



# classic repertory company

*This document is intended to give you a sense of the structure, content, and style of our workshops. We can make adjustments to serve any experience level and to suit your specific community. We can also expand to create a longer, more in-depth workshop! Reach out to Sarah Morrisette, Education Associate at [sarahmorrisette@newrep.org](mailto:sarahmorrisette@newrep.org) with any questions.*

## *Introduction to Shakespeare Workshop*

TIME: 75 minutes

AGES: Grades 2 through 6

GROUP SIZE: up to 35

**OBJECTIVE:** To give students an initial introduction to William Shakespeare and his work through silliness, wordplay, games, and songs, in order to remove the stigma, fear, and confusion often associated with studying the Bard for the first time.

**WARM-UP:** We always like to start in a circle and play an introduction game. Once we have people feeling comfortable and ready to be silly and explore, we will play one or two warm-up games. The games we choose vary depending on the size of the group and the nature of the space. We also take into consideration the context with which the students are entering the workshop, and we shape everything accordingly. A few examples of the games we like to play are:

- Opposite of Jackson (full body focus game)
- Cat and Rat (high energy and fun)
- Jana Cubana (high energy and teamwork)
- Pass the Energy (imagination and improv)

With the warm-up we have three primary goals:

- ***Come together as a group*** - The greatest initial barrier is self-consciousness; warm-ups enable students to work together and play together.
- ***Energize*** - Getting the students to move their bodies around and get their hearts pumping is essential to getting them ready for the workshop.
- ***Focus*** - The final step in every warm-up is to transform all of the rowdiness and silliness that gets whipped up by the games into useful, focused energy.

**INTRODUCTION AND FAST FACTS:** We start by giving the students an opportunity to share with us what they know or have heard about the infamous Bard. What preconceived notions do they have coming into this workshop? What do they think of when they think of Shakespeare? Do they know any of his plays? We will then give a brief introduction to William Shakespeare - his life, his plays and sonnets, and why we still study and talk about this man from so long ago! If you've already introduced your students to this information in class, we can take the next step to tell them a little more about his life and the role he plays in theatre worldwide.

**IAMBIC PENTAMETER:** What is iambic pentameter? What does it sound like? Why does he write like that? Pulling from plays like "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and "Romeo & Juliet" along with sonnets like "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?", we examine the role of meter in Shakespeare's writing. We physicalize this meter by having the students clap, stomp, gallop, and jump to the rhythm. What does it feel like to talk and move like that?

**RHYMING SCHEMES:** We take those same lines and look at the different rhyming schemes that he uses. How do the different rhyming schemes make the students feel, what does it tell them about what the person is saying and how they're saying it?

**CREATING NEW WORDS:** Perhaps our favorite part about Shakespeare, and a fact that kids often enjoy, are all the words he contributed to the English vocabulary. Some examples are:

eyeball (Midsummer - Act III, Sc II)  
 manager (Midsummer - Act V, Sc I)  
 moonbeam (Midsummer - Act IV, Sc I)  
 mimic (Midsummer - Act III, Sc II)  
 bedazzled (The Taming of the Shrew - Act IV, Sc V)  
 fashionable (Troilus and Cressida - Act III, Sc III)  
 swagger (Henry V - Act II, Sc IV)  
 uncomfortable (Romeo and Juliet - Act IV, Sc V)

Students are then given the opportunity to make up words of their own for feelings, people, and everyday objects found around their classroom.

**TRYING ON SOME PHRASES:** Now that the students have a basic understanding of Shakespeare and his writing, we break up into smaller groups and give each of them a rhyming couplet from our current production of “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” to explore on their own. CRC members work with the students one at a time to bring the couplet to life. Then we reassemble and any brave students who feel inclined can share their couplet with the group!

**WRAP-UP:** We end the workshop by giving students the opportunity to share their thoughts and experiences about our time together, and to give us feedback. We then finish with a big thank you, and ask all the students to give themselves a round of applause!

**To book a workshop, or get more information contact  
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