

The Iambic Name Game

Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus • Concentration • Rhythm • Understanding of iambic pentameter
Grade Level	7 - 12
Ontario Curriculum Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognize a variety of text forms, text features, and stylistic elements and demonstrate understanding to show they help communicate meaning • read and demonstrate an understanding of a variety of literary... texts, using a range of strategies to construct meaning
Time Needed	30 minutes
Space	any
Materials	none

Setting up the exercise:

This is an excellent warm-up activity as it provides a non-threatening and non-pedantic way to start speaking about Shakespeare's verse and rhythm.

The exercise:

- Have the students sit in a circle and have them begin tapping out the iambic rhythm through your example (de DUM de DUM de DUM de DUM de DUM).
- Briefly discuss what that sounds like (horses' hooves, a heartbeat...) and explain that it is the underlying rhythm of our everyday speech.
- Make up and demonstrate some examples of everyday speech that follow the iambic pentameter rhythm ("It's cold outside and so I will go in," "I hate the sun and so I sit in shade," etc.).
- Instruct the students that they must now make up their own line of iambic verse fitting their name and birthdate into the line. (e.g. "Dan Smith was born on May the twenty-first.") Remember, the line must have 10 syllables (no more and no less) and must fit the alternating unstressed/stressed rhythm. Students with multisyllabic names and birthdates will have to be creative in truncating.
- Go around the circle helping students individually who are having trouble.
- Once everyone has figured out their line, go around the circle, each person speaking their line in rhythm right on the heels of the previous person. Whenever there is a break in rhythm, start again from the beginning. Try to get around the whole circle without breaking rhythm.

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