

LAMDA

SHAKESPEARE FOR PERFORMANCE

Graded Examinations Syllabus

With first teaching from 1 September 2023
and first examining from 1 January 2024

LAMDA Level 1 Award in Shakespeare for Performance

Contents

About LAMDA	4
Why Shakespeare?	4
LAMDA Qualifications	7
Qualification Framework	7
About this Syllabus Specification	7
Structure of the Qualification	8
Examination Time Allowance	8
Introduction and Purpose	8
Learning Outcomes	9
Qualification Content	10
Performance Skills and Techniques	12
Assessment and Grading Criteria	13
Marking Scheme	15
Attainment Bands and Grade Descriptors	15
Examination Regulations	19
Assessment Guidance	21
Administrative Arrangements	24
Assessment and Grading	24
Invalidation Policy	25

A Note on Language	26
Glossary of Terms	27
Support Material	27
Glossary of Terms: Syllabus Terminology	28
Glossary of Terms: Command Verbs	30
Glossary of Terms: Syllabus Content	31
Appendix 1: Level 1 Set Speeches	34

About LAMDA

Founded in 1861, the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA) is the oldest drama school in the UK. We started to offer examinations in speech and drama to the public over 130 years ago. Since then, we have developed an enviable reputation for delivering excellence in the provision of Communication, Performance and Musical Theatre examinations in the UK and are rapidly extending our reach internationally.

Why Shakespeare?

In the 16th and 17th Centuries, Shakespeare was considered something of a revolutionary. Indeed, the ideas he highlighted in his work would have raised more than a few eyebrows in Renaissance era Britain.

And as cutting-edge as they may have been then, the stories of Shakespeare's plays have not gone out of style. Two teens, from different backgrounds, falling in love (Romeo and Juliet); a family trying to get ahead (Macbeth); a person dealing with grief (Hamlet): the themes in these stories hold as much meaning today as they did almost 500 years ago.

We believe this is why Shakespeare's work has endured the test of time: because it speaks to the fundamental human condition of love, conflict, death, ambition, power, fate and free will.

So why perform Shakespeare?

The answer to that is simple: Shakespeare's words were not written to be read, they were written to be spoken and heard. And not solely by the Kings and Queens of the English court, but by everyone.

You cannot fully appreciate Shakespeare's use of literary devices and figures of speech – such as how Iago's sibilance speaks to their snake-like cunning –without hissing it aloud. Nor can you understand how perfectly matched Benedick and Beatrice are, without embodying their lightening quick prose.

Through studying the LAMDA Shakespeare for Performance qualifications, Learners will discover how to use vocal and physical skills to explore language, before moving onto form. Through this practical execution of language and form, they will then aim to unlock character, story and, eventually, theme.

The LAMDA Shakespeare for Performance qualifications have been designed to take Learners on a journey with Shakespeare: starting with the words and ending, we hope, with a deep and practical understanding of some of the complex, universal and deeply human ideas Shakespeare wanted to share with the world.

Benedict Cumberbatch CBE

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Benedict Cumberbatch', with a small plus sign below the end of the signature.

LAMDA President & Graduate 2000

LAMDA Qualifications

LAMDA is recognised as an awarding organisation by Ofqual, the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation in England, Qualifications Wales, and the Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA Regulation) in Northern Ireland.

Qualification Framework

The LAMDA Shakespeare for Performance qualifications reside on the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF). The qualifications are available at three levels on the RQF: Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3.

The RQF permits direct comparison between academic qualifications (i.e. GCSEs/ A Levels) and vocational qualifications (i.e. LAMDA qualifications and others).

The LAMDA Shakespeare for Performance qualifications also reside on Qualifications Wales' educational framework: the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW).

About this Syllabus Specification

This syllabus specification outlines the specification for LAMDA Level 1 Award in Shakespeare for Performance. It is designed for use by Centres, Teachers, Learners, and Parents/ Guardians.

Structure of the Qualification

LAMDA Shakespeare for Performance qualifications are open to all. There are no age restrictions, and the choice of repertoire is intended to appeal to Learners of all ages.

Qualification Name:	LAMDA Level 1 Award in Shakespeare for Performance
Qualification Number:	610/2961/0
Level:	RQF Level 1
Guided Learning Hours:	15 (hours) Total Qualification
Time:	40 (hours)
Mode of Assessment:	Examination
Examination Time Allowance:	10 minutes

Introduction and Purpose

The LAMDA Level 1 Award in Shakespeare for Performance is designed to enable Learners to develop basic skills in performing a Shakespeare text. Learners will perform from memory one set speech from a play by William Shakespeare, audibly and clearly. They will be able to apply their knowledge, understanding and skills to produce a thoughtful interpretation, based on creative engagement with the material and careful preparation. Learners will demonstrate

their knowledge of their character and the speech, reflecting on the rhythm and imagery in the speech.

