

'COMEDY, TRAGEDY, HISTORY' LESSON PLAN

'Comedy, Tragedy, History' by Akala

In this lesson, students will familiarize themselves with Shakespeare's play titles and selected famous Shakespearean quotes. They will also learn about internal rhyming, metaphors and compose their own Shakespeare-inspired rap!

Lesson time: 60 minutes

1 Fill in the blanks

Ask students to work individually and give them the Student's worksheet. Watch the video, 'Comedy, Tragedy, History' and fill in the blanks from the words in the box.

pearl	Lear	tower	oyster	destiny	dancing	cello	Ethiophe's
suicide	Winter's	jewel	Bard	history	Tamed	military	Diamond
Caesar	fool	charmed	berserk	mind's	destroyed	street	

2 Spot the Shakespeare

Ask students to work alone or in pairs. Look at the lyrics to the song 'Comedy, Tragedy, History' and/or use the video.

- There are 25 Shakespeare play titles referred to in the lyrics. Find them all and highlight them in a colour. For example: All you little boys are a 'Comedy Of Errors'
- There are 21 allusions to Shakespeare in the text (e.g. names of characters not including play titles and direct quotes from Shakespeare and his name). Find them all and circle them. For example: I'm Capulet, you're Montague

3 Synonyms

Ask students to work alone. Find synonyms in the lyrics to 'Comedy, Tragedy, History' for the following words:

- | | | | | |
|----------|-------------|-----------|-----------------|------------|
| a) eat | c) tempting | e) ruined | g) malnourished | i) citadel |
| b) humor | d) retailer | f) idiot | h) beggar | j) branch |

e.g. terrible = dire

4 Write your own Shakespeare-inspired rap

Students can work alone or in groups of 4/5. Select 10 of the references to Shakespeare in the song 'Comedy, Tragedy, History' (see the answers to question 2) and compose your own rap that includes these references.

5 Internal rhyming

Students can work alone or in groups of 4/5. In poetry, internal rhyme, or middle rhyme, is rhyme that occurs within a single line of verse. There are several examples of internal rhyming in the lyrics to 'Comedy, Tragedy, History', for example:

"I'm the **first** with a **verse** to **rehearse** with a **nurse**"

"**Hearse** for the **first jerk** who **turn berserk**"

Come up with three examples of internal rhyming of your own.



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6 Metaphors

Working as a whole class/group, ask one of the students to become the scribe. Using a flipchart/whiteboard, come up with definitions/explanations for the following metaphors from the song 'Comedy, Tragedy, History'. It's worth noting that all four of these metaphors are based on quotes from Shakespeare that can be found below.

- a) 'Wrens can't make prey where eagles won't perch'
- b) 'A rose by any other name, smells just as sweet'
- c) 'The king's name is a tower'
- d) 'I speak daggers'

Example:

'The world is my Oyster'

Answer:

This quote means that you can do or have anything that you want. It also gives you the visual sense of the world being in the palm of your hand and being a simple snack to be eaten.

ANSWERS

1 Spot the Shakespeare

A) 1 Comedy Of Errors 2 Othello 3 Taming Of The Shrew 4 A Midsummer Night's Dream 5 Julius Caesar
6 The Merchant Of Venice 7 All's Well That Ends Well 8 Macbeth 9 Measure for Measure 10 Merry Wives of Windsor
11 King Lear 12 Timon of Athens 13 Hamlet 14 As You Like It 15 Much Ado About Nothing 16 Twelfth Night 17 The Tempest
18 Henry IV 19 Pericles Prince Of Tyre 20 A Winter's Tale 21 Titus Andronicus 22 Anthony And Cleopatra 23 Cymbeline
24 Love's Labour's Lost 25 Two Gentlemen Of Verona

B) 1 Capulet 2 Montague 3 Wise is the man that knows he's a fool 4 Tempt not a desperate man
5 Some rise by sin and by virtue fall 6 The world is my oyster 7 A rose by any other name, smells just as sweet 8 The Bard
9 Where for art thou 10 Shakespeare 11 Chance never did crown me 12 The king's name is a tower 13 In my mind's eye
14 I bare a charmed life 15 I speak daggers 16 Wrens can't make prey where eagles won't perch 17 Off with his head
18 There's no method in it 19 I speak with daggers 20 Shakespeare 21 Ethiope's ear

2 Fill in the blanks

(See the full lyrics on p3.)

