



SHAKESPEARE  
*Carnival*

# EIGHT STEPS TO GLORY

*Follow these steps to bring your Shakespeare scenes to life!*



## SHAKESPEARE CARNIVAL 2023

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Step One: Select your piece.....	3
Step Two: Read your piece out loud.....	5
Step Three: Read the scene your piece comes from.....	5
Step Three Exercise.....	6
Step Four: Look up the meanings of the words.....	7
Step Five: Find the rhythm of the piece.....	8
Step Six: Hit the end word.....	10
Step Seven: Transformation.....	11
Step Eight: Learn your lines.....	12
Recap.....	13
Additional Content.....	15-19
Your Notes.....	20



# SHAKESPEARE CARNIVAL

# EIGHT STEPS TO GLORY



Follow these steps to bring your Shakespeare to life!

## 1 SELECT YOUR PIECE

How do you know which one to choose? Any reason is a good one, like:





## WRITE OR PRINT YOUR HERE

You can print and paste your scene here - but if you write it out by hand you'll be getting into your head better. And Will says:

*If you use a quill to write it out you'll embed it in your soul!*

**Play:**

**Act + Scene:**

**Character:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

O serpent heart, hid with a  
flowering face!  
Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave?  
Beautiful tyrant! fiend angelical!  
Dove-feathered raven, wolvish-  
ravening lamb...



## 2

### READ YOUR PIECE OUT LOUD

Read the scene out loud a few times – make notes of anything that comes to mind, such as:

- *Is that a joke?*
- *Could that have a double meaning?*
- *Is there a pause there?*
- *What does that mean?*

## 3

### READ THE SCENE YOUR PIECE COMES FROM

Read the scene the speech comes from a few times – out loud, acting out all the parts. Note down anything you discover that relates to the speech and your character.

**See if you can answer these questions:**

- *Who is your character talking to?*
- *How does your character change?*
- *What's just happened to your character before they speak?*
- *Where do they go afterwards?*

Then you can just learn it and perform it right now (if you want to). However, if you want to do the best performance you can, then try doing some or all of the following...



## STEP THREE - EXERCISE

**WHO IS YOUR CHARACTER TALKING TO?**

--

**HOW DOES YOUR CHARACTER CHANGE?**

--

**WHAT JUST HAPPENED TO YOUR CHARACTER?**

--

**WHERE DO THEY GO AFTERWARDS?**

--



# 4

## LOOK UP THE MEANING OF THE WORDS

Look up any words you don't know the meaning of - and sometimes it's useful to look up the words you do know, as they too can have more than one meaning. Write the meaning down next to the word so you can memorise it quickly and avoid another search.

Here are some helpful places to look up the meanings of Shakespeare's words are:

- [Shakespeareswords.com](http://Shakespeareswords.com)
- [PlayShakespeare.com](http://PlayShakespeare.com)
- Google, and
- Most printed scripts (they will have notes that help too).



### **WARNING!**

NoFearShakespeare can be good, but it can also hide stuff from you because it doesn't like the ruder bits Shakespeare writes and tries to gloss over them so that it doesn't offend your parents and teachers.

## 5

## FIND THE RHYTHM OF THE SCRIPT

You've possibly heard that Shakespeare wrote much of his work in iambic pentameter. This is a kind of rhythm pattern – in the same way that rock and reggae are different rhythm patterns. **Iambic Pentameter** just means that each line of text has ten syllables in it and the even numbered syllables have more emphasis than they odd numbered ones. Some examples are:

- "But **SOFT** what **LIGHT** through **YONder** **WIN**dow breaks?"
- "**FRIENDS**, **RO**mans, **COUN**try-men, **LEND** me your **EARS**!"
- "**GAL**lop a-**PACE**, you **FIRE**ry **FOOT**ed **STEEDS**"

This is the basic pattern of his work – but he also used that rhythm, like all good musicians do, to set up a rhythm and then break it. So it's not as predictable as a metronome – it's more like the way hip-hop sets up a rhythm and then breaks.

**The rhythm a character speaks in can suggest insights to their psychological or emotional state:**

- If they are really using the structure of even numbered syllables being stressed, perhaps they are supremely confident?
- Or perhaps they are trying to present a confidence they don't really feel? This might change the intensity of the rhythm in some way or you might find a moment of broken rhythm to reveal that their mask of confidence is slipping.
- Or perhaps they are trying to impose their will on an unruly mob that doesn't want to listen.