Learning outcomes

On completion of this qualification the Learner will be able to:

Interpretation

LO1: Perform one set speech from memory from a play by William Shakespeare, demonstrating an understanding of the material.

Technique

LO2: Use appropriate vocal skills in response to the text.

LO3: Demonstrate an appropriate physical response to the text.

Knowledge

LO4: Know and understand the content and rhythm of the speech.

Qualification Content

Speech (Set Piece) Interpretation and Technique

(LO 1, 2, 3)

The Learner will perform from memory one set speech from a play by William Shakespeare.

- The Learner must select this speech from the list of set speeches provided in this Syllabus Specification in Appendix 1.
- The Learner must announce the play title and the character name prior to the performance.
- A clear, legible copy of the speech should be provided for the Examiner.
- Speeches may not be edited in any way.

Knowledge Questions

(LO 4)

The Learner will answer questions on the following:

1. What the speech is about and who the character is talking to.
2. A piece of imagery from the speech, selected by the Learner together with:
 - Reasons for selecting the imagery
 - An outline of what the selected imagery means.
 - LAMDA defines ‘imagery’ as ‘words that create visual pictures of ideas in our minds’
3. The Learner will also be asked to describe the rhythm of iambic pentameter. This should be done with reference to their specific speech.
 - This may be done through words, or practically (for example, through clapping).
 - Please see the Assessment Guidance for further notes.

Performance Skills and Techniques

Performance skills and techniques that the Learner should develop include:

- audibility
- clarity
- expression
- fluency
- focus
- form
- pace and pause
- situation.

Please see the glossary at the end of this syllabus for terminology definitions.

Learners do not need to memorise these definitions.

Assessment and Grading Criteria

Level 1

In order to pass this qualification, the evidence that the Learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the Learning Outcomes. The Assessment Criteria for a Pass grade describes the level of achievement required to pass this qualification.

LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
LO1 Perform one set speech from memory from a play by William Shakespeare, demonstrating an understanding of the material	1.1 Demonstrate an understanding of the character and situation in the speech 1.2 Communicate an understanding of the form of the speech 1.3 Perform from memory with fluency and focus

<p>LO2 Use appropriate vocal skills in response to the text</p>	<p>2.1 Speak with audibility 2.2 Speak with clarity 2.3 Use pace and pause appropriate to the text</p>
<p>LO3 Demonstrate an appropriate physical response to the text</p>	<p>3.1 Perform with movement and expression appropriate to the selected text</p>
<p>LO4 Know and understand the content and rhythm of the speech</p>	<p>4.1 Describe what the speech is about and who the character is talking to 4.2 Select a piece of imagery within the speech performed and give reason(s) for choosing the selected imagery 4.3 Outline what the selected imagery means 4.4 Describe the rhythm of iambic pentameter, with reference to the speech performed</p>

Marking Scheme

ASSESSMENT TASK		MARKS	TOTAL MARKS
Speech	Interpretation	40	80
	Technique	40	
Knowledge	20		
Total Marks	100		

Attainment Bands

AWARD	TOTAL MARKS
Pass	50–64
Merit	65–79
Distinction	80+

Grade Descriptors

The following information describes what skills and knowledge Learners need to present in order to attain marks for Pass, Merit or Distinction for the Level 1 Award in Shakespeare for Performance.

Learners who complete the external assessment but who either do not meet the minimum pass criteria mark for a Pass or fail to satisfy one or more of the stated Assessment Criteria, will be graded as a Fail. This is irrespective of the total marks accumulated.

Distinction (80–100 Marks)

A Learner who achieves a Distinction grade will have communicated the sense of the piece throughout their performance, demonstrating a full understanding of the character and situation. The performance will have been clear and audible, and pace and pause will have been used appropriately. The Learner will have used thoughtful and appropriate movement and expression in response to the text. The Learner will have also given accurate and detailed answers to questions asked about their chosen piece.

Merit (65–79 Marks)

A Learner who achieves a Merit grade will have communicated the sense of the piece for the majority of the

examination, but will not have done this throughout, demonstrating a secure understanding of the character and situation. The Learner will be mostly clear and audible in their performance. The Learner will have used appropriate movement and expression in response to the text.

The Learner will have also given general, but accurate answers in response to questions asked about their chosen piece.

