

Teacher Tool 206: Shakespeare Outdoors

Hamlet Study Guide

Study Guide for Theater 27: Shakespeare Outdoors: Hamlet

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Shakespeare Outdoors: Hamlet

Original Date: May 17, 2010

Grade Level: Grades 7-12

Program Description:

Ever wanted to know what it's like to be part of a professional theatre? To go inside the rehearsal space and ask actors, directors and technicians questions while they work? To find out about their creative process? To see how a theatre production comes to life? Ever wondered what new challenges and opportunities await you when you stage that production outdoors? You can find the answers to these questions and more when you behind the scenes of the Shakespeare Festival of St. Louis. In this archived program from 2010 we went behind the scenes of their production of *Hamlet*, saw their outdoor performance space in the heart of St. Louis' urban oasis Forest Park, and met the director and others involved in bringing this classic tale to life.

The program focuses on the text of Shakespeare's masterpiece and what it means to bring it to life in an outdoor production. Find out what it's like to speak Shakespeare's language, how they determine how to interpret the script and create their character, and how it might change the acting and directing process to produce the play outdoors.

Program Objectives:

1. The participant will explore the nature of the theatrical experience by participating both as an audience member and as a critical questioner.
2. The participant will interact with professional theatre performers, directors and designers.
3. The participant will tour an outdoor theatre stage and view scenes from a theatrical production.

Program Format:

- I. Welcome and Introduction—Includes introductions of guests and participating student groups.
- II. Interaction with the Director and Actors—Students ask questions about the play, speaking Shakespeare's language, how characterizations are developed, etc. Specific parts of the play's text are read, explained and discussed.
- III. Closing Segment—Includes summary of major ideas learned and final questions from the students.

Program-Related Activities:

1. If students are not already familiar with the plot and character of “Hamlet,” utilize the plot summary and character information in Teacher Tool 207: On Hamlet to provide background information before viewing the archived program. The document was created by St. Louis Shakespeare Festival.
2. Have students learn more about Shakespearean tragedy and the language in Shakespeare's plays with the information and activities included in the Student Tool 43: On Shakespeare's Plays that is also available on our Educate.Today website. The document was created by St. Louis Shakespeare Festival.
3. Have students read the excerpts from the play that are referenced in the program. Discuss questions they have about the meaning of the scene, how it might best be presented, how they might enact it, etc.
4. Extend student understanding of "Hamlet" and let them explore their artistic and literary responses to Shakespeare's play by utilizing activities included in Teacher Tool 208: Will in Action and Teacher Tool 207: On Hamlet also available on our Educate.Today website. The documents were created by St. Louis Shakespeare Festival.
5. Let students learn more about who Shakespeare was, when he lived and what his life was like through Student Tool 44: On Shakespeare and His Times also available on our Educate.Today website. The document was created by St. Louis Shakespeare Festival.