

Bill's Buddies, 2011-2012

"Where did you study all this goodly speech?" - *Taming of the Shrew*, 2.1

Do you sometimes feel detached from what you are asked to study in class - that your life and your interests are very different from your schoolwork? Have you ever wished that the topics discussed in class were more interesting to you or maybe a little less confusing?

William Shakespeare was a playwright that lived over 400 years ago. So why do we still bother reading, studying, and performing his plays today? What keeps us coming back...and how do we decipher all the language that can seem so different from our own?

Shakespeare's plays still contain timeless situations you might see played out in the halls of your school everyday: miscommunicating your feelings, fights between friends, and problems within families, just to name a few. Watch Bill's Buddies bring Shakespeare's words to life as they perform at your school, and decide for yourself if Shakespeare's language is worth a chance!



Coming Soon!

Bill's Buddies perform scenes from many of Shakespeare's plays. Here are the plays you will see pieces of when the Buds come to your school:



As You Like It: Rosalind's father has been overthrown by his brother and now she's been banished. She and her cousin escape to the Forest of Arden in disguise to find the true Duke, if they can.

The Merchant of Venice: After years of abuse, Shylock finally has a chance at revenge. If Antonio fails to repay his debt, he must give Shylock a pound of his own flesh. When Antonio's ship sinks, it looks like Shylock will win his prize.



The Winter's Tale: King Leontes accuses his wife of cheating on him with his friend and drives himself mad. He forces his wife to stand trial and orders his friend's death. Even though both are innocent, everything changes for their two kingdoms.

Romeo and Juliet: Two teenagers from households who hate each other fall in love and try to balance their family loyalties against their doomed affection.



Taming of the Shrew: When a man refuses to allow his younger daughter to marry until his man-hating older daughter has done so, Petruchio meets the challenge of courting the temperamental "shrew."

Richard III: The Duke of Gloucester becomes King of England only after committing several evil deeds. Richard has his enemies, family, wife and even friends killed in order to take the throne.



Your Chance to Shine!

Bill's Buddies believes that the best way to learn Shakespeare is by *doing* Shakespeare. So at a Bill's Buddies performance, everyone gets to speak, to act, and to play. The Buds will ask you questions from the stage, and they may even need help acting out a scene. Listen carefully as the show takes place, but be ready to respond and jump into the action as well!

Get ready for the action!

Below are some activities you can do alone or with your class to prepare for a Bill's Buddies visit to your school.



Stupendous, Tremendous Sounds. Writers often use the sounds of words to help communicate the rich meaning in the words they choose. Shakespeare did this all the time - see if you can, too! Imagine you are on trial and you must convince the court of your innocence. Write a testimony, using devices such as alliteration, assonance, repetition, and lists to help you plead your case.

A Picture Says 1,000 Words. Find the imagery that Shakespeare wrote into his language. In a group of four or more, explore this piece of text:

“How darkly and how deadly dost thou speak!
Your eyes do menace me. Why look you pale?” - *Richard III*, I.4

As a group, decide how to create a ‘picture’ of these words using your bodies, then share your interpretation with the class. If working alone, take photographs or create drawings that are inspired by the pictures you imagine from the lines.

In Your Own Words. Though 400 years old, Shakespeare’s stories show situations that may still be seen in the halls of any school today. Read 3.1 from *Rome and Juliet*. Decide what the modern-day equivalent for this scene might be. Rewrite Shakespeare’s story so that it takes place at your school today.

During the Performance...

Listen for these lines and name the play:

“This day’s black fate on more days doth depend.
This but begins the woe others must end.”

“The urging of that word “judgement” hath bred
a kind of remorse in me.”

“Yet your mistrust cannot make me a traitor.”

“We do pray for mercy, and that same prayer
doth teach us all to render the deeds of mercy.”

“If I be waspish, best beware my sting.”



Look for these words:

justice

tyranny

words

mercy

rivalry

truth



After the Show...

Test how much you remember:

Which scene is an example of resorting to violence when words fail?

How does Clarence reason with the Murderers in *Richard III*?

What does the word ‘malmsey-butt’ mean?

What three tools can help us better understand Shakespeare’s plays?