Pass (50–64 Marks)

A Learner who achieves a Pass grade will have communicated a basic sense of the piece, demonstrating a basic understanding of the character and situation. They will have demonstrated basic vocal performance skills and some imaginative interpretation of the texts through movement and expression. Learners will have also given accurate but basic answers to questions asked about their chosen piece.

Fail (0–49 Marks)

A Learner whose examination is graded as a Fail for any Subject and Grade will have demonstrated inaccuracy and lack of fluency and focus in all or most of the performance. They will not have demonstrated appropriate use of physical and vocal performance skills; there will have been lapses in memory (if applicable) and they will have shown little or no

evidence of interpretative skills. Knowledge in relation to the piece performed will have been insufficient. The Learner will also have failed to communicate basic answers to questions asked about their chosen piece.

Examination Regulations

1. It is recommended that the Set Speeches used for study (for all levels) are from The Arden Shakespeare Complete Works as published in this syllabus specification. No edits to any of the Set Pieces are permitted. If the Learner does not present the text, exactly as presented in the Syllabus Specification, their exam may be invalidated.
2. Full costume must not be worn during the examination. Long practice skirts, which allow freedom of movement, may be used together with small items such as scarves, hats, shawls, and gloves. Nudity is not permitted under any circumstances.
3. Hand props are permitted but must be kept to a minimum so as to not overburden the Learner. Please note that real weapons, or props that simulate real weapons (such as fake knives or guns) must not be used in examinations.
4. Electronic devices, such as (but not limited to): mobile phones, smart watches, tablets, e-readers and laptops, are not permitted in the examination room unless pre-approved by LAMDA Exams. Please see the LAMDA Exams policies at www.lamda.ac.uk for more information.
5. The Learner must only play one character in their selected speech.

7. No unauthorised person will be allowed to be present during the examination. An 'authorised person' is a person (that is not being assessed), who has been permitted by LAMDA Exams to enter the examination room in line with the requirements of the Learner's Reasonable Adjustment.
8. Animals are not permitted in the examination room.
9. The examination must be performed in English.

If, during the examination, the Examiner feels that a breach of the regulations poses a safety, security or safeguarding risk, the Examiner may take immediate action and halt the examination.

A breach of any of these Regulations will be referred to LAMDA Exams for consideration. Breaches found to have an impact on the validity of the examination, risk invalidation. Please see the Invalidation Policy section for further information.

Assessment Guidance

Use of the Performance Space

The Learner should try to avoid playing in profile for too long, as this masks facial expression.

The Learner should try not to place themselves too near the Examiner's table for the duration of the speech as this may limit their overall use of the performance space.

Focus/Audience during Performance

The Learner should ensure that they perform their speech with appropriate focus.

When performing a direct address to audience, the Learner should focus on the imagined wider audience of which the Examiner is a part, and not directly on the Examiner.

Gender and Casting

Learners do not have to select speeches that are gender specific. Female or non-binary Learners can play male characters, and equally male or non-binary Learners can play female characters. This is the case for all levels of examinations.

No edits to the Set Texts can be made if a Learner would like to play a character of a different gender: they must not change the name of the character or any of the pronouns used.

Accent

We welcome Learners from all over the world to take our examinations and encourage them to perform in their own accents. Whilst taking examinations, we encourage Learners to find clarity and intelligibility within their own accent rather than speaking in any particular accent.

Describing Iambic Pentameter

Iambic pentameter is defined as:

‘A line of verse with five metrical feet, each consisting of one short (or unstressed) syllable followed by one long (or stressed) syllable’.

<p>At Level 1, Learners are expected to be able to 'describe the rhythm of iambic pentameter'.</p>	<p>In the case of verbal explanation, the Learner must be prepared to describe all of the terms they use in their explanation.</p> <p>Verbal definitions should be given with reference to the selected speech.</p>
<p>OR</p>	
<p>The Learner may also demonstrate the rhythm of iambic pentameter by clapping, galloping, clicking or otherwise 'beating' out the rhythm.</p>	<p>This should be done with reference to the selected speech.</p>

Administrative Arrangements

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations are designed to facilitate access to qualifications for Learners who have particular requirements. Further information can be obtained from LAMDA Exams published Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy, which is available to download from the LAMDA Exams website: Help & Resources | London academy of music & dramatic art (lamda.ac.uk)

Assessment and Grading

The purpose of assessment is to ensure that effective learning has taken place to give Learners the opportunity to meet all the Assessment Criteria and achieve the Learning Outcomes within a qualification.

All LAMDA qualifications require external assessment through Examination. External assessment is a form of independent assessment where Assessment Criteria for each qualification are set by LAMDA and marked by a LAMDA Examiner.

