

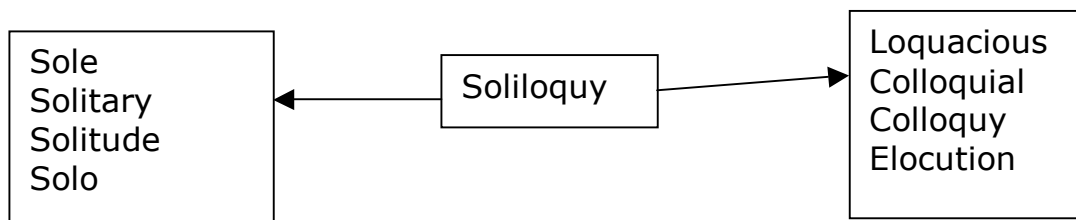
Richard III: Language and Themes – ACTIVITY 1

Focus: Detailed Analysis of Richard’s opening soliloquy:
Act 1, scene 1: considering how character and themes are developed through language.

Starter 5–10 mins

1. Introduce the word soliloquy. On mini whiteboards, ask pupils to deduce its possible meaning from their knowledge of other word meanings by mind mapping, grouping or listing words that are similar: sole, solitaire, solitary, solitude, solo, soliloquy.

2. Hear deductions and clarify meaning. Break the word down into its two halves – Latin solus (sole) and loqui (to speak)



3. Briefly discuss: What could a character tell the audience through a soliloquy that they wouldn’t normally be able to when in company? What could we deduce about a character who is alone?

Teacher-led 15–20 mins

Whole class reading of Richard’s soliloquy (Act 1, scene 1, L1-41). The *Stagework* site says that Barrie Rutter, director of Northern Broadsides’ production of *Richard III* Rutter’s is not concerned with what lies beneath the language, but instead it is the texture and feel of the words themselves that matter to him: he wants his actors to joy in relishing the beauty of the language itself. Experiment by adopting this approach with your class during their first readings of the soliloquy.

Pupils will need to hear or read the soliloquy a number of times to become familiar with the language and meaning. Ideally, enlarge a copy of the soliloquy onto A3 sheets and distribute one to each pupil.

Encourage pupils to actively prepare for various readings of the text by colour highlighting, text marking as necessary. During this section of

the lesson also begin to draw out with the class their developing understanding of the soliloquy and Richard's language. Below are various ways that the soliloquy could be read and explored with the class:

Read around the room with each pupil reading to the next punctuation mark. Repeat this and introduce various effects such as speeding up or getting louder.

Separate the soliloquy into its three main sections (1: L1-13, 2: L14-27, 3: L28-41) and read each one separately, working out with the class what Richard is saying in each section.

Read the soliloquy to the class, but ask pupils to join in with words they identify as key words. Develop this by asking half the class to shout out positive words and half negative (from this Shakespeare's use of antitheses can be illustrated). Compare the effects of whispering, shouting or echoing these key words.

Explore reading key lines in various contrasting tones of voice (angry, excited, secretive, boastful, for instance). What are the different effects created?

End this section of the lesson by clearly checking that the class understand the key points Richard says by focusing on which words really stand out. Highlight some examples of his clever use of language, including puns, antitheses, imagery, alliteration, assonance. Play Conrad Nelson's clip from the *Stagework* site: *Richard III/Performance/Conrad puts the opening soliloquy in his own words*, to consolidate understanding of the soliloquy's meaning.

Development 20–25 mins

NB: The teacher could work with one group as a guided group for this activity – please refer to Guided Plan 1.

Focus: What does Richard's use of language suggest about his character? What themes does Shakespeare introduce?

If necessary briefly model how to text mark, including underlining, highlighting, colour connotations, drawing images, adding notes and key words. Pupils need to text mark their copies of the soliloquy to show 1) Richard's use of language; 2) What his language suggests

about his character; 3) Themes that Shakespeare introduces through the language of the soliloquy.

Possible teacher points for feedback:

1. Language-based points could include:

Antitheses: winter/summer, bruised arms/monuments, stern alarms/merry meetings, dreadful marches/delightful measures, smoothed/wrinkled, mounting/capers, true and just/false and treacherous.

Puns: son of York/sun (York family emblem)/weather symbolism for finishing the war

Imagery – weather metaphors: winter of our discontent...glorious summer, personification of grim-visaged war, mew'd up (metaphor for imprisonment like a caged bird)

Alliteration: brows bound, merry meetings, dreadful marches to delightful measures, piping time of peace

Assonance: summer/son, brows bound, merry/measures, cheated/feature

2. Richard's use of language suggests that he is clever and charismatic. Even though he admits he is not physically attractive, he is dramatically attractive for the audience because he uses language interestingly and imaginatively and talks directly to us. Shakespeare presents us with a confident, charming character who is admirable even though he is clearly evil.

