

The Shakespearean Insult Game

Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get the language in their mouths – demystify Shakespearean text • Pull out individual lines from the play that students will recognize and connect to when they see the show later
Grade Level	4 and up
Time Needed	20 minutes
Ontario Curriculum Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • read and demonstrate an understanding of a variety of literary... texts, using a range of strategies to construct meaning • use knowledge of words and cueing systems to read fluently • use speaking skills and strategies appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes
Space	Open space, no furniture
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insult cards from the play – one per student • Drum, bell, whistle (anything loud)

Setting up the exercise:

- Tell students they are now going to insult each other, using insults from the play they are going to see later.

The exercise:

Stage 1:

- Hand out insult cards, one per student.
- Give students one minute to read their insult to themselves out loud, over and over. Help students who need help; emphasize that they don't need to know the meaning of every word, they just need to make it sound insulting.

Stage 2:

- Tell students to mingle as if they are at a cocktail party, moving around (fill the empty spaces in the room) and chatting. At the sound of your signal (drum or whistle) they will stop, turn to the nearest person and deliver their insult in the most insulting manner.
- Repeat this a few times so they get to insult a few different people.

Stage 3:

- Pair up students in partners. Have them deliver their insults back and forth a few times.

Stage 4:

- Have students line up in two rows, facing their partner. The “stage” is the space between the rows.
- The first pair meets in the middle of the space, insults each other, then returns to their lines.
- Continue down the lines.

Extensions:

- During Stage 3, ask students to add a gesture to their insult (no physical contact with the insultee is allowed). Students continue using this gesture in Stage 4.
- After the exercise, lead discussion about the differences between Shakespeare's insults and today's insults.