



# The English-Speaking Union National Shakespeare Competition MONOLOGUE LESSON PLANS



## Week 1: Getting to Know Monologues and the ESU National Shakespeare Competition

NOTE: This lesson will take 2 x 50 minute class periods.

- **What's On for Week 1 and Why?**

This first week is all about inspiration and groundwork. Key goals: introduce students to the English-Speaking Union National Shakespeare Competition, share several videos of successful monologues from the Competition, and have the students select and begin to explore their own monologues.

- Students will:
  - Watch several videos of monologue presentations from the Competition;
  - Explore and discuss the Competition's format and guidelines;
  - Select and research several monologues (in order to choose one for the Competition);
  - Develop a working relationship with the chosen monologue and the play from which it comes.

- **Which Standards Are Highlighted?**

Common Core English Language Arts:

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-12.1, 4 & 10
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-12.1
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-12. 3, 4 & 5

NCCAS National Theatre Education:

- NCCAS.NSTE.9-12.7

- **What Will You Need?**

- A computer with internet access
- A projector
- Links to ESU Competition videos on YouTube
- A computer lab with internet access
- *Monologue Viewing Guide* (a copy for each student)
- *Instructions for Students* (a copy for each student)
- *Suggested Monologues List* (a copy for each student)

Notes: Videos of Competition winners from the last few years are on the ESU's YouTube channel at: <http://www.youtube.com/englishspeakingunion>. Videos may also be found by searching "ESU Shakespeare Competition" on YouTube. Select three to five videos to show the students. Be sure to include a diverse section of presentations (male and female, comic and tragic, etc.)

## Day 1: Class Activities

- **What Will You and Your Students Do?**

Class Activity:

1. Pass out copies of the *Monologue Viewing Guide*.
2. Inform the students that they are going to watch videos of several students presenting monologues from Shakespeare. While watching the videos, instruct them to note on the handout:
  - a. what elements they thought did (and did not) make each presentation successful;
  - b. identify the monologue they liked best and reasons why they liked it.

*Lesson plan created by Susan Biondo-Hench (Carlisle High School).  
Find more educator resources at [www.shakespearecompetition.org](http://www.shakespearecompetition.org).*



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3. Show the students at least three videos from the ESU National Shakespeare Competition.
4. Allow a few minutes to finish completing Part A on the *Monologue Viewing Guide*.

**Group Activity:**

1. Divide the class up in small groups of three to five students.
2. Discuss responses to the videos.
3. Draw some conclusions as a group about the videos.
4. Allow time to finish completing Part B on the *Monologue Viewing Guide*.

**Class Activity:**

1. Together make a class list of the top five traits that the students think are characteristic of a successful monologue presentation.
2. Inform students that these monologues were presented at the national level of ESU National Shakespeare Competition. Explain that they will have a chance in the coming weeks to participate in a school level event for this Competition.
3. Pass out copies of the *Instructions for Students* and the *Suggested Monologues List*.
4. Discuss the Competition's rules and guidelines and answer any questions. Note: First be sure to check with your local ESU Branch to see if there is a limited set of monologues from which your students must use.
5. Provide students with a link to the *Suggested Monologues Packet* (available online at: [www.esuus.org](http://www.esuus.org)). Note: This resource will be used in tonight's homework.

• **How Did It Go?**

To assess this lesson plan in your classroom, ask yourself:

1. Did most students stay engaged while viewing the videos?
2. Did each student thoughtfully complete the *Monologue Viewing Guide*?
3. Did each student participate in the group and class discussions?
4. Did the class as a whole develop an effective list of presentation traits the students hope to develop throughout the monologue process?

• **What's for Homework?**

Ask the students to complete the following assignments for the next class:

1. Review the Competition sections of the ESU website (especially the Student Resources section).
2. Review the *Suggested Monologues List* and its accompanying *Suggested Monologues Packet* (available online).
3. Select a minimum of three to five monologues to explore.

**Day 2: Independent Research**

• **What Will You and Your Students Do?**

In a computer lab, each student will independently:

1. Read online synopses of the plays.  
Recommendation: Excellent synopsis can be found online at: [www.folgerdigitaltexts.org/](http://www.folgerdigitaltexts.org/).

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2. Reread their monologue options.
3. Select the one monologue that interests and excites them the most.
4. Print several copies of this monologue. Give one copy (with their name on it) to you.  
NOTE: The student needs several copies of the monologue for notes. You need one for reference and (if necessary) for prompting them during the workshops in upcoming weeks.
5. Reread the synopsis of the play that includes their selected monologue. Begin writing a 200-words or less summary (in their own words) of that play.  
Note: This summary helps the student own a quick but clear overview of the play from the very beginning of the monologue process. It is also a helpful pre-reading activity for them (as they begin reading their plays that evening).
6. Share the monologue he or she has selected with their peers. They can do this by:
  - a. stating it during a class discussion session;
  - b. posting it on a class blog or bulletin board.

Tips: Once the choices are announced, some students may prefer to choose a different monologue (rather than work on a monologue that another student has chosen as well). Since the selection process is a very individual and personal one, always give them the option of moving forward with this second choice. In addition, some students may ask to change monologues at different points through the process; please allow them that option as well.

- **How Did It Go?**

To assess this lesson plan in your classroom, ask yourself:

1. Did each student take advantage of this opportunity to research the plays?
2. Did reading the play synopses allow them to more easily come to a decision about their monologue?
3. Did each student select a monologue for performance and print several copies of it?
4. Did each student begin their summary of the play?

- **What's for Homework?**

Ask the students to complete the following assignments for next week:

1. Complete the 200-words or less summary of the play (which was started in class).
2. Begin to read the selected play.
3. Begin the exercise entitled: *Become Your Character* (found on Page 2 of the *Instructions for Students* handout). Note: This assignment need not be completed until Week 4.
4. Reread their chosen monologue. Break it down into three sections that seem to represent a logical beginning, middle, and end for the passage. Mark these divisions on one of the copies of the text that they printed earlier in class.
5. Work on fully understanding the monologue's text (focusing on the beginning section).
  - a. Write a one sentence summary (in their own words) of the beginning third of the monologue. Place this sentence summary in the margin of their working copy of the text.
  - b. Begin memorizing the monologue (especially the first third of the text).