3. Themes could include: physical/moral deformity; good versus evil and the attractiveness of evil; peace versus war; sin; dreams; deception; the soul etc.

Plenary 10 mins

Read the diary entries "His Use of Language" and "He's Lost without his Horse" at www.stagework.org.uk. What are they suggesting about Richard's language? Use these points to summarise the lesson's activities.

Hot seat a pupil as Shakespeare. The class should volunteer questions to him in role to recap the main teaching points of the lesson: What does Richard's soliloquy suggest about his character? What themes does Shakespeare introduce in the opening soliloquy of the play?

Extension suggestions/activities for most able:

- Read the rest of the text or the summary of the events of the play at "About the play" (www.stagework.org.uk). Consider how the soliloquy establishes all the action that will follow.
- Write a soliloquy for your own imaginary character. Try to use language to reveal their character.
- Write a paragraph/short essay that answers the question What does Richard's language in the opening soliloquy suggest about his character?
- Research the idea of a Machiavellian villain and consider Richard in this light.

Resources:

- Mini whiteboards and pens
- A3 photocopies with Richard's soliloquy
- Colours and highlighter pens
- Guided Plan 1

Stagework links:

- About the Play
- Rehearsal Diaries: "His use of language", "He's Lost without his Horse"
- Performance "Conrad puts the opening soliloquy in his own words"

Richard III: Language and Themes – ACTIVITY 2

Focus: Detailed Analysis of Richard’s opening soliloquy:
Act 1, scene 1: The relationship between Richard and us, his audience.

Starter 10 mins

Remind the class of the following scenario and quotation from Act 1, scene 1:

“I am determined to prove a villain”

A character (Richard) explains that he wants to be a villain and has laid dangerous plots.

Distribute Resource Card 1 to pairs (above quotation plus adjective/adverb cards also listed below). The cards show various suggestions for an actor’s use of voice. Ask pupils to discuss these, selecting the 3 that they feel would be most effective for the villain’s voice during his explanation:

Chilling	Secretive	Quick	Playful	Angry	Boastful
Friendly	Sinister	Bored	Confident	Honest	
Loud	Fearful	Slow	Quiet	Excited	
Evil	Upbeat	Sad	Conspiratorial		

Briefly hear several ideas with explanations and discuss contrasting choices. Now ask pairs to experiment with their own voices by using contrasting suggestions from the list as they say the line *“I am determined to prove a villain”*. Hear examples and evaluate different effects created.

Discussion point: How do various choices change the relationship between the character and his listeners? (for instance if it is said in a friendly voice what are the implications for us as the audience?)

Teacher-led 15-20 mins

Preferably on an interactive whiteboard, watch the rehearsal of Richard’s soliloquy from the Stagework site (Rehearsal: “Act 1, Scene 1”). Distribute an A3 photocopy of the scene and ask students to individually take notes on the handout as they listen to the actor Conrad Nelson’s use of voice during the rehearsal of his soliloquy. Model note-taking and annotating the text if needed. For detailed notes and more focused feedback split the class into three sections: 1:

L1-13, 2: L14-27, 3: L28-41. Pupils need to consider volume, pace and tone. Hear feedback from pupils from each group so that all pupils can take notes from across the whole soliloquy.

Discussion points during teacher-led session:

- What is Nelson's chosen use of voice and what impression of Richard does this create?
- How and why does his voice change during the soliloquy? How does this link to the structure of the soliloquy?
- What relationship does Richard have with his listeners and how does Nelson's use of voice emphasise this?

Development 20 mins

NB: The teacher could work with one group as a guided group for this activity

Focus: Richard's relationship with the audience

Organise the class into small groups and distribute Worksheet 1. Each group needs to decide how they would direct the soliloquy for filming for inclusion on the Stagework website. Chosen camera angles should relate to the relationship with the audience they are trying to create (for instance close ups could create a more intimate, conspiratorial, uncomfortable relationship between Richard and us, the audience).

If you have the time and resources this activity can be extended by having groups film a section of the soliloquy using their plans. Compare and discuss various groups' films, focusing on the relationships they create with the audience through the use of camera shots.

Plenary 20 mins

Now watch the filmed version of Richard's soliloquy from the Stagework site (Performance: "Now is the winter of our discontent"). Compare with pupils' own ideas. Focus the discussion on the sequence of long shot cut straight into close up, with Richard looking directly at the camera to emphasise the complicit relationship between him and the audience.