3 Synonyms

- | | | | | |
|-----------|--------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
| a) devour | c) appealing | e) destroyed | g) starving | i) tower |
| b) comedy | d) merchant | f) fool | h) pauper | j) perch |

6 Metaphors

- a) "The world is grown so bad, that wrens make prey where eagles dare not perch."
(King Richard III, Act I, Scene III)
- b) "What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet."
(Romeo and Juliet, Act II, Scene II)
- c) "The king's name is a tower of strength."
(King Richard III, Act V, Scene III)
- d) "I will speak daggers to her, but use none."
(Hamlet, Act III, Scene II)



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Lyrics

Words that were missing in exercise 1 are underlined. References to Shakespeare's plays from exercise 2a are highlighted (see answer section on p.2 for full titles). Allusions to Shakespeare from exercise 2b are in **bold**.

That boy Akala's a Diamond Fella
 All you little boys are a Comedy of errors
 You bellow but you fellows get played like
 The cello, I'm doing my ting
 You're jealous like Othello.
 Who you? What ya gonna do?
 Little boys get Tamed like the Shrew
 You're midsummer dreamin'
 Your tunes ain't appealing
 I'm **Capulet**, you're **Montague**, I ain't feelin'
 I am the Julius Caesar here, me
 The Merchant Of Venice couldn't sell your CD
 As for me, All's Well That Ends Well
 Your boy's like Macbeth, it's not going swell
Measure for Measure. I am the best here
 You're Merry Wives of Windsor not King Lear
 I don't know about Timon
 I know he was in Athens
 Back like Hamlet you pay for your actions
 That boy Akala, I do it As You Like It
 You're Much Ado About Nothing
 All you do is bite it
 I'm too tight, I don't need 12 nights
 All you little Tempests, destroyed on the mic
 Of course I am the one with the force
 You're history like Henry IV
 I'm fire, things look dire
 Better run like Pericles, Prince Of Tyre
 Off the scale, cold as A Winter's Tale
Titus Andronicus was bound to fail
 So will you if Akala gets at ya
 That's suicide like Anthony and Cleopatra
Cymbeline a modern day Bridget Jones
Love's labour's lost, a woman on her own
 She needed Two Gentlemen Of Verona
 This is Illa State and I am the owner!
Wise is the man that knows he's a fool
Tempt not a desperate man with a jewel
 Why take from Peter to go pay Paul?
Some rise by sin and by virtue fall
 What have you made if you gain the whole world
 But sell your own soul for the price of a pearl?
The world is my oyster and I am starving
 I want much more than a penny or a farthing
 I told no joke, I hope you're not laughing
 Poet or pauper which do you class him?
 Speak eloquent, though I am resident to the gritty inner city
 That's surely irrelevant

Call it urban, call it street
A rose by any other name, smells just as sweet
 Spit so hard, but I'm smart as **the Bard**
 Come through with a Union Jack for the yard
 Akala, Akala, **where for art thou?**
 I'm the rap **Shakespeare** The secret's out now
Chance never did crown me, this is destiny
 You still talk but it still perplexes me
 Devour cowards, thousands per hour
 Don't you know **the king's name is a tower**
 You should never speak it
 It is not a secret
 I teach theses, like ancient Greece's
 Or Egyptology, never no apology
In my mind's eye, I see things properly
 Stoppin' me, nah you could never possibly
I bare a charmed life, most probably
 For certain **I speak daggers** in a phrase
 I'll put an end to your dancing days
 No matter what you say, it will never work
Wrens can't make prey
Where eagles won't perch
 I'm the worst with the words
 'Cos I curse all my verbs
 I'm the first with a verse to rehearse with a nurse
 Hearse for the first jerk who turn berserk
Off with his head, 'cos it must not work
 Testing Akala? That is true madness
And there's no method in it just sadness
I speak with daggers and the hammers
 Of a passion when I'm rappin' I attack 'em
 In a military fashion
 Pattern of my rappin' chattin' couldn't ever map it
 And I run more rings round things than Saturn
 Sick, never slackin' like a pig with a baton
 Verses split big kids' wigs when I'm rappin'
 That boy Akala, the rap **Shakespeare**
 Didn't want to listen when I said last year
 Rich as a gem in an Ethiophe's ear
 Tell 'em all again
 For them who never hear



Akala's Slang Dictionary

fella = man

bite it = steal lyrics

tight = good at rapping

illa State = Akala's record label

yard = Jamaica

wigs = heads