If they suddenly break the rhythm it could mean they have experienced a shock or surprise, or had a realisation, seen a ghost, or someone they love – or they are being unconventional to get people's attention, or stressing really important ideas to change the listeners mind and actions...there are so many reasons.

**So, explore the rhythm, by reading the speech again and imposing a really heavy beat on every even numbered syllable, because it can help you and is fun to play with.**

Once you've explored rhythm in this way, you might feel that there are bits that make perfect sense in that 'regular rhythm' and other bits that don't – that's where Shakespeare is whispering to you from 400 years ago, that he has left you something to play with (creepy!).



Look at those lines and say them out loud trying to make sense of it and seeing where the rhythmic stresses fall for you - you are now 'jamming' with Shakespeare, improvising with William and finding the path for yourself. It might just be alerting you to a psychological insight for your character.

### How does he break it? Some of the ways he breaks it are:

- By flipping the first two syllables so that the emphasis is on the first syllable of a line not the second one [and then he returns it to the even numbered syllables]. This makes that first sound or word more obvious to the listener and more important.
- By adding an extra syllable at the end to give a line 11 syllables. This often makes the line flow more easily into the line below it – the thought might keep going over the two lines.
- The thing to ask yourself is why did my character break out of, or break into, the rhythmic structure at this moment.

### How does he keep it the same?

- Sometimes Shakespeare 'elides' a word – that's when he runs two vowels together into the one syllable so that the word has fewer syllables. The word 'heaven' is a classic example. He might want it said as two syllables like:
  - 'hea-van' or as one syllable like: 'hevn'.
- It's the same with 'ed' at the end of words. Sometimes he wants it to be 'remembered' with 3 syllables, but sometimes he wants it to be 'rememberèd' with 4 syllables.

There's lots of 'rules' about verse and how to do it 'right' but a lot of those 'rules' have a lot of exceptions. Think of all these things as guidelines or 'rules of thumb' to help you and then, if you spot something that you think is great to do and it breaks those rules, then break them! But do it knowing that the guideline is there and you are choosing another way – the artist's way. That's what Shakespeare did too, so go for it!



## 6

## HIT THE END WORD

The next step is the easiest one – and one of the most important. The most common common mistake that actors make when performing Shakespeare’s verse is to let their vocal energy drop towards the end of the line. Some people call it ‘falling off the end of the line’. This usually happens because you are too tense. The tension makes you start each line with a big puff of your breath and as you get to the end of the ten syllables you are running out of breath.

So go through your script and mark each of the end words. By this I mean underline or highlight both the words at the end of each line of verse AND the end words of thoughts that happen to finish in the middle of a line. Here’s a bit you may know, with the ‘end words’ highlighted. See how it’s not just the end of the verse line, but also the words that end thoughts in the middle of the line.

*To be, or not to be, that is the question:  
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
Or to take Arms against a Sea of troubles,  
And by opposing end them: to die, to sleep;  
No more; and by a sleep, to say we end  
The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks  
That Flesh is heir to?...*

You can mark them and then, as you speak the words, drive towards them as a target to hit hard. You can do the speech and throw (or mime throwing) a ball against a wall on those key end words to give your body a physical push towards it, to get your breath involved. You will find that this gives your words energy and helps you discover

the way the thoughts spring to life with a dynamic impulse from the previous thought, driving dynamically towards the end of the thought. I often think of the thought as like an arrow that has to shoot from the bow and SLAM into the target hard. The arrow is ‘the thought’, the target is ‘the end word’ it hits hard.



## 7

## TRANSFORMATION

How is the character different at the end of the speech? How is the character changed by the words they have said, the thoughts they have had, the things they have done? Most good scenes have a character go on a psychological journey from thinking and feeling one way to thinking and feeling another.

What a character is thinking is feeling is best defined by their 'objective' – what they want, the task they are trying to achieve, what they need. This is what will change – by the end of the speech they will be thinking, feeling, wanting – and therefore doing something new. This is the exciting part of drama – seeing people change before our eyes. It's also the most exciting part of acting – being changed by what your character is doing.

