

Shakespeare Retold



Age 9 – 11

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Producer: Marie Crook

Teacher's Notes: Stuart Rathe

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Introduction

Shakespeare Retold is a series of ten stories written by well-known children's authors. Each story is inspired by or based on a play by William Shakespeare. These are not straight retellings but stories with a spin, told only the way each individual author could tell them. Some are closer to the original play than others. The stories are intended as a very light introduction to some of the characters and themes found in Shakespeare's plays and have been written to appeal to children at KS2.

These notes include a brief introduction to the author of each story, a synopsis of the Shakespeare play the story was inspired by, a synopsis of the retelling and some ideas for classroom activities to accompany them. We very much hope you enjoy them!

William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare was born in 1564 and died in 1616. 2016 is the 400th anniversary of his death and a great time to celebrate his continuing legacy and introduce him to a new generation of story-lovers. The son of John Shakespeare and Mary Arden, young William grew up in Stratford-upon-Avon, where he attended the local grammar school. At just eighteen, he married Anne Hathaway (eight years his senior) and their marriage produced three children, including twins Judith and Hamnet. Shakespeare travelled to London, where he developed his skills as both a playwright and an actor with his company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men (later called the King's Men under King James I). His plays were performed at both the open air Globe Theatre and the indoor Blackfriars Theatre. He wrote thirty seven plays (categorised as comedies, tragedies and histories) and one hundred and fifty four sonnets. He died on 23 April 1616, at the age of 52 and is now considered by many to be the greatest dramatist in the English language. His plays are still performed all over the world.



King Lear: A Tragedy in Five Acts

By Andy Stanton



Image: Andy Stanton

Andy Stanton lives in North London and is the author of the *Mr Gum* series published by Egmont Books: <http://www.mrgum.co.uk/>

Shakespeare's *King Lear*

In Shakespeare's tragedy of kingship and madness, *King Lear*, Lear is an elderly king of Ancient Britain who decides to split his realm between his three daughters. When he asks them how much they each love him, the calculating Regan and Goneril give lavish declarations of love. His favourite, Cordelia, refuses to play along and simply tells him that she loves him as a daughter should. Lear is furious and banishes Cordelia from the kingdom. Cordelia travels to France, and with her gone, Regan and Goneril's true natures come to the fore - they treat Lear with terrible cruelty and plan to kill him.

Elsewhere, the Duke of Gloucester is convinced by his wicked son Edmund that his other son Edgar is going to murder him, prompting Edgar to take flight, disguised as 'Poor Tom'.

Gloucester learns of Goneril and Regan's plan to murder Lear and warns Lear to escape. Edgar (or 'Poor Tom') meets Lear and Lear's Fool on a blasted heath, where Lear rages in madness at the storm. Meanwhile, the evil Edmund tells the sisters that Gloucester has been helping Lear, for which they gouge out Gloucester's eyes.

Cordelia arrives back in England from France with an army and battles the English, under the wicked Edmund.

The blind Gloucester tries to make his way to Dover and, on the way, finds his good son Edgar, still disguised as 'Poor Tom', and dies in his arms. Cordelia, defeated by the English troops, is captured alongside her father Lear. Edmund orders Cordelia's death.

Goneril and Regan, both in love with Edmund, are soon destroyed by their own evil dispositions and they both die - Goneril is poisoned by Regan and Regan later kills herself.

Edgar, Gloucester's good son, duels with the evil Edmund and kills him, but it is too late to prevent Cordelia's death. Lear enters, carrying Cordelia's body and dies in sorrow at the death of his beloved daughter, leaving the good Edgar to become the new king.

A little about this re-telling

Fun and irreverent, Andy Stanton's retelling of King Lear centres on Lear and his daughters, with many secondary characters in Shakespeare's complex original not making an appearance. The story retains the (almost pantomime) nastiness of the two wicked sisters and the return of good daughter Cordelia, but there is plenty of modern dialogue and silly humour. Lear ultimately asks whether he can jump ship to another Shakespeare play with a happier ending. His choices (*Macbeth*, *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet*) are no happier than his own story, and when he finally asks if he can be transported to a comedy, Cordelia tells him that both he and she have died 'two minutes ago', leading Lear to sigh that 'it's been an absolutely terrible day.'

Ideas for use in the classroom

ENGLISH

Comedy/ History/Tragedy Game

In the retelling, Lear desperately wants to be transported to another Shakespeare play but seems quite confused by the genres of the different plays. This would be a fun opportunity to discuss Shakespearean genres of Comedy, History and Tragedy. The following plot synopsis cards could be printed and cut out for children to sort onto a sugar-paper sorting chart headed 'Comedy/History/Tragedy'.

(See overleaf for grid)

<p>HAMLET</p> <p>Hamlet – the young Prince of Denmark finds out that his dad has been murdered and the murderer is his uncle, who has taken over as king! He plots to take revenge on his evil uncle. He eventually kills him with poison, but Hamlet, his mum, Hamlet's girlfriend and many others die too!</p>	<p>THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR</p> <p>A fat knight called Falstaff wants a new girlfriend – and she has to be rich! He writes love letters to two rich women, but they find out what he is up to and team up to play tricks on him. They throw him in the river, make him dress up as an old woman and convince him that he is being attacked by fairies!</p>
<p>HENRY V</p> <p>Based on the true story of the King of England, who invades France after a French prince sends him an insulting gift of a box of tennis balls. The King wins a massive victory at a place called Agincourt. He eventually marries the French princess.</p>	<p>MACBETH</p> <p>A soldier called Macbeth meets three witches who tell him he will one day be king. He and his wicked wife kill the current king to get him out of the way. Macbeth becomes a cruel and powerful king. Eventually he gets his comeuppance. His wife kills herself and he gets his head chopped off!</p>
<p>COMEDY OF ERRORS</p> <p>Two identical twin brothers are separated by a shipwreck. One brother goes in search of the other but when he arrives in his brother's home town everyone keeps getting the two mixed up. This leads to all sorts of crazy confusion, made worse by the fact that the servants working for the identical brothers are ALSO identical twins.</p>	<p>RICHARD II</p> <p>Based on a true story of the King of England, who was a poor and ineffective ruler. He banishes a lord called Henry Bolingbroke, but Henry returns to England and eventually throws Richard off the throne, becoming king himself.</p>
<p>RICHARD III</p> <p>Based on a true story of the evil Richard, a man determined to become King of England. He even kills his own brother and two princes (who are still children!) in order to get to the throne. He is hated by his people and eventually dies on the battlefield of Bosworth Field.</p>	<p>ROMEO AND JULIET</p> <p>Romeo and Juliet fall in love and secretly marry. The trouble is their families hate each other! It gets worse when Romeo is banished for killing Juliet's cousin in a fight! Juliet pretends to be dead to avoid marrying another man, but Romeo thinks she really is dead and kills himself! Juliet kills herself too when she finds out Romeo is dead.</p>
<p>OTHELLO</p> <p>Army general Othello loves Desdemona and marries her in secret. A captain in the army – Iago – is jealous and convinces Othello that Desdemona has been cheating on him. Othello is driven mad with jealousy and kills Desdemona before killing himself!</p>	<p>MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING</p> <p>Benedick and Beatrice cannot stand the sight of each other! They hate each other so much that their friends think it will be hilarious to trick them into falling in love with each other. Everyone laughs behind their backs as they slowly fall madly in love with each other.</p>

Key:

Hamlet – tragedy

The Merry Wives of Windsor – comedy

Henry V – history

Macbeth – tragedy

Comedy of Errors – comedy

Richard II – history

Romeo and Juliet – tragedy

Twelfth Night – comedy

Henry IV, part 1 and 2 – history

Othello – tragedy

Much Ado about Nothing – comedy

Richard III – history

WANTED POSTERS

Children could create ‘Wanted’ posters for the evil Goneril and Regan complete with artists’ impressions of the wicked duo.

They could also create a ‘Missing’ poster for Lear. This could be particularly fun as they could include some of the hilarious depictions of Lear’s antics (pineapple eating, ceremonial nose-wearing *etc.*) in their descriptions and illustrations. They could also include details of his last known whereabouts (in a shack made of peasant’s hair *etc.*).

SHAKESPEAREAN CHAT SHOW

The dysfunctional family of King Lear would be incredible guests on a tabloid talk show. In groups of five, children could play the talk show host, Lear and his three daughters, who should be invited on to the show

one by one. Before devising their dramas, mind map the questions they might ask, such as:

- Cordelia: why did you not tell your father how much you loved him?
- Goneril: why didn't you let your dad stay with you after he gave you half his kingdom?
- Lear: what did you think when you realised your two daughters were only after your money?

It might also be wise to share a simplified version of the original Shakespeare tale (as per the summary in these teachers' notes) with children to develop in depth questions for the characters.

COMPUTING/MUSIC

At the centre of the story of Lear is the terrible storm through which Lear rages in his madness. Children could use a combination of percussion instruments and computer software, websites and apps, including sound effects such as those found at: <http://www.freesoundeffects.com> to create, record, refine and edit compositions based on a Lear's storm. They could write their own descriptions of the storm and record themselves reading these, editing their own voices into their 'storm' compositions using editing software.

HISTORY/ ENGLISH/ RE

SHAKESPEARE'S SOURCES

Shakespeare usually used a number of historical sources when writing his plays. One interesting source for primary aged children is the Indian folk story or fairy tale called '*Love Like Salt*' or '*Water and Salt*' which features a king and his daughters. The youngest, and favourite, daughter, says that she loves her father like water and salt – meaning that she needs his love to live – but he is unimpressed with her response, compared with those of her sisters, and sentences her to death. The story can be found for free online and could be used in the study of morality stories from other cultures in addition to providing an interesting comparison/companion piece to *Lear*.



