

## Shakespeare and Manipulation

### Lesson plan

**Topic:** Shakespeare and manipulation

**Level:** B1

**Time:** 70 minutes

**Aims:**

- To develop students' ability to take part in discussions
- To develop students' knowledge of the plot of *Richard III*
- To develop students' ability to listen for information
- To develop students' ability to read a text and answer specific questions.

### Introduction

This lesson is all about manipulation and Shakespeare's play *Richard III*. Students begin by identifying the correct meaning of the word 'manipulate' before taking part in discussions on various situations and deciding whether they are an example of 'manipulation'. Students then listen to two students discussing the plot and put the events of the story in the right order. Students then read a **simplified version** of the famous opening speech from *Richard III* and answer questions on this. Finally, students discuss manipulation in their everyday lives with links to the media, society and their relationships with their friends and family.

### Preparation and materials

Make one copy of the **Student worksheets** for each learner in the class.

For every four students in the class, make one copy of the **Events for ordering in Task 1** and cut them up. This may be easier if you copy onto differently coloured bits of paper.

The **audioscript** of the dialogue used in **Task 1 – listening** is at the end of this lesson plan; you could make copies of this for your students if you wish, although it is not needed for any of the tasks in the lesson.

### Procedure

#### Warmer – what is manipulation? (10 minutes)

- **1.** This section of the lesson allows students to understand exactly what manipulation is.
- Put students into pairs and ask them to read the definitions together and choose the correct answer before you share the answer with the whole class.

**Answer:** c

- **2.** Before you start this task, ask students to read the situations individually and make sure they understand all the words. Take some time to explain any of the expressions or words that they find difficult. This will make the discussion task much easier for students and allow them to produce more language
- In the same groups or pairs, ask students to discuss the situations together and decide if they think they are examples of manipulation. Usually, *manipulation* has negative connotations.

- Below are suggested answers only; you or your students may have different opinions.

**Suggested answers**

- depends on whether you agree the politician will help the people
- probably not manipulation? Perhaps he's doing it for his own good.
- probably not manipulation, just another form of encouragement
- large scale manipulation and exactly what Shakespeare might have done to Richard III

**Task 1 – listening: the plot of *Richard III* (15 minutes)**

- Ask students if they think a member of a royal family would ever manipulate anyone. Ask what they might do.
- Ask students if they have ever heard of the play *Richard III*. If they have, ask them to explain what he was like. Explain that in the play, he is a cruel, manipulative and deformed monster who will stop at nothing to get what he wants.
- Distribute the cut up strips of paper (**Events for ordering in Task 1**) to each group of four students, and ask them to order them while they listen
- Ask students to read the events in the story (**a-h**) before you play the audio to make sure they understand the words. Explain that students won't hear the exact words in the text but will hear examples of paraphrasing.
- Now play the audio through once.
- Elicit the answers below as a full class.

**Answers**

1.e;2.d;3.b;4.c;5.a;6.f;7.h;8.g

**Task 2 – vocabulary (15 minutes)**

- a.** In different pairs, ask students to look at the words and match them up with their definitions. Allow students to use their dictionaries if necessary or an online English-English dictionary on their mobile phones.
- Ask students to feedback the answers below but before you move on, ask students to spend five minutes using the words in sentences with their partner. Of course, because they are working in pairs you won't be able to correct their usage but just trying to use the words in their own constructions with help students remember the words. Elicit and correct some of the sentences pairs have made.

**Answers:** 1 a 2 g 3 e 4 h 5 a 6 d 7 c 8 f

- b.** Ask students to look at the pictures and try to use some of the words from the exercise to describe them. Ask students to do this in pairs before you elicit some answers from the whole class.

**Suggested answers**

1<sup>st</sup> picture – a **wrinkled** hand

2<sup>nd</sup> picture – a **frown** / the woman is **frowning**; perhaps something **dreadful** has happened

3<sup>rd</sup> picture – the swimmer has been **victorious** in her race; perhaps she has won a **glorious** victory for her team or country

**Task 3 – Richard III's opening speech (15 minutes)**

- Here, students read the opening speech of *Richard III*. It's one of the most famous speeches in the English language. It's been made shorter and simpler so that it's easier to understand.
- Before students read, ask them what kinds of things they think a man like Richard, who is ambitious and wants to be king, might want to say at the start of the play. Elicit some suggestions.
- How you do the task is up to you – you may prefer to read the speech yourself, or let the students read it silently.
- Depending on how outgoing your students are, you get them to read the speech to each other in pairs, or ask different students to read the speech out loud. Shakespeare's words were meant to be 'said' rather than read.
- Make sure students understand the speech and explain any words they might find difficult before asking them to complete the questions below.

