

Romeo and Juliet

Dramatic Readings: Capulets vs. Montagues

1. Arrange your students into two facing lines so that each student is facing a partner
2. Rehearse the lines below with the students as a question and answer until the lines are memorised
3. Now, the first student in the line walks towards their partner and delivers "Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?" in a dramatic way giving consideration to volume, tone, gesture etc.
4. The partner responds with "I do bite my thumb sir" in what seems like the most appropriate manner to the way in which the question was posed – funnily, seriously, questioningly etc.
5. The next pair repeats the process but have to deliver both question and response in an entirely different way to the way that has just been performed.
6. It is useful occasionally to stop after one of the couples have performed and ask the group as a whole to comment on what made one version very different from another

- Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

- I do bite my thumb, sir.



How can we use tone, gestures, etc., to better understand Shakespeare?



Shakespeare's characters often explain their actions and gestures in their words. Why is it important that these gestures are described verbally instead of just being shown on stage?



These lines are said by Abram, a Montague, and Sampson, a Capulet in Act I, Scene 1. What might this exchange tell us about the relationships between the two families? How does this set the scene for the rest of the play?