Macdeath

By Pamela Butchart



Pamela Butchart lives in Dundee and teaches philosophy to teenagers. She won the Blue Peter Book Award in 2015 for her book *The Spy Who Loves School Dinners*, which is published by Nosy Crow. Her latest books are *Pugly Bakes and Cake* (Jan 2016) and *Attack of the Demon Dinner Ladies* (Feb 2016).

Shakespeare's *Macbeth*

Macbeth is one of Shakespeare's bloodiest tragedies. With its mixture of murder, ghosts, witchcraft and general mayhem, it is always a huge hit with Primary-aged children.

Macbeth is the Thane of Glamis, and a valiant warrior of feudal Scotland. At the start of the story he meets three weird sisters on the battlefield, who tell him that he will be king and his friend Banquo will be a father of kings. He confides in his wife, the ruthless Lady Macbeth, and together they plot to kill the current King, Duncan, and to frame the king's guards for the murder.

Following the murder, Macbeth is crowned king, fulfilling the witches' prophecy. However, he becomes increasingly uneasy regarding the witches' forecast for Banquo's heirs and hires assassins to kill Banquo. He succeeds, but Banquo's son Fleance escapes.

A distressed Macbeth, haunted by the ghost of Banquo, seeks out the witches. They tell him that he cannot be killed by anyone born of woman and that he will remain king until the woods march on his castle. They also tell him to beware Macduff, the Thane of Fife. On the back of this, Macbeth murders Macduff's young family.

Lady Macbeth succumbs to guilt and dies in distress. Macbeth is finally defeated by Macduff, who marches with an army carrying branches (the prophesied 'marching' woods) and reveals that he was cut from his mother's womb (and so not technically 'born of woman'). The play ends with the evil Macbeth's head being presented to Malcolm, the new king of Scotland.

A little about this re-telling

In this adaptation, the narrator is a primary school pupil who volunteers to tell the story of Macbeth to her classmates. What follows is an exuberantly funny version of the tale told in a distinctively modern and childlike voice.

Ideas for use in the classroom

Witches (when they first see Macbeth)	All hail, Macbeth! That shalt be King hereafter
Lady Macbeth (giving advice to Macbeth about the killing of Duncan)	Look like the innocent flower, But be the serpent under it.
Macbeth (as he makes his way to kill King Duncan)	Is this a dagger which I see before me, The handle toward my hand?
Macbeth (when he sees the ghost of Banquo at his dinner table)	Hence, horrible shadow! Unreal mockery, hence!
Witches (as Macbeth visits them after Banquo's murder)	Double, double toil and trouble; Fire burn and cauldron bubble.
Witches (as they hear Macbeth approach)	By the pricking of my thumbs, something wicked this way comes
Macbeth (as he hears of the approaching army come to attack him)	What's he That was not born of woman? Such a one Am I to fear, or none.
Macduff (presenting Macbeth's severed head to Malcolm)	Behold where stands The usurper's curséd head. Hail, king of Scotland!

ENGLISH

1. Introduce some of the key dialogue spoken by the play's characters. The above pieces of dialogue are presented in chronological order. They could be printed on card and handed out to children for them to familiarise themselves with. (See possible approach to introducing Shakespearean language in the Drama section on the next page).

2. **Campfire stories**

The way the narrator tells this story is reminiscent of spooky campfire stories; both funny and scary. Once the children are familiar with the broadcast and have been introduced to some of the dialogue from the play (above), you could have them sit in a circle and retell the story of Macbeth from memory, using speech and drama to really add to the performance (eg speaking in a witchy voice or remembering and re-using some of the actual dialogue in the appropriate parts of the story).

The story can be passed around the circle by saying '*...and then...*' when a child has finished speaking their part.

This is non-confrontational as a child can simply pass the baton without saying anything if they do not remember any detail by simply saying '*and then...*' rather than adding anything further.

3. **Writing spells.**

Macbeth features arguably the most famous spell in English literature. This is perfect for learning and reciting (in line with the KS2 curriculum requirements)

Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn, and caldron bubble.
Fillet of a fenny snake,
In the caldron boil and bake;
Eye of newt, and toe of frog,

Wool of bat, and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork, and blind-worm's sting,
Lizard's leg, and owlet's wing,—
For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.

Children could create their own magic spells using the same opening and closing couplets but with their own disgusting ingredients in between! It is worth noting that there are 7 syllables for each of the 'ingredients' lines which children could recite and clap as a whole class. Can they make their own 'ingredients' lines 7 beats long?

4. Print the following statements onto card or write them on the whiteboard. Once children are familiar with the story they can discuss and debate these opinions or write a persuasive/balanced argument based on one of the statements.
 - Lady Macbeth is evil. She has no good qualities
 - Macbeth is the hero of the story
 - The witches control everything in the story
 - There are no innocent characters in the story
5. The narrator tells us some really funny facts in modern child-speak about Macbeth (what he eats for breakfast, what nickname he uses for Lady Macbeth *etc.*) and about Lady Macbeth (that she steals crisps on the playground and makes people peel grapes for her *etc.*).

Children could create a table of further 'modern child-speak facts' about key characters including Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, Banquo, Macduff and the Witches, giving clues about their characters.

HISTORY

Duncan (1034 – 40) and Macbeth (1040 – 57) were real kings of Scotland. Children could research the real stories of these two kings and compare Shakespeare's story with historical fact.

DRAMA AND PERFORMANCE

Break the story down into 10 sentences (or have the children do this once they are familiar with it). Divide up the 10 sentences between groups of 3 or 4 and have them freeze frame their individual sentences. Put this together for a quick whole-class retelling of the whole story

When introducing dialogue (see above) print off dialogue cards and give each child one card. Ask all children to move around the classroom space, quietly muttering their line. After a while give them an instruction to say the line differently (eg to say it like it was a secret, to shout it to the top of a mountain, to say it as if it was the punchline of a joke, as if performed by a hammy actor, *etc*). Once the children are familiar with their line some may want to perform it to the whole class, but this time in context as the character from the story.

- **ART**

The narrator of the story gives some fantastic descriptions of the witches. Children could create their own depictions of the witches based on the description from this re-telling or by researching previous incarnations of the witches in film, theatre and art.

Children could create a 'Wanted' poster for Macbeth and/or Lady Macbeth detailing their horrific crimes.



The Tempest: The Isle of Noises

By Frank Cottrell-Boyce



Frank Cottrell-Boyce is a screenwriter and novelist. His debut children's novel, *Millions*, won the 2004 Carnegie Medal and was shortlisted for the Guardian Children's Fiction Award. His second novel, *Framed*, was shortlisted for the 2005 Whitbread Children's Fiction Award and has also been shortlisted for the 2005 Carnegie Medal. His third novel, *Cosmic*, was shortlisted for the Carnegie Medal, the Guardian Children's Fiction Prize and the Roald Dahl Funny Prize.

Shakespeare's *The Tempest*

This programme is inspired by *The Tempest*, which is thought to be the last play that Shakespeare wrote. Some of its speeches and themes are seen as an explicit farewell from Shakespeare to his audience. It is also one of only two plays (the other being *A Midsummer Night's Dream*) whose plot is entirely Shakespeare's invention.

It tells the story of Prospero, the Duke of Milan, who is usurped by his evil brother and banished with his infant daughter Miranda. They reach an island governed by a witch, Sycorax and her son Caliban. Prospero defeats the witch, enslaves Caliban and frees a spirit called Ariel from the witch's clutches. Prospero himself becomes a mighty sorcerer and takes Ariel as his spirit servant.

When the ship of Alonso (King of Naples) strays near the island, Prospero conjures a storm, knowing that his treacherous brother is aboard ship. Prospero plays various tricks on the shipwrecked sailors, who include a pair of comic drunkards called Stephano and Trinculo (worshipped as gods by Caliban) and Ferdinand, the son of King Alonso, who falls madly in love with Miranda.

After much trickery, the play ends with a reconciliation between Prospero and his brother, the promise of marriage for Miranda and Ferdinand and the freeing of the spirit Ariel. Caliban, who has been ineptly plotting Prospero's overthrow with the two drunkards, is forgiven, and Prospero decides to give up his magic and return to Milan.

A little about this re-telling

In *The Isle of Noises*, we meet a 'real life' shipwrecked sailor, Ned Blood, who has a chance encounter with Shakespeare outside the Blackfriars Theatre and goes on to help Shakespeare create some of the special effects used in the first performances of *The Tempest* at Blackfriars. Ned's own shipwreck story seems to inspire Shakespeare to write Caliban's famous lines describing the magic of the island, '*Be not afeard, The isle is full of noises*' and Ned appears to recognise in the final lines of the play that Shakespeare is saying farewell to the theatre with a crowning achievement that (to use Ned's words) 'is like every play you have ever written sir...'

Ideas for use in the classroom

HISTORY

Ned's chance encounter with Shakespeare is outside the Blackfriars Theatre. This was an indoor playhouse used by Shakespeare in his later career. Plays would often be performed during the summer at the outdoor Globe theatre and during winter in the more intimate, indoor Blackfriars. Children could research the history of theatre entertainment in Shakespeare's times including both the Globe and Blackfriars. There are some excellent resources for children on the official website of Shakespeare's Globe (which houses working reconstructions of both original theatres)

<http://www.shakespearesglobe.com/playground>

<http://www.shakespearesglobe.com/discovery-space/fact-sheets>

A virtual tour of the Globe theatre is included here

<http://www.shakespearesglobe.com/about-us/virtual-tour>

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY/ COMPUTING

Children could research the design of the Globe and Blackfriars theatres, then design sketches/ cross sections for their own modern or Elizabethan outdoor or indoor theatre, with a view to making and evaluating their own designs.

MUSIC/COMPUTING

The Tempest is one of Shakespeare's most lyrical and musical plays. Musical interludes were very popular in the indoor theatre (and partly necessary to allow intervals for trimming candle wicks!) One of the most famous songs is Ariel's song:

*Full fathom five thy father lies;
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes:
Nothing of him that doth fade*

*But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell
Burthen Ding-dong
Hark! now I hear them,--Ding-dong, bell.*

Children could improvise and compose their own melodies or accompany a recital of this song with appropriate percussive sound effects.

