

How to play

The game begins as Alexander Cooke the company's favourite boy player is wounded in a brawl and Nicholas has to take his part in the play. Nicholas is concerned that he does not understand Shakespeare's language. Burbage reassures him that neither do many people as Shakespeare was often making up words and using them in unusual ways. Burbage explains how the actors guess at the meaning of new words from the context. On stage Nicholas comes across a number of words he does not understand and has to explore what they mean by looking at the context which surrounds them. The game presents extracts from several plays with blank words inviting pupils to discuss how the blanks might be filled. The idea is not necessarily to make the same choice as Shakespeare, but to explore the context and think about what words would be suitable.

Pupils may be surprised at how creative Shakespeare was with language.

The game is best played in small groups as it requires discussion.

Nicholas does a good job and the company rewards him by taking him to see the bear-baiting at last!

Suggestions for use

This game requires small group discussion. It is important to remember that a successful answer is not necessarily to choose the same word as Shakespeare did, but rather to choose a word that works in the context of the extract.

It is important to think about the clues in the text which allow us to guess at what the word might mean. There is a handout sheet which contains all extracts in a wider context which you may find useful, but the game is certainly playable without it.

The handouts if you wish to use them show the extracts in a wider context.



Richard Burbage