

Shakespeare – The Tempest

Topic

Shakespeare's *The Tempest*

Aims

- Learners will practise listening skills
- Learners will practise speaking skills
- Learners will develop writing skills with a descriptive text
- Learners will develop vocabulary skills

Age group

Teens

Level

B1–B2

Time

45 minutes or three shorter sections

Materials

- Video from LearnEnglish Teens <http://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/uk-now/literature-uk/shakespeare-tempest>
- The Tempest student worksheet

Introduction

In this lesson, students will watch a video about Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. There is an introduction activity where students discuss magical powers, they will watch a video and check their understanding of the story, and finally students work in pairs to write a message in a bottle from Miranda, one of the characters from the play. There are also suggestions for alternative/additional follow-up activities.

Procedure

1. Introduction to the video (5–10 minutes)

- Put students into groups of three or four. Ask them to brainstorm different magical superpowers (e.g. the ability to fly, the ability to read people's mind, etc.). Ask them for a couple of suggestions first to get them on the right track. Give them 3 minutes

	<p>to make a list.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After 3 minutes, ask groups to count how many powers they have on their list. The group with the most reads out the list. Put them on the board. Correct any grammar/vocabulary mistakes here. Ask other groups to add any other different powers that they have on the list. • Now ask students in pairs to discuss which two magical powers they would most like to have and what they would do with them. • After 5 minutes, ask students to share their ideas. • Ask students if they think there might be any disadvantages to having magical powers. Again, encourage students to give reasons for their ideas.
2. Preparation activity (5–10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell students that they are going to watch a video about one of Shakespeare’s most original plays. It’s called <i>The Tempest</i>. Do the preparation activity from the LearnEnglish Teens website. It can be found here and is the first task under ‘Preparation’ http://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/uk-now/literature-uk/shakespeare-tempest. This can be done by projecting the page, or by printing off the worksheets. • Alternative: Divide up the words and definitions and put the definitions on one colour card and the words on a different colour card. Ask students to find their partner. Check the answers when students have matched themselves. • When students have completed the task, ask them what they think the play is going to be about, thinking about the words they have just learnt.
3. Watch the video (10–15 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch the video. Students can compare their ideas from the previous task with the real story. • Ask students to do the ‘Check your understanding: reordering task’. Students can do this either on individual computers or as an open-class activity projected onto a screen/IWB, or by printing the worksheet here: http://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/sites/teens/files/the_tempest_-_exercises_0.pdf. Alternatively, cut up the events of the story onto strips of paper and ask students to reorder them in groups as they watch. • Check answers. • Now ask students to do the ‘Check your understanding: true or false’ task. This can either be projected onto a screen/IWB, or students can have a copy of the printed-out worksheet. Alternatively, you could dictate the sentences and ask students to decide if they are true or false in pairs. • Check answers and correct the false statements. • Ask students to make a list of how Prospero uses his magic in the play. Write them up on the board. Do they think he uses it for mainly good or bad purposes? Ask them to discuss this in pairs and give reasons for their answer.
4. Follow-up: A message in a bottle (15–20 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students to imagine what it would be like growing up on a desert island like Miranda in the story. Miranda is portrayed as an innocent young woman in the play, but how would a teenager today react to living alone with their father on an island? Ask students to imagine that, after meeting Ferdinand, Miranda decides she wants to leave the island and return to Italy. • Ask students how they could communicate with the world if living on a desert island. Accept any reasonable answers (no mobile phones/internet!). If someone says a

message in a bottle, that's great. If not, explain that this is a typical way for shipwrecked people to communicate.

- Miranda is going to send a message in a bottle, asking for rescue. Give students the worksheet and go through the ideas with them.
 - *Describe the island – What plants/animals are there? How big is it?*
 - *Weather – Is it hot/cold? Does it rain a lot?*
 - *Food – What are you eating? What food do you miss most?*
 - *Clothes – What do you wear? How do you make clothes?*
 - *Activities – What do you do every day on the island?*
 - *Father – What has your father been doing? How do you feel about it?*
 - *Ferdinand – Describe how you met him and what he's like.*
 - *Ask for help to return to Milan so that you can live with Ferdinand.*

Students can work in pairs to write their message. Help out with grammar/vocabulary and encourage them to use a range of adjectives. When they have finished, you can display their messages on the wall.

**5. Optional
follow-up**

If you would like to do more work with your learners on Shakespeare, go here:

[https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/Teens Shakespeare Extension Activities.pdf](https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/Teens%20Shakespeare%20Extension%20Activities.pdf) for a series of additional/alternative follow-up activities.

Contributed by

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