The Isle of Noises has a real focus on sound effects, which Ned helps to develop. Children could create their own percussive accompaniments for key aspects of the story such as the creation of *The Tempest*/ shipwreck and try to emulate/ modify the sound effects used in the broadcast.

CREATIVE WRITING

Children could create their own magic spells to conjure up a storm, just as Prospero does at the start of the play. This could be done as an acrostic poem spelling out **TEMPEST**.

Children could write a series of diary entries for Ned Blood based on his meetings with Shakespeare in the re-telling.

They could write an empathetic poem or story from the perspective of Caliban as Prospero's slave.

DRAMA AND PERFORMANCE

Caliban's speech about the strangeness and beauty of the island is perfect for a poetry discussion, leading to a recital by heart in line with KS2 Curriculum requirements.

*Be not afeard; the isle is full of noises,
Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.
Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
Will hum about mine ears, and sometime voices
That, if I then had waked after long sleep,
Will make me sleep again: and then, in dreaming,*

*The clouds methought would open and show riches
Ready to drop upon me that, when I waked,
I cried to dream again.*

Children could be encouraged to freeze-frame parts of the story of *The Tempest* (the banishment of Prospero and Miranda/ The crew of the ship during *The Tempest*/ Caliban being ordered to work by Prospero/ the drunkards worshipping Caliban as a God/ the meeting of Miranda and Ferdinand etc.) and/or of Ned's own story.

Thought-tracking techniques could be used in conjunction with the freeze-framing to encourage children to think about how the principal characters feel at key points in the story.

ART

What do Caliban and/ or Ariel look like? They are fantastical and magical creatures and have been depicted on stage and in paintings for centuries. Children could look at pictures of recent and historical portrayals and create their own designs.

PSHE/ RE

Was Prospero a good man or a bad man? He has been badly treated by his brother and he obviously loves his daughter Miranda dearly, but he does some bad things too; he takes the island away from Sycorax and enslaves Caliban (and arguably Ariel too). He also seeks revenge by raising the tempest. This could form an interesting moral discussion about his character.



The Taming of the Kat Dog

by Gareth P. Jones



Gareth P. Jones is from Birmingham and has been writing since he was a child. His first book was *The Dragon's Detective Agency* and he has written many books since then, including *Ninja Meercats* and *The Adventures of the Steampunk Pirates* series. *The*

Thornthwaite Inheritance was shortlisted for eleven local book awards and won seven of them and *The Considine Curse* was voted Blue Peter Book of the Year 2012.

Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*

The Taming of the Shrew is Shakespeare's controversial 'battle of the sexes' comedy. In the play, the wealthy Baptista Minola is desperate to marry off his headstrong eldest daughter Katherine. When suitors take an interest in his milder, younger daughter Bianca, he makes it clear that Bianca cannot be married until Katherine has a husband. Petruchio, deeply in debt, sees an opportunity to solve his money troubles by marrying the rich man's eldest daughter and decides to woo Katherine. He agrees upon a wedding date with Baptista, who can barely believe his luck in marrying off his troublesome eldest.

Petruchio arrives inappropriately dressed and horribly late to the wedding. He takes Katherine away to his country home and treats her badly in an attempt to 'tame' her out of her 'shrewish' behaviour. Free to marry, Bianca takes a young man Lucentio to be her husband, despite the efforts of a number of other ardent suitors. Katherine and Petruchio attend the wedding feast, where Petruchio proves Kate to be the most obedient new wife by making her come when called, to the consternation of the other men, who had assumed that the mild-mannered Bianca would be more dutiful than the spirited Katherine.

A little about this re-telling

The notion of 'taming' a woman being unsuitable for today's audience, Gareth P. Jones in his story *The Taming of the Kat Dog*, replaces the characters Katherine and Bianca in Shakespeare's play with two pedigree dogs from the same litter. Kat is the poorly behaved, feisty pup. Bianca is the delightful pup who breeder Mrs Minola refuses to sell until a willing owner is found for the troublesome Kat. The role of Petruchio is taken by Peter, a young boy who agrees to take ownership of Kat, but plays a number of tricks on her (some very similar to the tricks played by Petruchio on Katherine) until Kat eventually grows into a well-trained puppy, who seems even more responsive to her new owner than Bianca.

Ideas for use in the classroom

SHAKESPEAREAN INSULTS

In the original play, the war between Kate and Petruchio results in some of Shakespeare's most waspish banter. Children could imagine that they are Kate or Petruchio at the start of their relationship and insult each other. Pick and mix Shakespearean insults are huge fun. A printable template can be found at either the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust's Shakespeare Week site (which is free to join) or at the website PlayingWithPlays. Have children create insults and incorporate these in drama activities based on the story.

<http://shakespeareweek.org.uk/topics/drama-and-talking-shakespeare/#>

<http://playingwithplays.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/shakespeare-insult-generator.pdf>

ENGLISH

1. This version of the story modernises the tale and removes some of the archaic elements of the relationship between men and women. After listening to the broadcast, give out the summary of the original story below and see if children can spot similarities and differences between the two texts. This could lead to some interesting discussions. *Why might this play be considered a 'problem play' today? Why did the author change the play to make it about an owner and dog rather than husband and wife? Why is this play 'of its time'? Is the play 'sexist'? What was the role of man and woman in the time of Shakespeare? How has this changed?*

Children could follow up the discussion by researching the traditional roles of men and women in Shakespeare's time compared with modern times. They could go on to look at the emancipation of women throughout history including the suffragette movement.

1. Bianca has many admirers but her rich father Baptista will not allow her to get married before her feisty older sister Katherine.
2. One of the Bianca's admirers asks his friend, Petruchio to marry Katherine so that Bianca will be free to marry.
3. Petruchio doesn't have much money and marriage to someone from a rich family would be good for him!
4. Petruchio agrees to marry Katherine, even though Katherine is rude and insulting to him on their first meeting.
5. Petruchio turns up late for his own wedding, dressed in terrible clothes. He takes Katherine off to live with him in his country house without even staying for the wedding reception.
6. When they arrive home, Petruchio says that the food has been burned by the cook (even though there is nothing wrong with it). He will not allow Katherine to eat ruined food so she gets nothing to eat at all!
7. Next, Petruchio tells Kate that he is not happy with the beautiful dress that he has ordered for her. He shows it to her and she loves it, but he claims it is ugly and tells her to wear rags instead.
8. Bianca is to marry an admirer called Lucentio. Petruchio and Katherine are invited to the wedding.
9. On the way to the wedding, Petruchio tells Katherine that the sun shining in the sky is actually the moon. She is so tired of all their arguments that she simply agrees with him.
10. At the wedding dinner Petruchio and Lucentio have a bet about which wife is the most pleasant and obedient. Everyone expects Bianca to be the most pleasant, knowing Katherine's rude manner. However, everyone is surprised at the change in Kate, who is quicker to join her husband's side than Bianca.

2. Using the above summary, groups of children could be given two or three of the ten points from the original Shakespeare story to 'freeze frame' for an instant dramatization of the tale.
3. Children could create a 'for sale' poster advertising Kat the dog for sale at the start of the story. Look at examples of advertisements and persuasive writing to see what tricks are used by advertisers to influence prospective purchasers. Look at estate agents' particulars and learn to 'read between the lines'. Can children create posters for the sale of Kat which, on the face of it, suggest that she is a good buy, but with clear implications of her stubborn and naughty behaviour?
4. The author uses a lot of fun, invented compound words to create a unique voice for Bianca as the narrator of the story. Have children make a note of these as they listen to the broadcast. Mind map the words they have found and fill in any blanks (an example list appears below). Can the children come up with definitions for these words based on the root words used to create the compounds?

Can children write a diary entry for a day in the life of Bianca the puppy, using some of the invented words and incorporating some invented words of their own?

(See next page for examples)

Lovi-chumable	Snoodily-gorge
Pedigreeable	Cuddi-yum-tum
Speedy-whizz	Tricksi-pickle
Chocker-liciously	Boundy-ran
Confoundi-fused	Licki-gobbling

5. Children could discuss an alternative ending for either the re-telling or the original Shakespeare story. Perhaps Kat Dog is impossible to train but Peter grows to love her anyway. Perhaps Katherine resists Petruchio's attempts to tame her and gets her revenge on him by playing similar tricks on him. With appropriate scaffolding, children could write their alternative endings to either story based on these discussions.



Hamlet Lives Forever

by Horatio Clare

(Photo by Caroline Flinders)



Horatio Clare is the author of several books for adults, including *Running for the Hills* which won a Somerset Maugham Award in 2007 and was longlisted for The Guardian First Book Award 2006. His most recent book *Aubrey and the Terrible Yoot* is a children's book about a rambunctious young boy's attempts to deal with his father's depression.

Shakespeare's *Hamlet*

Hamlet is Shakespeare's most famous tragedy. Hamlet is the Prince of Denmark. At the start of the play his father, the king, has died and his father's brother Claudius (Hamlet's uncle) has taken both the old king's throne and his wife, Gertrude (Hamlet's mother). Hamlet meets the ghost of his dead father on the castle battlements and is told by the ghost that Claudius poisoned him while he slept in his orchard, in order to gain both crown and queen. Hamlet decides to avenge his father's death, but first seeks proof that the ghost is telling the truth. Hamlet pretends that he has lost his mind in order to investigate the ghost's claims without arousing suspicion.

Eventually, he asks some travelling actors to put on a play for Claudius that closely mirrors the murder of his own father. Claudius reacts in horror at the play's murder scene, giving Hamlet the proof he needs. He vows to kill Claudius but mistakenly kills Polonius, the father of Hamlet's girlfriend, Ophelia. Hamlet is banished from Denmark and sent to England with two duplicitous friends who are charged with arranging his death when they arrive there.