All assessments for LAMDA regulated qualifications are criterion- referenced, based on the achievement of specified

Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria. Each qualification has specified Assessment Criteria, which are used for grading purposes. A qualification grade can be awarded at Pass, Merit or Distinction.

Learners must achieve a minimum of a pass for all assessment criteria and meet the minimum overall mark in order to achieve a pass for the whole qualification.

Learners who fail to satisfy one or more of the stated Assessment Criteria (irrespective of the total marks they accumulate) will be graded as a Fail.

A Learner Examination Report (LER) will be completed by the Examiner for each assessment. This will show a result for each Assessment Criteria which could be Distinction (D), Merit (M), Pass (P), Fail or Not Presented (NP).

Invalidation Policy

LAMDA operates an Invalidation Policy for all of its qualifications.

All Learners must perform to the exact requirements as detailed in this syllabus specification. All Learners must also comply with all LAMDA Examination Regulations as detailed on page 18.

Learners who do not conform to these requirements will be at risk of Invalidation. All potential Invalidations are submitted by the Examiner and are reviewed by LAMDA to ensure fair, valid and consistent decisions are made. If an examination is Invalidated, LAMDA will issue a result of 'Invalidated' and will not award a certificate for the Learner's assessment.

For all confirmed Invalidation decisions, a letter detailing the reasons for the Invalidation along with the Learner's Examination Report (marked Invalid) will be sent directly to the Centre Coordinator or the named accountable person detailed at the time of examination entry.

A Note on Language

English is used and explicitly expressed in all LAMDA syllabus specifications and assessment materials for the examinations. Examinations are conducted solely in English. The language used in all syllabus specifications, assessment materials and during practical assessment is explicit, plain and free from bias.

While LAMDA offers examinations in Wales and Ireland, it does not offer examinations using Welsh (Cymraeg) or Irish (Gaelige) languages.

Glossary of Terms

A glossary of the terminology used in this Syllabus Specification is available on pages 26-28.

Support Material

LAMDA Exams has provided additional support materials to use when preparing for the LAMDA Shakespeare for Performance qualifications. These include a Knowledge Matters publication. This is available to purchase from the LAMDA Exams online shop.

It is vital that the LAMDA Teacher FAQs and LAMDA Shakespeare for Performance Teacher Support Materials are also consulted in preparation for this examination. These can be found on the LAMDA website at www.lamda.ac.uk.

Glossary of Terms: Syllabus Terminology

Assessment – the process of making judgements about the extent to which a Learner’s work meets the Assessment Criteria or any additional assessment requirements of a qualification.

Assessment Criteria (AC) – descriptions of the requirements a Learner is expected to meet to demonstrate that a learning outcome has been achieved.

Certificate (for a qualification) – a record of attainment of credit or a qualification issued by an awarding organisation.

Guided Learning Hours (GLH) – the activity of a Learner being taught or instructed by a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other provider of education. GLH includes the assessment time.

Learning Outcome (LO) – a statement of what a Learner can be expected to know, understand or do as a result of a process of learning.

Level – an indication of the relative demand, complexity and/or depth of achievement, and/or the autonomy of the Learner in demonstrating that achievement.

Qualification – an award made to a Learner for the achievement of the specified combination of credits, or credits and exemptions, required for that award.

Qualification Syllabus Specification – a detailed statement defining the purpose, content, structure and assessment arrangements for a qualification.

Qualification Title – a short description of the level, size and content of a qualification.

Total Qualification Time (TQT) – guided learning hours (GLH), plus an estimate of the number of hours a Learner will reasonably be likely to spend in preparation, study or any other form of participation in education or training, which takes place as directed by – but not under the immediate guidance or supervision of – a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training.

Glossary of Terms: Command Verbs

Communicate – convey ideas to others.

Demonstrate – carry out and apply knowledge, show an understanding and/or skills in a practical situation.

Describe – give a clear, straightforward description which includes all of the main points.

Explain – show and give reasons and/or evidence to support an opinion, view or argument.

Outline – set out main characteristics.

Perform – deliver to an audience.

Select – choose the best or most suitable option related to a specific criteria or outcomes.

State – express in clear terms.

Glossary of Terms: Syllabus Content

Please note the Learner does not need to know these definitions from memory for the examination.

These definitions should only be used as an initial starting place when preparing for the examinations, and Learners are encouraged to explore these terms in greater depth using other sources.

Audibility – using sufficient breath and resonance appropriate to the size of the performance space and for the needs of the character.

Clarity – articulating sufficiently, without losing the sense or flow of the text, in order to be understood by the Examiner (and wider imagined audience).

