

Topics: Differences between plays and films; plots and emotions
Level: B2
Time: 90 minutes

Aims

- to improve speaking and reading skills
- to teach/revise vocabulary for stage plays and emotions
- to encourage students to think about what goes into a plot

Introduction

This lesson provides an introduction to plays and plots. It explores the differences between plays and films with a reading comprehension. It introduces different emotions with a word search. It looks briefly at the basic elements of some Shakespeare plays and gives students an opportunity to devise a simple plot. Students will practise their speaking and reading skills.

Preparation

Copy and cut out the cards for **Task 4 – Devising a plot for a play** before the class starts, so they are ready for the task. The cards can be found at the end of the lesson plan. You will need one complete set of cards for every 10 students and one spare set.

Procedure

Warmer – Discussion about going to the theatre (10 mins)

- Ask the students if they ever go to the theatre.
- Ask them what different kinds of entertainment are put on at the theatre.

Suggested answers: Plays, musicals, opera, ballet, pantomime.

- Check that the students know what they all mean and then ask them which they prefer to watch and why.
- Ask the students if they can think of some similarities between the different genres.

Suggested answers: They all have a simple but dramatic story/plot. There is often a problem that the characters must solve and this problem can cause strong emotions, like fear or jealousy. Most importantly, they are all performed live.

Task 1 – Differences between plays and films (30 mins)

This exercise is to improve reading skills and speaking skills. It introduces vocabulary that will be used for **Task 4 – Devising a plot for a play**.

- Ask students to work in pairs and discuss whether they prefer going to see a play or a film and why.
- Feedback students' views and discuss as a class.

Suggested answers for why students may prefer a play:

It is exciting to watch actors acting live, especially if you are sitting near the front.

You can read the play beforehand or afterwards and study the words.

Set design for plays can be very imaginative and interesting.

Suggested answers for why students may prefer a film:

You can see actors' faces clearly in a film and understand their emotions.

As films are shown nationally/internationally, you can discuss the film with lots of people afterwards.

Films can be shot in real locations, making them seem more realistic.

- Give out **Task 1 – Differences between plays and films.**
- Tell students that they are now going to read about the differences between plays and films from an actor's point of view.
- Ask students to read the text and decide if the actress Tamara prefers plays or films.
Suggested answer: She prefers acting in plays. Although they are harder work and she gets less money, Tamara seems more excited about acting in plays.

- Now ask students to read the text again and fill in the boxes below.
- Elicit answers.

Suggested answers

Advantages of acting in a film	Advantages of acting in a play
<p><i>She can earn a lot of money in a film.</i></p> <p><i>Films are watched by a lot of people.</i></p> <p><i>She gets better known.</i></p> <p><i>She enjoys film premieres, wearing a posh frock, walking on the red carpet and seeing her photo in the newspapers.</i></p> <p><i>She doesn't get much publicity from plays.</i></p> <p><i>She finds plays are harder work: she has to act every night for six weeks or longer.</i></p> <p><i>She worries about forgetting her lines, dropping a prop or falling off the stage when she acts in a play. In a film, if she makes a mistake, it can be re-shot.</i></p>	<p><i>Performing live in front of an audience is very rewarding.</i></p> <p><i>She has a direct contact with people and she can feel them reacting to her emotions.</i></p> <p><i>She has time to really work on the character.</i></p> <p><i>She gets to know the play inside out and she can climb inside the playwright's head and explore his creative thoughts.</i></p> <p><i>She gets to know and love the other characters, even the villains.</i></p> <p><i>She gets to know the other actors and they usually become very close friends.</i></p> <p><i>She tells a new story every night.</i></p>

- Now ask students to match the five words highlighted in the text to the definitions.
- Check answers.

Answers:

- the author of a play....**playwright**
- where the actors stand and perform in a theatre....**stage**
- a person in a play or film that the actor must pretend to be....**character**
- an object used by the actors in a play or film, for example a telephone....**prop**
- the words an actor speaks in a play or film....**lines**
- a section of a play or film which happens in one place...**scene**

Task 2 – Vocabulary: emotions (10 mins)

This exercise introduces/revises different emotions that are often used by playwrights. It introduces vocabulary which will be useful for **Task 3 – What exactly happened?**

- Give students **Task 2 – Vocabulary: emotions**.
- Check the answers.