Back in Denmark, Ophelia goes mad and drowns herself over her father's death. Ophelia's brother, Laertes, appears on the scene, desperate to avenge his sister and father. Meanwhile, Hamlet's ship is attacked by pirates and Hamlet escapes, thereby avoiding an untimely end in England. Upon Hamlet's return to Denmark, Claudius (who has convinced Laertes that Hamlet is to blame for Ophelia and Polonius's deaths) arranges a fencing match between Hamlet and Laertes. Hamlet will be encouraged to drink from a poisoned cup during the match, and Laertes' fencing foil will be tipped with poison.

During the match, Hamlet's mother mistakenly drinks the poison, Laertes and Hamlet are both scratched with the poisoned blade and Hamlet finally kills Claudius by forcing him to drink from the cup AND stabbing him with the poisoned foil. At the end of the play, everyone is dead except for Hamlet's friend Horatio, who vows to tell Hamlet's story so that it will live on forever.

A little about this re-telling

In *Hamlet Lives Forever* by Horatio Clare, Shakespeare is telling the story of *Hamlet* to his son Hamnet, who died at the age of eleven. Shakespeare meets Hamnet in an orchard, representing paradise, and tells him the story of Hamlet in the manner of a bedtime story. There is a touching parallel in the re-telling between the paradise afterlife of Shakespeare's son Hamnet and the 'afterlife' of Shakespeare's play *Hamlet*, which lives on forever as the most famous play in the English language.

Ideas for use in the classroom

PHILOSOPHY FOR KIDS

Hamlet is a deeply philosophical play. Hamlet himself spends a great deal of time thinking about what he should do and whether he should avenge his father. His most famous speech - '*To be or not to be, that is the question...*' - centres on the question of whether it is better to live or die. Hamlet even suggests that the only thing preventing us from ending our lives on Earth is the fear of the unknown afterlife, which might be more painful than our mortal life. This is pretty heavy stuff – but the re-telling opens up a number of accessible philosophical enquiries and thought provoking questions that children will love to explore. Here are some examples of questions that children could consider. Before considering these questions and to ensure a lively debate, tell children that there are no right or wrong answers in Philosophy.

1. Shakespeare tells his son Hamnet that the play of *Hamlet* will live forever because after Shakespeare is dead it will be acted on stages for years and years to come. He was right. *Hamlet* is the most famous play in the world, 400 years after Shakespeare's death. It is kept alive every time it is performed.

Questions to think about.

What is a legacy? Children could look this word up in the dictionary or research it on the internet.

Can you think of any famous people who have left legacies?

Many years after your death, what will your legacy be? How do you hope that you will leave an impact on the world? (Children may talk about either improving the world in grand ways or by leaving behind their own children, grandchildren, family or friends who will keep them alive after they have died by remembering them. They may talk about their own grandparents or great grandparents who have died and left a similar legacy).

2. In the re-telling, Shakespeare tells Hamnet that 'Death and Time are nothing compared to Love.' He keeps Hamnet alive by talking to him and remembering him after death.

Questions to think about

Have you ever had a pet cat or dog that died? Is your pet still 'alive' when you think about it or share stories about it?

If people talk about you and share memories of you after you have died, does this mean that you are still 'alive' in some way?

3. Claudius does a terrible thing by killing his brother. Straight after the play that Hamlet stages, Claudius tries to pray to God to say that he is sorry for what he has done but he says, "My words fly up, my thoughts remain below. Words without thoughts never to heaven go."

Questions to think about.

Is Claudius really sorry or is he only sorry because he knows that Hamlet has discovered his crime? Can you think of any examples of a time when you said sorry just because you were found out? Does 'saying sorry' always mean that you really are sorry?

Can Claudius be truly sorry for what he did when he still wears the dead king's crown and is married to the dead king's wife? He got those things by murdering his brother. If you steal your best friend's bike, can you tell your friend you are sorry about it but still keep the bike?

Claudius is trying to pray to God for forgiveness but he can't send his words to heaven. Is there anyone else he could ask for forgiveness? Can he forgive himself?

4. In the re-telling, Shakespeare says that we 'cannot control the simplest things, like joy and grief, and love and death.' This would be a good opportunity to look at a text like Michael Rosen's *Sad Book* and discuss what grief and sadness look like.

Questions to consider

How do you behave when you are sad?

Can you tell that someone is sad just by looking at them? Why not?

Hamlet 'pretends' to be mad so that he can investigate his father's death. Have you ever pretended to be happy when you were sad, or to be sad when you were happy? Why?

Why do our emotions make us act in particular ways? Does everyone act in the same way when they are sad, happy, angry or afraid?

ENGLISH

1. Introduce some of the key dialogue spoken by the play's characters. When introducing dialogue, print off dialogue cards and give each child one card. Ask all children to move around the classroom space, quietly muttering their line. After a while give them an instruction to say the line differently (eg to say it like it was a secret, to shout it to the top of a mountain, to say it as if it was the punchline of a joke, as if performed by a hammy actor, etc). Once the children are familiar with their line some may want to perform it to the whole class, but this time in context as the character from the story.

The Ghost (telling Hamlet that Claudius killed him).	The serpent that did sting thy father's life now wears his crown.
Hamlet (plotting to catch out Claudius by putting on the play-within-a-play)	The play's the thing wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.
Hamlet (thinking about whether it would be better to live or die in his current situation)	To be or not to be, that is the question.
Claudius (trying to pray to God for forgiveness)	My words fly up, my thoughts remain below. Words without thoughts never to heaven go.
Hamlet (telling his friend Horatio that he is willing to fight Laertes, perhaps knowing that it is a trap)	The readiness is all.
Hamlet (his final words as he dies)	I die... The rest is silence
Horatio (to Hamlet as he dies)	Goodnight, sweet prince, And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.

1. Claudius is a truly evil character; one of the worst in Shakespeare's canon! Children could write poetry about just how sly and sneaky he is. Look for the John Agard poem 'Don't Call Alligator Long-Mouth Till You Cross The River', which provides a great template for writing about a nasty character (once you are out of his grips). Write poems called 'Don't Call Claudius XXX Till You Get Out of Denmark!' (eg 'Don't Call Claudius King Killer...Foul Poisoner...etc.)
2. In the re-telling, Shakespeare tells Hamnet that he likes *'thinking about you, and the kind of man you might have been.'* Ask children to think about the kind of man or woman they might be in the future. Create a 'bucket-list' of ten things you want to achieve in the future. Model this with the children first, encouraging them to think about themselves as *'seeds which will grow to be great men and women'* (as Shakespeare says to Hamnet in the re-telling).
3. Create a 'role on the wall' for Hamlet and Claudius, detailing their qualities.
4. Hot seat Hamlet with questions such as
 - Were you really mad or did you just pretend to be?
 - Did you believe the ghost when you first saw him?
 - How did you feel when you heard that your girlfriend Ophelia had died?
 - When did you know for sure that Claudius had killed your father?
 - How did you feel about your mother marrying your uncle?
 - Did you have any idea that the fencing match was a trap?

Children can generate their own further questions based on the re-telling.

They could also hot seat Shakespeare himself about his relationship with his son Hamnet, based on the re-telling.

HISTORY

Research Shakespeare's family tree. Hamnet Shakespeare was a twin with his sister Judith (who survived William Shakespeare). Tell the children this before they begin their research and as an extra challenge, see whether they can find any references to twins in Shakespeare's plays. (Note: *Twelfth Night* is a play about shipwrecked boy/girl twins (just like Judith and Hamnet) called Viola and Sebastian, each of whom think the other has died in a shipwreck, but who are reunited at the end of the play. An early play, *The Comedy of Errors*, features two sets of identical master and servant twins, who are separated as babies (once again in a shipwreck!) and are reunited after much mistaken identity confusion!)



A Midsummer Camp's Dream

by Laura Dockrill



Laura Dockrill is an award-winning author and illustrator. The first in her *Darcy Burdock* series was recently shortlisted for the Waterstones Book of the Year prize and she has recently released a new young adult book: *LORALI*.

Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

A Midsummer Night's Dream is Shakespeare's magical, romantic comedy. The story begins in the Athenian court, where Duke Theseus is planning his wedding to Hippolyta. Theseus is interrupted by Egeus and his daughter Hermia along with Hermia's two suitors, Lysander and Demetrius. Egeus wants his daughter to marry Demetrius and is furious that she has fallen for Lysander.

To avoid her father's will, Lysander and Hermia plan to run away together through the nearby woods and they confide in Hermia's best friend Helena. Helena, madly in love with Hermia's other suitor, Demetrius, tells him of the plan. Demetrius and Helena follow Hermia and Lysander into the woods.

A comical group of amateur actors (the Mechanicals) meet to cast a play they hope will be chosen as the entertainment for Theseus and Hippolyta's wedding day. The overconfident and domineering Nick Bottom wants all the parts in the play, a horribly inept rendition of the tragic love story of *Pyramus and Thisbe*. They agree a time to meet in the woods to rehearse.

In the woods, Oberon and Titania, king and queen of the fairies, are having an argument over Titania's little changeling boy, who Oberon wants as his henchman. After they part acrimoniously, Oberon spies Demetrius and Helena arguing. Oberon asks his impish servant Puck to daub a love potion from a magical flower on Demetrius's eyes to make him and Helena a couple. He also tells Puck to use the same potion on Titania to make her fall in love with whatever vile creature she sees upon waking from sleep.

Puck anoints Titania's sleeping eyes but he mixes up the two Athenian men in the woods and smears the potion on Lysander's eyes in error.

With Titania sleeping nearby, the actors arrive to (incompetently) rehearse their play. Puck is watching and mischievously gives Nick Bottom a donkey's head, causing the other actors to flee in terror. The commotion awakes Titania, who falls instantly in love with Bottom and asks her fairies to wait upon him.

Lysander wakes from his sleep just as Helena wanders near. Under the effects of the potion, he falls madly in love with her and deserts Hermia.