Sometimes it's only clear to you how the character is feeling at one end of the text – it can be either the beginning or the end. That's ok. If you have that, ask yourself:

- What's the opposite of that?
- What's really a long way away from that feeling or thought?

This way of approaching the character's objective gives you a strong emotional journey to go on and gets you started on thinking, feeling and acting as the character.

You can refine and improve your choices as you discover more – but this gives you a really good starting point.

WHAT DOES YOUR CHARACTER WANT?	WHAT DOES YOUR CHARACTER NEED?	WHAT ARE THEY TRYING TO ACHIEVE?	HOW ARE THEY DIFFERENT AT THE END?

## 8

## LEARN YOUR LINES

Now you'll have read the script a number of times and you are probably getting familiar with it. Start to learn the lines by doing the following:

**Think about what triggers each line.**

What your character wants, hears, sees, feels that makes them speak that thought. What you are learning is the thoughts behind each line, the reason they are said.

**Read it out loud 10 times and put a tally mark at the top of the page each time.**

You can read it quite quickly if you like, but make sure you are saying the words accurately. You can do this as you go for a walk or move around the room – these help get the whole body involved and walking can trigger the brain's memorisation process.

**Cover the speech and say the first thought – then reveal it to check you got it right.**

If you did, move on to the next thought. If you didn't, cover it again and say it again correctly. Then check, then move on. (You can do this while walking too).

**Write out the first letter of each word and all the punctuation of the speech.**

*"T b, o n t b, t i t q:  
W ' t n i t m t s  
T s a a o o f,  
O t t A a a S o t,  
A b o e t:"*

You'll then have this a stimulus to your memory. It helps you recall the line without having to read it again – it shows you that you know it. (And if you do this while walking, think how fit you'll be).

**Write the speech out on a blank piece of paper and check to see if you made any mistakes.**

**There are apps you can get to help you too.**

Line Learner is one popular one – or just record the lines on your phone and play them back to yourself. (While going for a walk).

**The try to distract yourself as you speak the words.**

You can juggle or walk on a bench or low wall, throw and catch a ball, do the washing up, sprint for 50 metres and then speak – anything to break up any habitual patterns that you may have fallen into. (Speaking in accents or funny voices can help with this too).

Now for some people that will be enough fun and you'll just want to record your scene and find something new, which is great, but if you want to go deeper, there's more you can do.



## RECAP: STEPS 4 - 8

Play: \_\_\_\_\_ | Act + Scene: \_\_\_\_\_ | Character: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Look up the meanings of the words</b>	Words that I don't know?	Meanings/Definitions	Meanings/Definitions
<b>Rhythm of the script</b>	How many syllables are being stressed?	How many are broken?	What does this suggest about the character?
<b>Hit the end word</b>	End words at the end of lines.	End words at the end of thoughts.	Arrows (thoughts) --> HIT (end words)
<b>Transformation</b>	What does your character want at the beginning?	What is their objective? (thoughts, feelings, etc.)	How are they different at the end?
<b>Learn your lines</b>	Method 1:	Method 2:	Method 3:



D  
M  
A

D  
M  
A  
MUSIC  
High School of the Performing Arts

D  
M  
A  
MUSIC

GOING DEEPER IN THE WORLD OF PLAY

# EIGHT MORE STEPS TO BE A LEGEND OF THE STAGE



*Follow these steps to bring your Shakespeare to life!*

1

## READ THE PLAY

### TOP TIP:

- Sometimes reading the whole play at one sitting can be a bit too much. The famous director, Mike Alfreds, says only work in 30-minute bursts, or on one scene at a time. Keep your mind fresh!

It's actually best to read it a few times – you'll discover so much more on repeat readings – but to help you get a lot from it as you read it – read a synopsis first, read about your character [and any character you're talking to or about]. Wikipedia can help, as can the introductions they write before the play starts in some printed versions of the play, watch a few movies versions, YouTube clips about the play – anything to enrich your understanding, but then: read the play again! Out loud – acting out all the parts [it's crazy fun] and note down all the things you learn about who you are and what you want and how you feel about the characters you're talking to and about.

2

## RELATIONSHIPS

Ask yourself who are you talking to and what is the relationship between you? You can start being broad like – father, cousin, enemy, but you want more specific about the unique details of that particular relationship.