Answers for Task 2:

J	C	A	G	R	I	E	F
W	H	A	T	R	E	D	C
X	L	O	Z	L	O	V	E
C	O	U	R	A	G	E	Q
H	N	N	A	N	G	E	R
J	E	A	L	O	U	S	Y
P	G	U	I	L	T	L	X
F	M	K	F	F	E	A	R

- anger
- guilt
- grief
- love
- hatred
- fear
- courage
- jealousy

- Ask concept questions about the words, e.g.
 - *Do most of the words have a positive or negative meaning? (negative)*
 - *Which words have a positive meaning? (suggested answers: love; courage)*
 - *Is grief exactly the same as sadness? (no) Why not? (grief tends to involve a loss, usually death)*
- Elicit other words for emotions. e.g.
 - *What is another word for jealousy beginning with e (envy)*
 - *What is another word for happiness, beginning with j? (joy)*
 - *What is another word for sadness, also beginning with s? (sorrow)*
 - *What is the opposite of hope? (despair)*

Task 3 – Emotions and plots in Shakespeare’s plays (10 mins)

This task is a light-hearted glimpse of the basic elements of three different Shakespeare plays. Students do not need to know the plots in order to do the exercise. Or, they may know the original plot but come up with a plot that is better. The exercise prepares students for **Task 4 – Devising a plot for a play**.

- Taking each of the boxes in turn, ask students if they know or can guess the basic plot of each play.
- Write any suggestions on the board and get students to call out with further ideas or amendments, encouraging them to improve on the original if they want to.
- Encourage the students to think which emotions play a role in the stories.

Summary plot-lines

Macbeth: *Macbeth is a Scottish lord who longs to be king. With his wife’s encouragement, he kills the king with a dagger and crowns himself king of Scotland. However he must then kill other people to keep the crown. One of them starts to haunt him, as a ghost. His wife is overcome with guilt and dies and Macbeth is eventually killed in battle.*

Romeo and Juliet: *Romeo and Juliet are two young lovers, but their families are at war. When Juliet is told by her family that she must marry someone else, a priest gives her a sleeping potion that will make it look as if she is dead. The priest tries to let Romeo know about the plan, but does not manage to tell him in time. Romeo thinks Juliet is dead and kills himself with poison. When Juliet wakes up, and finds Romeo dead, she commits suicide with his dagger.*

Merchant of Venice: *A young man borrows a bag of gold from a moneylender, promising that, if he cannot pay him back, he will give the moneylender a pound of his flesh. When he cannot pay, the moneylender takes the young man to court. A young lady disguises herself as a lawyer in order to help the young man. She tells the banker he can have a pound of flesh, as long as he doesn’t spill a drop of blood.*

Task 4 – Devising a plot for a play (30 mins)

- Divide the students up into groups. Groups can number between three to five students. One set of task cards is needed for every three groups with one set as a spare.
- Take the **Character cards** and, without showing them the words on the back, ask each group to pick two cards. Do the same with the **Emotion cards** and **Prop cards**, making sure that a different group picks first every time. Each group should end up with:
 - two Character cards
 - two Emotion cards
 - and two Prop cards.
- Tell the groups to think of a simple plot for a play that uses all their different cards. They can add in other characters, emotions and props, but they must include the ones that they already have. If a group gets stuck, they can exchange three cards with the ones in the spare set.
- When the groups have finished, ask a spokesperson from each group to tell the whole class which cards their group picked and how they turned them into a story.

Extension activity

Ask the students if they can write the first scene of their play in groups.

Homework

Ask the students to write a review of a film or a play that they have seen recently.

Emotion cards

Emotion: Hate	Emotion: Guilt	Emotion: Envy
Emotion: Love	Emotion: Courage	Emotion: Fear

Character cards

<p>Character:</p> <p>An old rich banker</p>	<p>Character:</p> <p>A king who has lost his memory</p>	<p>Character:</p> <p>A beautiful young woman who is poor</p>
<p>Character:</p> <p>A young prince who doesn't have parents</p>	<p>Character:</p> <p>A man who wants to be king</p>	<p>Character:</p> <p>A woman who is in prison</p>

Prop cards

Prop: A knife	Prop: Poison	Prop: A bag of gold
Prop: A letter	Prop: A ghost	Prop: A basket with a baby in