Oberon discovers Puck's mistake and is furious. He asks Puck to put love potion on Demetrius's eyes just as Helena draws near. Demetrius now falls in love with Helena. Both men now dote on Helena rather than Hermia. Oberon intervenes and uses magic to make Helena and Demetrius a pair and to reunite Hermia and Lysander.

Titania is woken from her spell and Bottom's ass-head is removed. Oberon and Titania are reconciled and Bottom rushes back to Athens, just in time to perform the play for the nuptials of Theseus and Hippolyta, who are joined in the wedding congregation by the two young couples.

A little about this re-telling

In this story by Laura Dockrill, Puck takes centre stage. In Shakespeare's play Puck is also known as Robin Goodfellow and here he becomes a girl called Robin, a keen magician and brother to Obie (Shakespeare's Oberon). The story takes place in a Midsummer Camp, where Obie has forgotten his magical powers in favour of his girlfriend Tania (Shakespeare's Titania). The camp leader is Nick Bottom and the lovers are Dem, Sander, Helen and Mia. Robin is disgusted by all the smoochy lovey-doviness in camp. She accidentally turns Nick into a donkey and the mix-up with the lovers is retained as the main plot of the story. Eventually, Robin's expert use of magic impresses brother Obie.

Ideas for use in the classroom

ENGLISH

1. In the retelling the boys Dem and Sander begin to argue over Helen's love when the Smoochie Flower starts to affect them.

Look at their lines

'You puny, onion eyed, pigeon egg!'

'You rank, sheep-biting, maggot pie!'

Believe it or not, these are real Shakespearean insults, picked and mixed from various plays! Pick and mix Shakespearean insults are huge

fun. A printable template can be found at either the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust's Shakespeare Week site (which is free to join) or at the website PlayingWithPlays.

You could ask the children to travel around the classroom space as Dem and Sander. When you give a signal they should meet up with a partner and insult their partner in the context of the story. They could preface their insult with, 'Helen loves me. She couldn't possibly love you, you...'

Printable Shakespearean insult templates can be found at:

<http://shakespeareweek.org.uk/topics/drama-and-talking-shakespeare/#>

<http://playingwithplays.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/shakespeare-insult-generator.pdf>

2. In the original play, the girls fight too. Helena thinks that the boys' love for her is some sort of set up, and Hermia thinks that Helena has stolen her boyfriend. This leads to a hugely funny fight, where the insults fly – many focussing on Hermia's small stature. Children could develop their Midsummer Camp insults above by role playing this scene with the original (abridged) text.

Hermia - You canker-blossom, you thief of love! What, have you come by night and stolen my love's heart from him?

Helena - Fie, fie, you counterfeit, you puppet, you!

Hermia - Puppet? Why so!

Because I am so little and so low?

How low am I? I am not yet so low

But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes.

Helena - Though she be but little, she is fierce.

Hermia - 'Little' again? Nothing but 'low' and 'little'?

Let me come to her!

3. As there are a number of differences between this story and the original (most notably the Mechanicals are missing other than Bottom and Titania doesn't fall in love with Bottom-as-donkey!) children could be encouraged to compare and contrast plots. Look at this BBC introduction to the play for KS2 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/clips/zxpj7ty> Children could then consider the 10 point summary below and create a table of similarities and differences between the original and the retelling.

1. Hermia wants to marry Lysander but her dad tells her she must marry Demetrius!
2. Hermia runs off to the forest with Lysander. Demetrius is in love with her and follows her. Helena (who loves Demetrius) follows into the woods too.
3. A group of workmen are rehearsing a play in the woods. They aren't very good actors and the play looks like it will be terrible.
4. Oberon is the King of the Fairies. He and his wife Titania are having a fierce argument. All the fairies of the wood take sides.
5. Oberon asks his servant Puck – a terrible mischief-maker – to use the juice of a magic flower to make Titania fall in love with whatever she sees when she wakes up. Oberon hopes it will be something horrible.
6. Oberon sees Demetrius trying to get rid of Helena and takes pity on her. He tells Puck to put some flower juice in Demetrius's eyes to make him fall for Helena.
7. Meanwhile Puck watches the workmen practising their play in the woods. He gives Bottom a donkey's head. When Titania wakes up the flower juice makes her fall in love with Bottom!
8. Puck gets mixed up and puts the juice in Lysander's eyes too. Lysander and Demetrius wake up. They both see Helena and fall in love with her. Neither of them is interested in Hermia anymore and the two sets of couples have a huge fight!

9. Oberon tries to fix Puck's mistakes. He makes it so that Lysander and Hermia are in love again. He also makes it so that Demetrius and Helena love each other. He lifts the spell on Titania, who sees that she has been in love with a donkey! Bottom's donkey head disappears!
10. The two couples get married. The Mechanicals perform their terrible play and Oberon and Titania become friends again.

ART

Puck has been represented by many artists and actors over the years. Give out the table to the children (below) and read through it. What do the children think Puck might look like? They could draw their own interpretation of this mischievous sprite. This could be followed up by an internet search to find pictures of previous representations to compare and contrast with their drawings.

Things Puck says and does:		
He is described as a 'merry wanderer of the night'	He tells jokes to Oberon and makes him laugh.	He magically disguises himself as an apple to trick an old woman
He magically disguises himself as a stool so that he can make people fall on the floor when they try to sit on him	Lord what fools these mortals are! <i>(he's making fun of the humans in the play!)</i>	He turns Nick Bottom's head into a donkey head
He gets mixed up and puts the flower juice on the wrong man's eyes causing chaos.	He is described as a Hobgoblin	I'll put a girdle round about the earth In forty minutes. <i>(that means he can fly really fast!)</i>

POETRY AND PERFORMANCE

In the retelling, Robin says she is great at magic spells.

Children could write their own spells with titles such as 'A spell to turn someone into a donkey', 'A spell to make people fall in love at first sight', 'A spell to impress your older brother' *etc.*

Children could perform their spell-poems and they could be collected in a book of class spells.

ENGLISH – CREATIVE WRITING

Children could write a sequel to the retelling, incorporating some of the elements that this retelling doesn't include. Perhaps Nick Bottom could plan a Midsummer Camp show but it all goes horribly wrong. Perhaps Robin could put Smoochie Flower juice on Tania's eyes to make her fall in love with Nick Bottom. What will Obie think if that happens? Mind map ideas and use scaffolding to help the children write their own Midsummer Camp inspired story.



Henry V: A Soldier's tale

by Geraldine McCaughrean



Geraldine McCaughrean has written about 170 books. She has been published in 41 languages, writes for every age level, and her awards include the Carnegie Medal and Whitbread Prizes. She has also written many retellings of myths and legends, and hard-to-read classics.

(Photo by Ailsa Joy)

Shakespeare's *Henry V*

Henry V is Shakespeare's famed history play. The play begins with an introductory chorus, which apologises for the limitations of the theatre and begs the audience to use its imagination in creating 'a kingdom for a stage'. (The chorus reappears throughout the action of the play to introduce each subsequent Act.) We then meet King Henry: a good ruler, despite a troubled and unruly past. His courtiers present him with the case for war against France just as the ambassador from the French Dauphin (or Crown Prince) arrives with an insulting gift of a box of tennis balls. This infuriates Henry, and tips the balance in favour of war.

We then meet a rag-tag group of Englishmen, some of whom were friends with Henry during his unruly youth, as they prepare for the French war. We meet these characters throughout the course of the play at various battles as a comic counterpoint to the main dramatic events of the story.

Henry boards his warships for France and we see him at the French town of Harfleur, where he tries to breach the castle walls with his army. The Governor of Harfleur surrenders the castle and tells Henry that the Dauphin has not yet sent help to Harfleur, thinking Henry a weak and immature ruler who is no threat to France.

On the eve of the greatest battle of the war at Agincourt, Henry moves amongst the troops, disguised as a commoner and learns that many of his men are unsure whether they are fighting for a good cause. He prays to God that he is doing right and contemplates the heavy duty of kingship. The next morning he gives a rousing speech to his outnumbered troops, suggesting they will become immortal in folklore by fighting such a brave battle. They fight and win a resounding victory, leading to the surrender of the French.

Henry woos the French princess Katherine, and the chorus tells us in a bittersweet epilogue that his victory and reign is short lived – Henry dies soon after and England loses everything that Henry fought for in France.

A little about this re-telling

This version of the story is told by Pistol – one of the comic characters in Shakespeare’s play. Pistol takes on the role of the original play’s Chorus - he even mirrors some of the Chorus’s most famous lines - by inviting us, as listeners, to imagine great courts, armies and battlefields. Pistol explains all about Henry’s mischievous youth, his kingship and his decision to fight in France. We learn about the invasion and Harfleur and Pistol gives us echoes of Henry’s famously rousing St Crispin’s Day Speech before the Battle of Agincourt. Pistol comes across as a lovable rogue, but there is a real sense of pathos in his re-telling. He wants us to know of the vain-glorious futility of war; despite the victory in France, his friends are dead and he can’t get a living now that he is back in England...

Ideas for use in the classroom

HISTORY

October 2015 saw the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Agincourt. Children could research the battle and find out how similar it is to Shakespeare’s version.

When Henry reads out the list of the dead after Agincourt he says that there are ten thousand French dead but only a handful of English dead.

Read the following text to the children, numbering the English dead.

Edward the Duke of York, the Earl of Suffolk,
Sir Richard Ketly, Davy Gam, esquire:
None else of name; and of all other men
But five and twenty. O God, thy arm was here

Children could find out how accurate these figures are thought to be. They could research why the French were unsuccessful, despite outnumbering the English. (Note: the French cavalry charge was thought

to be hindered by the thick clay soil and the English army's longbows. Many horses lost footing and the French were crushed in the charge).

Question: Why might Shakespeare play down the number of English dead in his play? Think about who his audience were.

Question: Do you think that this play is often performed in France? Why?