Watch Conrad Nelson's video clip titled "What do audiences find attractive in Richard" (Rehearsal section) and consider his comments that the audience become complicit in Richard's plans, enjoying the "*glint and shimmer*" of Richard's villainy. How does Shakespeare make Richard attractive to us through his language? What is the effect

created by us knowing his plans but being unable to intervene to warn others on stage? What other villains in stories, plays or films do we find we are drawn to and what makes a villain attractive? What might Shakespeare be suggesting about us all if we do admire something of Richard?

Extension suggestions/activities for most able:

- View another filmed version of Richard's opening soliloquy (perhaps Ian McKellen's from the 1996 film). Compare it to Conrad Nelson's on www.stagework.org.uk. How does this actor use his voice and how did the director decide to use camera shots? What relationship is created with the audience here? Evaluate the differences between the two performances of the soliloquy. Imagine you are Shakespeare and explain either orally or in writing your opinions on both versions.
- Read the Stagework web page, Rehearsal, and consider the view shown there that "*although Richard deceives so many people, he is true to the audience with whom, in that opening soliloquy, he strikes up a relationship*". Consider this view and find evidence from across the text to support it. Then write a paragraph entitled 'The relationship between Richard and the audience'.

Resources:

- Ideally, for all lessons show clips from www.stagework.org.uk on an interactive whiteboard for whole class work
- Resource card 1
- A3 photocopies with Richard's soliloquy
- Colours and highlighter pens
- Worksheet 2
- Possible additional resources: video camera

Stagework links:

Rehearsal: "Act 1, Scene 1", "What do audiences find attractive in Richard?"

Performance: "Now is the winter of our discontent"

Richard III: Language and Themes – ACTIVITY 3

Focus: Considering the various points of view held in Act 3, scene 7 (Part 1)

Starter 10 mins:

Distribute pairs with Resource Cards 2 – the quotation taken from Act 3, Scene 7: “MAYOR: *See where his grace stands, 'tween two clergymen*” and ask the class to briefly recap the situation leading to the quotation. (You could also read Buckingham’s lines from earlier in the scene – L44-54 – to ensure the class are clear about the plan of Richard and Buckingham). One by one, give out each of the three point of view cards: Richard, Buckingham, Mayor. Each time ask pupils to decide on what each of the named characters is thinking and feeling at this point in the scene and play. Which characters are thinking and feeling something very different inside to outside? Finally give out the card ‘Audience’ and ask the class to do the same with the audience. What position does the audience have and why?

Teacher-led 10 mins:

Read the scene with the class from line 94 to the end and watch the rehearsal “Act 3, scene 7, Part 1 and 2” together. Demonstrate for the class the Stagework website so that they can research sections of it independently during the lesson. Distribute worksheet 2 and introduce the next task – ask the class to consider in more detail the various points of view in the scene. If needed, model how to start the task/find quotes or take notes as shared reading.

Development 20 mins:

Pupils need to work in pairs or small groups at computers. Each group should use the text and Stagework website to consider the various viewpoints held during the scene. Direct pupils to the following particular areas of the website: the point of view tool for Act 3, scene 7 and the video clips under the rehearsal section of the website: “Between 2 clergymen”, “He doesn’t want the crown”, “Catesby helps both men” and “The mayor’s own reasons for wanting order”, “Act 3, scene 7, Part 1 and 2”. Encourage pupils to spend time with the interactive point of view tool, switching between the various points of view during the scene to compare the viewpoints of characters.

Plenary 20 mins:

Groups share their ideas with the class. Divide the class into four for feedback, hearing about the audience, Richard, Mayor and

Buckingham from the four different areas of the class. Groups could produce feedback on OHTs to share with the rest of the class (perhaps distribute OHTs with photocopies of key sections of the scene or worksheet 2 for pupils to prepare prior to feedback). Where does the dramatic impact of the scene lie?

Extension activity for more able:

- Read Act 3, scene 7 from line 94 to the end. Now re-watch the filmed version of it on the Stagework site. As you watch, mark your copy of the text to show the sections cut by the director. Imagine you are Barrie Rutter, the director. Justify, either orally or in writing, why you made the cuts you did during the scene. Then as yourself, evaluate the cuts. What is gained and lost?

Resources:

- Resource Cards 2
- Worksheet 2
- Enough computers for pairs or small groups to work independently
- OHP+OHT+pens if necessary

Stagework links:

Point of view: Act 3, scene 7

Rehearsal: "Between 2 clergymen", "He doesn't want the crown", "Catesby helps both men" and "The mayor's own reasons for wanting order", "Act 3, scene 7, Part 1 and 2"

Richard III: Language and Themes – ACTIVITY 4

Focus: Considering the various points of view held in Act 3, scene 7 (Part 2)

Starter 10-15 mins:

Open the point of view tool for Act 3, scene 7 and pause it to show the opening image that the audience sees. Briefly discuss its power as a dramatic representation of characters, relationships and themes. In pairs or small groups, pupils create a freeze frame image of a significant line or moment from Act 3, scene 7 (you could either allow each group to decide themselves which moment to freeze or allocate resource cards 3 to groups, which show chosen line/s from the text which can be differentiated). Briefly remind the class of the importance of space, height, facial expressions and body language. Share some of the freeze frames with the class, who must try to work out which quotation the still image reveals.