To find those specifics, look at the following...

## 3

## CHARACTER LISTS

This is an amazing way of going really deep into a play and a character.

**Read the play and write out (it's better to do it by hand):**

- Everything your character says about themselves
- Everything other characters say about your character
- Everything your character says about other characters
- Facts about your character (This one can be tricky, is that really a FACT?)
- The imagery that the character uses – what do they keep coming back to or are they always new and different?

## 4

## GIVEN CIRCUMSTANCES

These are famous questions derived from the work of Stanislavski and Uta Hagan. You answer these questions for your character from the information in the play, which the character lists help you understand more deeply.

*Who am I?* → All the details about your character including name, age, address, relatives, likes, dislikes, hobbies, career, description of physical traits, opinions, beliefs, religion, education, origins, enemies, loved ones, sociological influences, etc.

*What time is it?* → Century, season, year, day, minute, significance of time.

*Where am I?* → Country, city, neighbourhood, home, room, area of room, public or private space.

*What surrounds me?* → Animate and inanimate objects-complete details of environment – light/dark, hot/cold etc.

*What happens?* → Past, present, future and all of the events.

*What is my relationship?* → Relation to total events, other characters, and to things.

*What do I want?* → Character's need. The immediate and main objective.

*What is in my way?* → The obstacles which prevent character from getting their need.

*What do I do to get what I want?* → The action: physical and verbal, also-action verbs.





## WHAT ARE YOUR GIVEN CIRCUMSTANCES?

Exercise: Write out your given circumstances in the table below.

*This will help you understand your character more deeply!*

WHO AM I?			
WHAT TIME IS IT?	WHERE AM I?	WHAT SURROUNDS ME?	WHAT HAPPENS?
WHAT IS MY RELATIONSHIP?	WHAT DO I WANT?	WHAT IS IN MY WAY?	WHAT DO I DO TO GET WHAT I WANT?

## 5

## WHAT ARE THE STAGES ON THAT JOURNEY OF TRANSFORMATION?

Break the speech into 'units' or 'blocks' by asking yourself:

- Where are there big changes in thought and feeling?
- Where does the character realise something or change their mind about someone or something or reach a conclusion?

Mark it with an underline across the page.

## 6

## THOUGHTS AND CHANGES

Mark out all the little thoughts that build to those big unit changes with a little slash after each thought.

- Where does a new thought happen?
- How specific can each thought be?
- Can you see what you are talking about?
- Can you feel what you are talking about with different senses?
- Can you do what you are talking about?

## 7

## LET'S GET PHYSICAL!

There's been a lot of 'heady' work on the script so now involve your body and unconscious a bit more by physically act each thought out, mime it. By getting your body and your breath moving – this can help you activate your body and get 'out of your head'.

You can be really 'illustrative' making literal shapes for each word as you say them, or you can be really abstract and just do some kind of 'interpretive dance' – but the key thing is to make sure you move your feet, bend your knees and flex your spine to get your whole body involved.

Be really big with your gestures. You might just surprise yourself with what you discover from your voice, from your body and from your imagination.

## 8

## DISCOVERY

You may have discovered lots of different ways of playing each thought – note them down as options or actions you can play – there are lots of different opportunities in each moment.

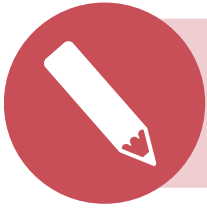
- How different can each thought be from the one before it? If you play similar actions your performance can become predictable.
- How much contrast and variety can you find in your character and still stay true to their world?

Find that contrasting variety, but keep it within the (very big and often colourful) world of the play.

**FINALLY – Have a whole heap of fun!**

Whether your character is a lover, a villain or a fool – or all three of these archetypes at different times, find the joy in performing them. Bring them to life by allowing yourself to play, discover things in the moment, surprise yourself and give a creative gift to the audience.





# YOUR NOTES HERE!

***Write out any additional notes here:***

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



VII



VII



SHAKESPEARE  
*Carnival*

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES, VISIT  
[SPORTFORJOVE.COM.AU/SHAKESPEARE-CARNIVAL](https://SPORTFORJOVE.COM.AU/SHAKESPEARE-CARNIVAL)

© 2023 Sport for Jove Theatre Company LTD



VII



VII