POETRY AND PERFORMANCE

1. Iambic Pentameter

- Look at the opening and closing lines of Henry's famous Harfleur speech (Stressed syllables underlined and in bold – see below)

Once **more** **unto** the **breach**, dear **friends**, once **more**
Or **close** the **wall** up **with** our **English** **dead**.
In **peace** there's **nothing** **so** **becomes** a **man**
As **modest** **stillness** **and** **humility**
But **when** the **blast** of **war** blows **in** our **ears**,
Then imitate the action of the tiger

I **see** you **stand** like **greyhounds** **in** the **slips**
Straining **upon** the **start**. The **game's** **afoot**
Follow your **spirit**, **and** **upon** this **charge**
Cry '**God** for **Harry**, **England**, **and** Saint **George**!

This is a perfect opportunity to learn, recite and perform poetry in line with the KS2 curriculum. It's such a great rousing call to arms and there are plenty of versions to watch on YouTube - search 'Once more unto the breach' and add actors' names to your search (such as Kenneth Branagh in his film version or the RSC's most recent Henry – Alex Hassell).

The verse lends itself to discussion of poetic rhythm. Shakespeare often wrote in iambic pentameter, which basically means five pairs of stressed/ unstressed beats per line. (Think of *Ba-DUM, Ba-DUM, Ba-DUM, Ba-DUM, Ba- DUM* – with the stress on the 'DUM')

Clap the syllables in the speech. All lines but one have exactly ten syllables, giving a powerful 'heart-beat' rhythm to the speech which really drives it forward as a rousing battle cry. The underlined bold words are the stressed beats in the pentameter lines*. Children will love counting and chanting in time with the heart-beat of the lines. As teacher, you could try a 'call and response' where you chant each line with a clear rhythm and children repeat it back, mimicking the heart-beat rhythm.

- Children could perform the abridged speech either individually or as a choral reading, ensuring they keep to the same heart-beat rhythm if performing chorally. Rehearse and perform, adding gestures (such as a raised fist during the Battle Cry!)
- In small groups children could choose their favourite five powerful words from the speech (eg **FRIENDS**, **BLAST**, **TIGER**, **CHARGE**, **STRAINING**) and create tableau or freeze frame pictures for each word.
- Children could try creating their own verse about the Henry V story (perhaps focussing on the character of Pistol) using ten beats per line. They will love the challenge of getting the right number of beats per line (eg *Pistol was a great friend to young Harry*) They can tap fingers on tables or palms against their chests to check whether they have enough syllables per line, adding and subtracting where necessary. (This could be done collaboratively, with groups of children creating just one ten-beat line per group and then combining all groups' lines to create one iambic pentameter poem. In this case, allocate a particular 'scene' from the story for each group to base their ten-beat line upon).

2. **Meeting a King**

How would Pistol greet Henry?

- Role play this in two ways. Moving around a large space, have children meet and greet each other as Young Henry and Pistol when they were great friends and both rabble-rousers. Then change the dynamic – children move around the space and this

*Technically, a couple of the lines have a reversed stress at the start of the line but this has been ignored for the sake of simplicity.

time meet and greet as King Henry and Pistol, just after Pistol learns that Henry has had Bardolph and Nym put to death.

Discuss the differences in the two greetings. How has the relationship changed?

ART - IMAGINING COURTS, ARMIES AND BATTLES

Pistol repeatedly asks his listeners to use their imagination to create pictures in their minds. This is exactly what the Chorus does in Shakespeare's play – asking the audience to become active participants in the drama by using their imaginations.

Share this link to the original play with the children. Give them the Chorus's original line, 'Think when we talk of horses that you see them'. Now, ask the children to listen to the broadcast again and this time allow pictures to form in their minds of the scenes that Pistol describes. They can create their own artwork based on the story. Explain that, just as Shakespeare wanted, they are becoming active participants in the story.

Create a gallery of their Henry V artwork; they will undoubtedly focus on different aspects of the story - the romance, the battles and perhaps portraits of Pistol himself.

HISTORY/ PSHE - WAR VETERANS

In Henry's speech at Agincourt, he tells the men that they are a 'Band of Brothers'

This story shall the good man teach his son;
And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,
From this day to the ending of the world,
But we in it shall be remember'd;
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;

How do we remember our war heroes? Why is it important to do this? This could be linked to topic work on the Second World War. Children could carry out research relating to WW2 and more recent conflicts and create their own 'remembrance' tributes; poems, posters etc.

ENGLISH – Henry and Pistol’s characters

- Question: Is Pistol a reliable narrator? Children could create a character profile/ role on the wall from the clues given about Pistol in the re-telling. What clues do we get that he is not ‘Fierce as lions and brave as bears’ as he first suggests?
- Question: Was Henry right to become a solemn king and give up his ‘harum scarum’ friends? Pistol even tells us that Henry arranges for two of his old friends to be hanged during the French war. Children could create a balanced argument about the responsibilities of kingship versus Henry’s responsibility to his friends.



Romeo v Juliet

by Chris Priestley

(Photo by Judith Weik)



Chris Priestley decided at the age of nine that the thing he most wanted was to write and illustrate his own book. He has since written and illustrated many books for children, including the *Tales of Terror* series and *The Last of the Spirits*.

Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*

This programme is based on *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare's romantic tragedy of star-crossed lovers.

The Capulets and the Montagues are warring families in Verona, Italy, where a delicate peace is maintained by the governing Prince. Romeo is a young Montague who gate crashes a party held by the Capulets and falls in love at first sight with Juliet, the daughter of Old Capulet. Likewise, Juliet falls for Romeo and, in spite of their warring families, the two decide to wed, with a little help from Juliet's nurse and Friar Lawrence, a priest who marries them in secret.

After spending just one night together, all is ruined when Romeo and his friend Mercutio become involved in a fight with Juliet's angry cousin Tybalt. Mercutio and Tybalt are both killed and Romeo is banished by the Prince as a means of keeping the peace. Meanwhile, Juliet's parents, unaware of her marriage to Romeo, plan to marry her to an eligible young man called Paris.

On the eve of Juliet's 'second' wedding, Friar Lawrence hatches a plan; he gives Juliet a potion that will simulate death. The Friar will send for Romeo from banishment and Juliet will be interred in the Capulet vault until Romeo returns for her, by which time the potion's effects will have worn off, allowing the lovers to make their escape for a new life together.

The plan goes awry when the Friar's messenger to Romeo is waylaid, meaning that Romeo gets the wrong message; that Juliet is truly dead. He returns to Verona and the Capulet vault, where he kills himself with poison at Juliet's 'grave'. Just as he dies, Juliet awakes from her slumber and, seeing her dead lover by her side, takes her own life with a dagger. The warring families are united in grief and end their hostilities.

A little about this re-telling

In this funny, modern-day re-telling, we meet two rival schools: St Montagues High and Capulet Academy. The action is played out on the football pitch, where the star players in the mixed-sex teams are Romeo (for the Montagues) and Juliet (for the Capulets). The star-crossed lovers meet during half time and are instantly attracted. An on-pitch scuffle between Romeo's best friend and a 'dirty tactics' Capulet leads to multiple sendings-off. Seeing carnage all around them, Juliet and Romeo feign injury and leave the pitch. They are both tended by the school nurse, who finds nothing wrong with them. Left alone together, they kiss. This brings the other Capulets and Montague players and their game to a standstill; appalled at the sappy display, they put aside their squabbles and are 'united in disgust'.

Ideas for use in the classroom

- **SHAKESPEAREAN INSULTS**

Children could imagine that they are from Capulet Academy or Montague High and insult the opposing school. Pick and mix Shakespearean insults are huge fun. A printable template can be found at either the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust's Shakespeare Week site (which is free to join) or at the website PlayingWithPlays. Have children create insults and incorporate these in drama activities or make their own banners based on their insults. When insulting each other, it's fun to begin by 'biting your thumb' at the other person (which is what triggers the very first fight in Romeo and Juliet). The offended party can respond, 'Did you bite your thumb at me sir?' The appropriate reply is then, 'Yes, I did you... (insert Shakespeare insult here!)

<http://shakespeareweek.org.uk/topics/drama-and-talking-shakespeare/#>

<http://playingwithplays.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/shakespeare-insult-generator.pdf>

ENGLISH/ COMPUTING

11. This is a radically different and very light-hearted take on the original Shakespeare story. Children could research the original plot of the Shakespeare tragedy and spot similarities and differences between the two texts.

They could answer questions such as: *Shakespeare's original story is a tragedy. Is this story a tragedy? If not, what genre best describes it? What themes of the original Shakespeare story are retained? Do you like that Romeo and Juliet have a romantic 'happy ending' in this story as opposed to the Shakespeare tragedy? Do you think that Montague High and Capulet Academy will maintain their peace?*

Children could write a 'sequel' story or diary entry for the re-telling's Romeo and/ or Juliet after their fateful kiss on the side-lines. How are they treated in school the next day? Will they be able to date each other without any further problems?

12. Children could write their own match commentary for the Capulet/ Montague football game. They could then create and edit scripts for post-match interviews with key players such as Romeo, Juliet, the nurse, Romeo's best friend (who could be called Mercutio as in the original text) and the Capulet red-card offender (perhaps Tybalt). Commentaries and interviews could be recorded and edited in iMovie or Windows MovieMaker for video interviews and in audio editing software such as audacity for audio only work. Success criteria should include clear storytelling of the rivalry between the teams and the burgeoning relationship between Romeo and Juliet (and how this made the other players feel).
13. The re-telling contains some subtly funny echoes of the original text. Give children the following key lines from the Shakespeare text. If the children are given cards with the original text, can they match these with their counterparts in the new re-telling as they listen? (The original text is in black in the table below and the re-telling's counterparts are matched in bold).