Teacher-led 10 mins:

Recap the previous lesson's learning on point of view. How are the Mayor and citizens persuaded? Discuss the use of persuasive language with the class. Note how little the Mayor actually says in the scene. Why do you think this is?

Define '*irony*' and '*dramatic irony*' (if necessary) and ask pupils to explain why this scene is deeply ironic throughout, with appearances not being trustworthy and various points of view held or disguised. Discuss the audience's part in the creation of dramatic irony and link to the scene.

Development 20 mins:

Ask pairs or small groups to return to the freeze frame image created earlier in the lesson. Each group show their freeze frame and now the class should choose a character from it and ask them to step out of their image while the others remain frozen. Remaining in role, the character must then say, in as much detail as possible, what they are thinking and feeling at that moment. Discuss whether their inside desires and outside impressions are the same or very different. Then ask the class as the audience what they are thinking and feeling at this point too, focusing on dramatic irony and the audience's complicit role in the deception. Who are the audience supporting and why?

Plenary 20 mins:

Identify and consider the themes the last two lessons have highlighted as the key themes that Shakespeare develops in this scene (religious hypocrisy, appearance and reality, lust for power, play acting within a play, the political power of persuasion and rhetoric, Realpolitik etc). Ask the class to re-cap their learning by creating a mind map of Act 3, scene 7, which shows the relationship between characters, language and themes. This could either be an individual mind map for each pupil, or put together as one huge mind map to be displayed as a reminder of the learning. For the class mind map, enlarge and photocopy the scene and stick the pages in a horizontal line across the centre of a long display board. Give individuals thinking time to consider the areas they would like to cover and during this time begin to ask small groups to visit the wall and add their ideas, writing directly onto the display board backing paper. Pupils could cover or connect many areas including: character, language, and theme. This activity can be effectively differentiated so that the more able pupils visit the wall later when more sophisticated connections can be drawn across the annotations.

Extension activity for more able:

Select a small number of themes that particularly interest you and track their development across the whole of the play. Create a plot line that shows this thematic development.

Find examples of modern-day speakers using rhetoric and persuasion for their own ends. Perhaps watch politicians debating or delivering speeches. Analyse their use of language and compare it to Shakespeare's in *Richard III*.

Resources:

- Resource cards 3
- For the mind map: enlarged photocopies of the scene, display board, marker pens, highlighters etc

Stagework links:

Point of view: Act 3, scene 7

Richard III: Language and Themes – ACTIVITY 5

Focus: Speaking and Listening activity

Starter 5-10 mins:

Ask pupils to select a line from a scene studied so far that they feel is particularly important or significant. Individually, pupils should imagine they are the character saying the line, and must decide on an appropriate use of voice. They should then consider their use of body language and facial expression to accompany the reading of the line. See and briefly discuss some examples.

Teacher-led 10 mins:

Ask pupils to suggest what makes an effective piece of speaking and listening (voice, actions, use of space, effect on audience etc). The S+L Bank has 10 possible speaking and listening tasks. These cover activities for the triplets: explain/describe/narrate; explore/analyse/imagine, and discuss/argue/persuade. Select the activity or activities most appropriate for students and introduce it to the class (the bank includes activities needing varying amounts of space, group sizes and ability). Model how to prepare for the activity and explore the Diary section of the Richard III Stagework site to introduce the idea of the nature of rehearsal.

Development 20 mins:

Pupils plan, script and rehearse their work in groups. Call frequent pauses to hear feedback on group progress. The teacher could work with one group as a guided group for this development section of the lesson (additional time may be needed here).

Plenary 20 mins:

Watch the speaking and listening performances. If possible, photograph freeze frames or video performances and watch them on an interactive whiteboard to structure evaluative, constructive feedback from the class. Target setting for the next speaking and listening activity.

Extension activity for more able:

More able drama students could work at the same activities from the S+L bank, but take on a director's role within the group or themselves create an additional speaking and listening bank for you to use again.

Resources:

- Speaking and Listening Bank
- If possible a digital camera/video camera/interactive whiteboard (These are not essential but will enable your class to evaluate work more effectively in the plenary)

Stagework links:

Introduction: "You get to use your own voice" "Origins of Northern Broadside"

Rehearsal: "Act 1, Scene 1", "What do audience's find attractive in Richard?"

Performance: "Now is the winter of our discontent"