**Task 4 – reading for detail (10 minutes)**

- Once the students have a reasonably clear idea of the main points in the speech, ask them to look at the questions.
- Draw students' attention to the footnotes, which indicate which line numbers contain the answers; for stronger classes, you could encourage the students to complete the task without this additional support.
- When they have finished, ask them to discuss their answers with a partner.
- Then go through the suggested answers below as a whole class

**Suggested answers:**

1. How do you know people are happy? (line 3) *The clouds from above their houses have gone.*
2. How do you know the war is over? (line 6) *Because war has 'lost his frown' and doesn't want to frighten the enemy. Instead, war wants to dance and walk into lady's bedrooms.*
3. What do you think Richard looks like? How do you know? (line 10) *He's ugly and clumsy. He says he's not 'shaped for sporting tricks' and he also that he has been 'robbed of this fair shape'. In fact, popular opinion has it that Richard was a hunchback.*
4. What kind of a man do you think Richard is? Why? (line 23) *He's very bitter and selfish. All he can think about is himself.*
5. What does 'the winter of our discontent' mean? Why would Richard say it? *If discontent is in winter it must mean that even sadness is unhappy. If sadness is unhappy then it means everyone must be happy. Richard would never say 'everyone is happy', he's too bitter and vicious to say anything positive!*

**Task 5 – discussion (5 minutes)**

- In pairs or small groups ask students to read and discuss the wider questions connected with manipulation. If your class are not very chatty, you could start by doing the first question as a whole group and elicit ideas from students by asking them leading questions. In this way, students will get the idea how to discuss the rest of the questions in pairs.
- After students have finished talking, ask them to feedback some of their ideas to the whole class. Develop any interesting ideas students come up with by asking further questions or encouraging them say more about what they think.

## Transcript

**Jane:** Have you read the Shakespeare play *Richard III*?

**Alex:** No, but I've seen the play and a couple of the films.

**Jane:** Is it any good?

**Alex:** Yeah, the speeches are really good. Especially Richard's: '*Now is the winter of our discontent...*' But Richard is meant to be 'the villain of villains'. If you like baddies and loads of people getting killed, then it's great.

**Jane:** Oh, that doesn't sound very nice. What happens?

**Alex:** Well, basically, there's this horrible prince called Richard, who will do anything, including murder, to become king.

**Jane:** So Shakespeare made him into this unbelievably bad guy. Why would anyone want to watch him?

**Alex:** Well, he's actually really clever with his words and he's really good at controlling people. First of all, he marries an aristocrat called Lady Jane – that's after he's murdered her husband, which she knows about, by the way.

**Jane:** So he manages to manipulate the people around him.

**Alex:** Exactly. Then he kills one of his brothers and manages to put the blame on his elder brother who is the king and is really ill. Because the king thinks his brother's death is his fault, he dies and then Richard becomes the 'protector' of England. Then Richard kills all the lords and people who were loyal to his brother. He even kills the former king's two young sons.

**Jane:** It seems quite hard to believe. I mean, in real life did King Richard III really go round murdering people?

**Alex:** Well, it's still a mystery really. Some people think he did, some say he didn't. Watching the play, you're meant to hate Richard though.

**Jane:** Right. I suppose you've got to think of Shakespeare writing this play in the context of England in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The Queen...

**Alex:** Elizabeth I?

**Jane:** Yeah, well she was only in power because her family had fought a war against Richard III. Elizabeth and her government, I suppose they wanted Richard III, because he was a rival to her family, to be seen as this baddie. So maybe that's why Shakespeare made him so horrible.

**Alex:** Yeah, you might be right. So in a way, Shakespeare was manipulating the audience by making them dislike Richard.

**Jane:** So anyway, in the play, from what you've told me, he does sound really horrible.

**Alex:** I haven't finished yet. He also murders that woman he married... and he tries to marry his niece!

**Jane:** I'm not surprised he had a lot of enemies then.

**Alex:** Exactly. And then, the night before a big battle, Richard has a horrible nightmare and all the people he's killed come back to haunt him and tell him that he will be killed the next day.

**Jane:** And he is?

**Alex:** Oh yeah, but he delivers some great speeches before he is. '*A horse... a horse, my kingdom for a horse!*'

**Jane:** I might as well not watch it now, you've told me what happens.

**Alex:** You did ask!