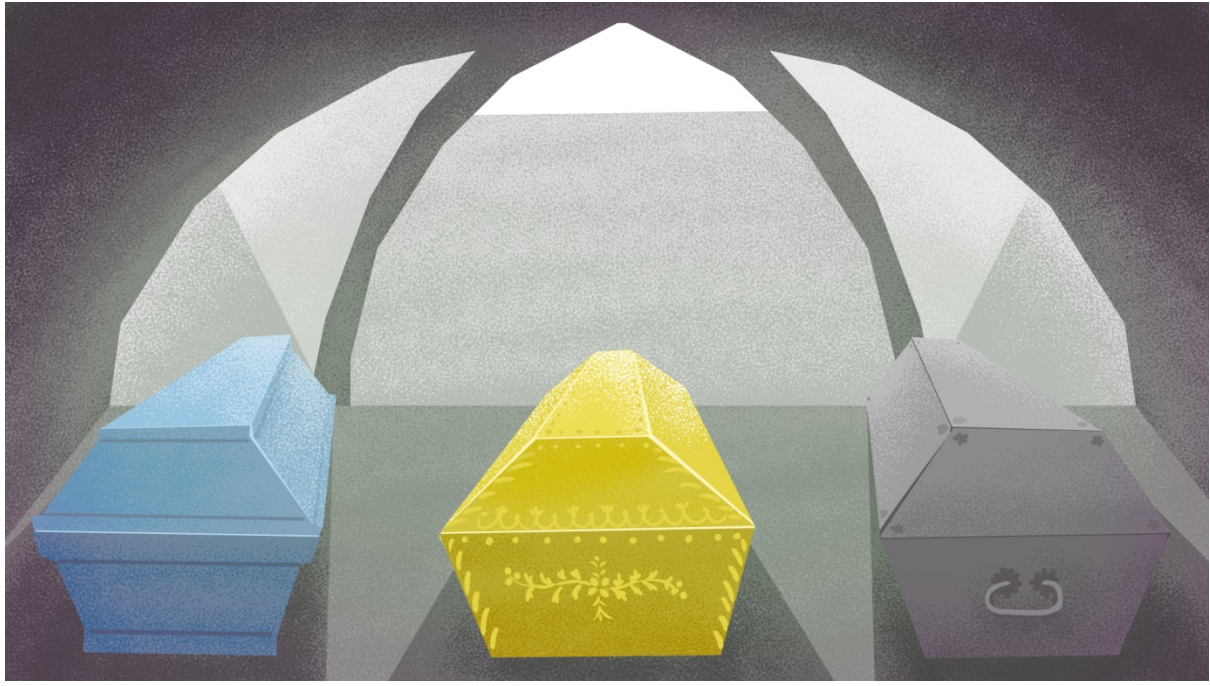
Two households, both alike in dignity, in fair Verona where we lay our scene	Two football teams, both alike in hostility – one from St Montague’s High the other from nearby Capulet Academy.
A rose by any other name would smell as sweet	They try out each other’s names again and find they taste as sweet
For never was a story of more woe Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.	There never was a story of more woe, than this – of Juliet and her Romeo

DRAMA/ PERFORMANCE

Introduce some of the key dialogue spoken by the play’s characters in Shakespeare’s original text. When introducing dialogue, print off dialogue cards and give each child one card. Ask all children to move around the classroom space, quietly muttering their line. After a while give them an instruction to say the line differently (eg to say it like it was a secret, to shout it to the top of a mountain, to say it as if it was the punchline of a joke, as if performed by a hammy actor, etc). Once the children are familiar with their line some may want to perform it to the whole class, but this time in context as the character from the story.

All of the following quotations are from the famous 'balcony' scene. In the re-telling this takes place on the substitutes' bench! Children could try re-enacting the scene in pairs using the original language.

Romeo - comparing Juliet to the sun as he sees her appear on the balcony. He is hiding in the undergrowth beneath	But, soft! What light through yonder window breaks? It is the east, and Juliet is the sun!
Juliet – before she spies Romeo below. (It's worth noting here that 'wherefore' means 'why' rather than 'where'. Juliet is asking why he has to have the Montague name.)	O, Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo?
Juliet – she still hasn't seen Romeo. Here she is saying that his name is unimportant: it's his qualities that she is interested in.	What's in a name? That which we call a rose, by any other word would smell as sweet.
Romeo – announcing his presence and saying that he will gladly lose his Montague title for Juliet	Henceforth I never will be Romeo!
Juliet – shocked at Romeo's audacity in appearing at her window	If any of my kinsmen find thee here, they will murder thee.
Romeo – saying goodnight to Juliet before they meet again to marry	Good night, good night! Parting is such sweet sorrow, That I shall say good night till it be morrow



The Merchant of Venice

By Jamila Gavin



Jamila Gavin was born in Mussoorie, India, in the foothills of the Himalayas. With an Indian father and an English mother, she inherited two rich cultures which have run side by side throughout her life and which have always made her feel she belongs to both countries. Her first book *The Magic Orange Tree* was published in 1979 and she has been writing and publishing steadily since then. Her book *Coram Boy* won the Children's Whitbread Award and was shortlisted for the Carnegie Medal.

Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*

This story is based on *The Merchant of Venice*, which is considered to be one of Shakespeare's 'problem plays', containing elements of tragedy-drama and comedy which are difficult to reconcile.

It tells the story of Antonio, who wants to lend money to his friend Bassanio to help him woo Lady Portia of Belmont. Antonio is wealthy, but all his money is tied up in shipping. Eager to help his friend, he visits the money-lender Shylock. Shylock is Jewish, and Antonio despises him for his beliefs. Shylock is surprised that Antonio wants to do business with him and makes a strange bargain: if the money is not repaid within a specified time limit, then Shylock can take a pound of Antonio's flesh in payment. Antonio agrees to the deal, confident that his ships will return in time for the loan to be repaid.

Elsewhere in Venice, Shylock's daughter Jessica elopes with a Christian called Lorenzo, taking much of her father's gold with her. Shylock is furious.

In Belmont, Portia awaits her suitors. Her deceased father has burdened her with a strange fate. He has left three caskets of gold, silver and lead, one of which contains a portrait of Portia. Prospective suitors must solve a riddle and choose the casket they think contains the portrait. Whoever chooses the correct casket wins Portia's hand in marriage. Bassanio arrives in Belmont and solves the riddle correctly – choosing the lead casket. Portia gives Bassanio a ring to seal their love and he promises never to part with it. While the couple celebrate, news arrives that Antonio's ships have been wrecked at sea, meaning that Shylock can call in his debt of a pound of Antonio's flesh.

Shylock has Antonio arrested and the Duke of Venice hears the case against Antonio. Shylock is adamant that he wants his pound of flesh despite Bassanio offering to repay (with Portia's money) significantly more than the debt owed. All seems lost until a young lawyer, Balthazar, appears in court to argue on Antonio's behalf. Antonio and Bassanio do not know that this young lawyer is actually Portia in disguise. She outwits Shylock: the contract gives him a pound of flesh but not a drop of blood. How will he get one without the other? Shylock is driven from the court without receiving a penny and the Duke decrees that he must convert to Christianity. Balthazar the lawyer asks for the ring from Bassanio's finger in payment for 'his' services, and Bassanio reluctantly parts with it, not realising he has given it back to Portia.

In the final scenes of the play, Portia asks Bassanio what has become of the ring, and he explains that he has given it to the young lawyer as payment. Portia eventually reveals that **she** was the young lawyer and returns the ring to Bassanio, who promises never to part with it again. It is revealed that the report about Antonio's wrecked ships was false: they have in fact returned safely. Finally, we learn that Shylock has died miserably. His daughter Jessica, who is betrothed to the Christian, Lorenzo, inherits Shylock's money.

A little about this re-telling

In this adaptation, the story is told through the eyes of a young slave boy who realises that, to most, he is as invisible as 'a dog or a goat'. It is a faithful and detailed re-telling which raises some very interesting questions about freedom, slavery and humanity. Is Portia any freer than a slave if her father has decreed that she must marry anyone who solves a riddle? Aren't we all human, whether we are Jewish, Christian, slave or master?

Ideas for use in the classroom

PSHE/RE

1. Modern productions of *The Merchant of Venice* shy away from making Shylock a 'villain'. He is horribly treated by the Christians in the play, who relentlessly mock him for his beliefs and who are overjoyed when his daughter runs off with a Christian. He is not a good man, but as the re-telling says he *'was bitter about the way he was treated just for being Jewish; often pushed around and insulted. This had made him mean and hard, and turned him into a bully...'*

Questions to think about

- Many religions (including Christianity and Judaism) have explicit rules that state we should treat others as we expect

to be treated. Does this happen in the play? How is Shylock treated? How does Shylock treat others?

- What happens when somebody is treated badly by others? What effect might it have on the way they behave in the future? Why do bullies act the way they do?
- Why is it important that we respect the beliefs of others, even if they are different from our own?

2. Ask children to listen carefully to what Tomas says at the very start of the programme. ('I'm human: I see, hear, speak, touch, smell.') Now read out Shylock's famous speech (and if possible give out a hard copy for children to read),

I am a Jew.

Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die?

Can the children see similarities between the two speeches? This could be followed up with questions for debate such as:

What makes us human?

What would it be like if we were all exactly the same?

Is it difficult for people of different religions or social backgrounds to be friends?

Is it better to be rich or poor?

Is it better to be rich and miserable or poor and thankful for what you have?

Is there a difference between being 'rich' and being 'wealthy'? Other than money, what else might constitute 'wealth'?

What does it mean to have 'freedom'? What freedoms do we take for granted that others do not have?

3. Discussions about freedom and slavery based on Tomas's story might develop into discussions about rights, responsibilities, Classroom Charters and subsequent lessons on UNICEF's Conventions on the Rights of the Child, for which resources and lesson plans are widely available.

ENGLISH

In the re-telling, when Portia (disguised as Balthazar) tries to persuade Shylock to show mercy, she speaks the following words:

"Shylock! You can't put a value on mercy. It is good, gentle, like soft rain, blessing the person who gives mercy as well as the person who receives it."

Shylock however, maintains that he will have what he is entitled to. Kindness is not an option.

