

Shakespeare

Topic

William Shakespeare

Aims

- To learn about Shakespeare
- To practise reading skills
- To practise question formation
- To develop speaking skills

Age group

12 – adult

Level

B1 / B2

Time

60 minutes

Materials

1. Shakespeare student worksheet and reading texts
2. Internet links: http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/people/william_shakespeare/ - BBC History page on Shakespeare
<http://www.britainexpress.com/History/bio/shakespeare.htm> - Good concise history of Shakespeare
<http://www.william-shakespeare.info/> - Website dedicated to The Bard

Introduction

Language Assistants have mentioned that they are sometimes asked to give lessons about Shakespeare. This lesson may help you to get started when planning a lesson based on Shakespeare. Feel free to pick and choose the tasks that are appropriate for the age and level you are teaching. If you need encouragement to bring Shakespeare into your classroom in the first place (!) read this article by Jo Bertrand before you begin your lesson planning:

<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/shakespeare-teens>

There are more materials available on Shakespeare on the Teaching English website which would work well in combination with some of the tasks here. The links are:

<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/shakespeare-extracts>

<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/much-ado-about-nothing>

Task one introduces Shakespeare as the topic for the lesson. Task two is a quiz which will help you to discover how much, or how little your students already know about the great man. Task three is a short reading activity for students to do in pairs and task four is a speaking activity to get students talking a little about the world of theatre. The final task is aimed at higher levels and asks student to complete the famous Shakespeare quotes.

Procedure

1. Introduce the topic – Who am I?	<p>Before giving out the worksheet, tell your students to imagine that you're a very famous Briton! Get them to ask you 'yes/no' questions until they guess who you are. (You are Shakespeare!) If you want to, play a few more rounds of the guessing game using other famous Britons, or use it in another class to practise question forms again.</p> <p>Alternatively, write an anagram of WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE such as MALILIW RAKESHAPEES on the board and have a race to see which student can find the name first.</p>
2. Task 1 – Shakespeare mind map	<p>Once you have established that Shakespeare is going to be the topic for the lesson, write the word Shakespeare with a little picture if you are artistic, inside a bubble on the board. Ask students what they know about him or what comes to mind when they think about William Shakespeare. This will help you to know how much or how little your students already know in order to gauge the level of input for the class.</p>
3. Task 2 – Shakespeare Quiz	<p><i>You could ask students to do the quiz in pairs or teams, depending on class size, or even do it as a 'pub quiz' with you reading the questions and the answers, and students in teams answering.</i></p> <p><i>Answers: 1-b, 2-a, 3-c, 4-a, 5-b, 6-c, 7-b, 8-a</i></p>
4. Task 3 – Information gap reading	<p>Put students into pairs to do this activity, but first put them in pairs of As with As and Bs with Bs. That way, before students begin speaking they need to read the text carefully and prepare the questions that they are going to ask their partner together. The first</p>

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question is given as an example. You may need to help your students write the questions and use this as an opportunity to review question forms. Once students have written their questions, you can re-group them into pairs of A and B, and then they can ask their questions to complete their texts. Here's the complete text for you to check the students' answers:

William Shakespeare was a poet and a playwright, and is widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English language. He was born in Stratford-upon-Avon, in central England, in 1564 and he died in 1616. His surviving work consists of 38 plays, 154 sonnets (a special type of poem with 14 lines), and some other poems. He is best known for his plays which have been translated into every major language and are performed more than those of any other playwright in the world.

When William Shakespeare was 18 years old he married Anne Hathaway, and they had three children. Shakespeare went to London to work as an actor and a writer. In 1599 the Globe Theatre was built in London and it was in this theatre, situated on the banks of the River Thames, that some of Shakespeare's plays were first performed. In 1613 the theatre was destroyed by a fire. However, a modern reconstruction of the theatre was built near the original site in 1997 so even today you can go to the Globe Theatre to see one of Shakespeare's plays.

5. Task 4 - Find someone who...

The aim of this task is to get students talking to each other. Your students may well be familiar with the classic 'Find Somebody Who..' task. First get students to complete the last row with something they'd like to find out about their classmates, then remind students how important the extra information column is. Demonstrate a few of the question forms or elicit these from students and if necessary write the questions on the board to support weak students during the task. For example, 'Can you name three of Shakespeare's plays?' and 'Have you ever seen a film of a Shakespeare play?' etc. When your students are ready to start, make sure everyone is standing up and has something to lean on and a pen with them, and off they go. As students are speaking to each other and completing the table make sure you monitor carefully so you can offer some constructive feedback at the end

6. Task 5 – Complete the Shakespeare quotes

This is a task for higher levels, as it's quite challenging. Put students into small groups or pairs and give your students time to try and match the quotes. If you like, cut up a set of quote halves so students can move them around on a table to experiment with different combinations. Encourage your students to look for words that normally go together, such as 'borrow and lend' or 'blind and see'. Then check their answers and ask them what they understand by them.

Answers: 1. d), 2. g), 3. a), 4. h), 5. b), 6. c), 7. f), 8. e)

Contributed by

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