)

- A. After the students have done their third read-through of the script, tell them they will be performing their version of the witches' scene in front of the class. Students are encouraged to be creative with their interpretations; share examples of places they could go with the scene (e.g. maybe the witches are astronauts in space, or businessmen in a boardroom, or hippies sitting in a circle). Give the students five minutes to put together their staging.
- B. Have the students perform their scenes for the rest of the class.

IV. Video (ten minutes)

- A. Present videos of different versions of the witches' scene. Try to find three versions that are very different from each other (e.g. film vs. staging, different interpretations, etc.)

V. Conclusion (five minutes)

- A. Hold a discussion with the class about what they felt, gained, or experienced from the lesson. Examples include:
 - 1. Which of the three experiences of the scene did you like the most: reading, acting, or watching?
 - 2. What did you discover about the scene/text/characters from reading/acting/watching the scene?

Modification and Differentiation

This model can be used for other works, though ideally the scene in question will be short and have relatively even amounts of text for each member of the group. Additionally, the scene in question should have room for interpretation to allow the students more creative freedom. Lastly, between readings, try to gauge what students are struggling to do with the text and use discussion questions to guide them through further understanding of the text.

Script text:

First Witch. When shall we three meet again

In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

Second Witch. When the hurlyburly's done,

When the battle's lost and won.

Third Witch. That will be ere the set of sun.

First Witch. Where the place?

Second Witch. Upon the heath.

Third Witch. There to meet with Macbeth.

First Witch. I come, Graymalkin!

Second Witch. Paddock calls.

Third Witch. Anon.

All. Fair is foul, and foul is fair:

Hover through the fog and filthy air.