Questions and Activities

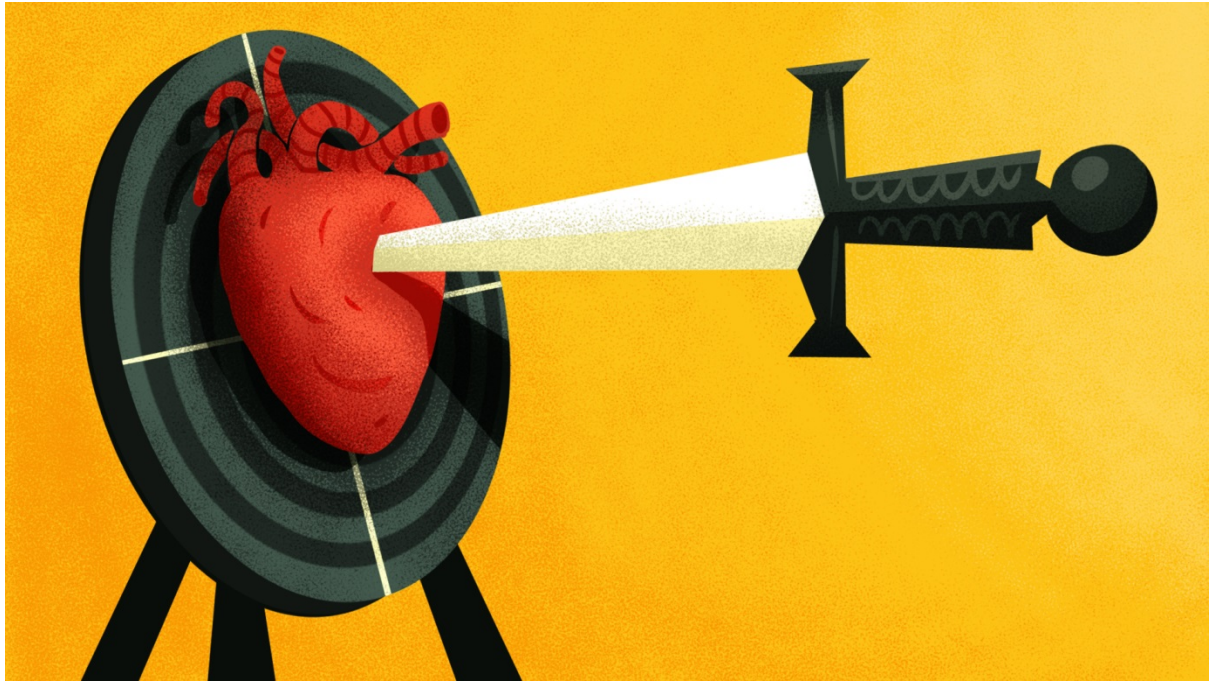
Look up the word 'mercy' in the dictionary. What does it mean? Why does mercy bless the person who show mercy and the person who receives it? (Or why is it good to forgive someone as well as to be forgiven?)

Children could hold a debate or write a persuasive argument either FOR or AGAINST Portia's position (for Shylock to show mercy to Antonio) using evidence from the re-telling to support their views and including evidence of their own they have collected or collated during whole class mind mapping (eg based on personal experiences or by making links to national news stories, TV and films, books they have read, etc.)

DRAMA AND PERFORMANCE

- Generate questions to Hot Seat Shylock, Antonio and the slave boy Tomas based on the re-telling of the story.

- Create a role on the wall for Shylock, Antonio and Tomas based on what we learn about them in the re-telling.
- As we have seen, status is very important in this story and in its re-telling. In small groups, children could devise short dramas that deal with status and show them back to the rest of the class for discussion. Examples may include; a child being bullied/ someone standing up to a bully/ a teacher or parent punishing a child unfairly/ a customer complaining in a shop or restaurant.



Ol' Fella

By Paul Stewart



(Photo by Rolf Marriott)

Paul Stewart has written everything from travel writing to football stories, fantasy and horror. His collaboration with Chris Riddell on *The Edge Chronicles* has taken him to bestseller lists in both the UK and USA.

Shakespeare's *Othello*

This story is based on *Othello*, Shakespeare's intense tragedy of love and jealousy. The story is about a brave army general called Othello. As a 'Moor' he is of a different race to the other members of the Venetian army. Othello's close advisor is Iago, who (with no justification other than his own wickedness) secretly hates Othello. Arriving home from the wars, Othello secretly marries Desdemona, whose father, mistrustful of Othello's 'otherness' accuses him of using witchcraft to seduce his daughter. Desdemona, however, assures her father that the love she and Othello have is real and mutual.

Othello is then sent to Cyprus to fight the Turkish army. He is joined by Iago and Othello's new young lieutenant Cassio. Jealous of Cassio's appointment, Iago incites him to get drunk and fight a fellow soldier. Othello strips Cassio of his office as punishment for his behaviour. Next, Iago gets his hands on Desdemona's handkerchief (a gift given to her by Othello) and lets it fall into Cassio's hands. Iago then persuades Desdemona to plead with Othello for Cassio's reinstatement as lieutenant, making Othello suspicious. This is made even worse when he spots Cassio with the handkerchief. Othello becomes obsessed with the idea that Desdemona and Cassio are having an affair - exactly what the wicked Iago had planned. Eventually, Othello murders Desdemona by suffocating her in a passionate rage, convinced of her infidelity. Iago's evil plot is discovered just as Desdemona dies. Iago is arrested, but it is too late for Othello, who kills himself, full of shame and grief at what he has done.

A little about this re-telling

In this modern day re-telling, the story is relocated to a high school. The theme of racial prejudice against Othello is removed but the jealousy and purely evil motivations of Iago (renamed Ian Jagger or 'Jags') remain intact. Othello becomes the popular and kind Olly, nicknamed 'Ol' Fella' on account of his 'big, beefy' build. Olly's surname is 'Moore' - an echo of Othello 'The Moor' in the original play. The plot begins with Jags feeling jealous that Olly has given Caspar (who takes the Cassius role) a place in the football team. The handkerchief becomes a baseball cap which Olly gave to Mona as a gift.

Jags uses social media to provide evidence of the fake relationship he creates between Caspar and Mona.

The story does not end with any deaths, but with the discovery of Jags' treachery and the humiliation of Olly, who loses both the girl and his previously spotless reputation.

Ideas for use in the classroom

COMPUTING/PSHE

- The characters in the story all use the (fictional) social media site KoolsKool. Jags takes incriminating photos on his mobile phone and he anonymously uploads the photos, using a bogus username to create a fake 'relationship' story which results in Mona losing followers on KoolsKool. The repercussions are massive for all concerned – the cyberbully Jags is discovered and punished, Mona and Caspar lose 'followers' and ultimately Olly loses his reputation and exposes himself as a 'LOSER' on KoolsKool.

You could use additional BBC resources such as
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/topics/zcpp34j/videos/1>
and **BBC Newsround – 'Caught in the Web'** -
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/13908828>

to discuss e-safety and cyberbullying.

Ask questions such as

1. What methods of online communication do children know of? (Texting, emailing, snapchat, social media, *etc.*)
 2. What would you do if you were in Mona's shoes and saw an online post or message that upset you? (Show the message to a trusted adult/ block the sender *etc.*)
 3. Do we always know who we are speaking with or interacting with online? (Remember that Jags created a fake account to post on KoolsKool).
 4. If you wouldn't say something to someone's face then don't say it online. **Discuss.**
- Children could create a 'KoolsKool' e-safety poster giving users of the fictional site some rules and tips about how to stay safe online.

ENGLISH

- This retelling is quite different from the original in some ways but the themes are very similar.

After the children have listened to the story once give them the following ten point summary of the original Shakespeare play. Read through it together.

1. Othello is a general in the Venetian army and his closest advisor is Iago, who secretly hates Othello but pretends to be a loyal servant.
2. Othello returns from war and secretly marries Desdemona.
3. Othello is sent to Cyprus to fight the Turkish army, joined by Iago and Othello's new young lieutenant Cassio.
4. Iago is jealous that Othello has promoted Cassio and encourages Cassio to get into a fight with another soldier.
5. Othello is furious with Cassio and takes his promotion away from him.
6. Iago gets hold of Desdemona's handkerchief (a gift given to her by Othello) and gives it to Cassio.

7. Iago persuades Desdemona to ask Othello to give Cassio his job back.
8. Othello sees Cassio with the handkerchief and becomes obsessed with the idea that Desdemona and Cassio are together.
9. Othello murders Desdemona in jealousy.
10. Iago's evil plot is discovered just as Desdemona dies. Iago is arrested, but it is too late for Othello, who kills himself, full of shame and grief at what he has done.

Ask children to listen to the story a second time. Can they match the Shakespeare character to the Ol' Fella character?

Can they identify the similarities and differences in plot and theme between the two stories? (eg *Caspar doesn't get into a fight, but Jags prevents him from getting to training on time and Olly sacks him from the team*) etc.

- Iago/ Jags is a truly evil and manipulative character with absolutely no redeeming features. How did he get this way? Children could create a backstory or 'prequel' to 'Ol' Fella' telling the story of how Jags became so jealous. Or they could write a diary entry for Jags telling the development of his evil plot throughout the story.

ENGLISH/CITIZENSHIP

A Simple Iago/ Jags' Mock Trial

Children could put the character of Jags on trial.
First, agree what the charge should be as a whole class.

Introduce the concept of 'prosecution' and 'defence'. Mind-map what arguments/ questions the prosecution and defence might raise.

Suggested approach

The teacher in role plays the part of Jags.
Divide the class into 3 groups.
One group is the prosecution.
Another group of children play the defence.
The third group is the jury.
The prosecution and defence take it in turns to ask the teacher questions in role based on the mind mapped arguments and questions in support of their case.
When all questions and representations have been made the jury will decide on a guilty or not guilty verdict.

For information on running a more detailed mock trial visit
http://citizenshipfoundation.org.uk/lib_res_pdf/1364.pdf