Communicating text – communicating the meaning of the text (the thoughts spoken aloud by the character); ensuring that this communication is appropriate to the situation and world of the text.

Express/Expression – use of face, voice and body to make known one's thoughts or feelings.

Fluency – to perform with a sense of ease.

Focus – maintaining concentration and involvement with the character being portrayed.

Form (of the language) – the arrangement, shape and structure of the words on the page.

Iambic Pentameter – a line of verse with five metrical feet, each consisting of one short (or unstressed) syllable followed by one long (or stressed) syllable.

Imagery – words that create visual pictures of ideas in our minds.

Meaning – clarifying what the character is thinking and the sense behind their words or actions.

Pace and pause – the variation in speed of speech delivery, which helps to endow the text with feeling.

Performance space – the area in which the Learner performs.

Physical response – responding to the imagery of the speech/scene non-verbally.

Rhythm – regular combinations of weak and strong stresses, creating a pattern or series of beats.

Situation – what is happening in the speech at that time and place.

Stress – intensity given to a syllable or word of speech, used to draw attention to a word or idea of importance.

Vocal response – transforming vocally into a character according to the style, form and content of the text.

Appendix 1

Set Speeches – Content and Trigger Warnings

Please note that many of Shakespeare's plays contain themes that some Learners may find distressing. We advise that care is taken when guiding Learners through this material. For Level 1 examinations Learners are not required to read the full play, although we understand that Learners may choose to study the play as a whole in order to inform their performance if they wish. To the best of our ability, LAMDA has selected speeches which do not deal with some of the less age-appropriate themes in Shakespeare's work.

From the Level 1 selection, some themes that appear in the wider plays include: misogyny, discriminatory language, sexual innuendo and violence.

LAMDA does not endorse any of the discriminatory terminology that appears in some of these works.

LAMDA is constantly exploring ways to make our syllabi as inclusive as possible. We work with the industry to create positive change and encourage conversation around inclusivity. We recommend casting with sensitivity and consideration of the themes and experiences of the character portrayed, particularly in relation to religion, race, gender and disability.

Level 1 Set Speeches

The Learner must choose one of the following speeches to perform for their Level 1 examination.

Chorus, *Romeo and Juliet*, Prologue

Phebe, *As You Like It*, Act 3 Scene 5

Oberon, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act 2 Scene 1

Miranda, *The Tempest*, Act 1 Scene 2 Orlando, *As You Like It*, Act 2 Scene 7 Juliet, *Romeo and Juliet*, Act 3 Scene 2

Puck, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act 2 Scene 1

First Lord, *As You Like It*, Act 2 Scene 1

The Learner must perform their chosen set speech from memory as it is presented below.

The italicised introductions to the speeches do not need to be spoken by the Learner during the examination.

These speeches have been reprinted from © Proudfoot, R., Thompson, A., Kastan, D. S., Woudhuysen H. R. *The Arden Shakespeare Complete Works* (2011), Revised Edition, India: the Arden Shakespeare, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing PLC.

1. Romeo and Juliet, Prologue

This speech takes place at the start of the play, in which the CHORUS outlines the events of 'Romeo and Juliet' to the audience.

Chorus

Two households both alike in dignity
(In fair Verona, where we lay our scene)
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life,
Whose misadventur'd piteous overthrows
Doth with their death bury their parents' strife.
The fearful passage of their death-mark'd love
And the continuance of their parents' rage,
Which, but their children's end, nought could remove,
Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage;
The which, if you with patient ears attend,
What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.

2. As You Like It, Act 3 Scene 5

PHEBE is a young shepherdess living in the Forest of Arden. Although Silvius is in love with her, she does not return his feelings. In this speech, Phebe rejects him.

Phebe

I would not be thy executioner:

I fly thee, for I would not injure thee.

Thou tell'st me there is murder in mine eye:

'Tis pretty, sure, and very probable,

That eyes, that are the frail'st and softest things,

Who shut their coward gates on atomies,

Should be call'd tyrants, butchers, murderers.

Now I do frown on thee with all my heart,

And if mine eyes can wound, now let them kill thee.

Now counterfeit to swoon: why now fall down,

Or if thou canst not, O for shame, for shame,

Lie not, to say mine eyes are murderers.

Now show the wound mine eye hath made in thee.

3. A Midsummer Night's Dream, Act 2 Scene 1

This speech takes place in a magical wood, which is home to OBERON and Titania: King and Queen of the fairies. Before this speech, Oberon has sent Puck to find a flower that contains a love potion. Presented with the flower, Oberon tells Puck about his plan to use the love potion on Titania's eyes.

Oberon

I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses, and with eglantine.
There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,
Lull'd in these flowers with dances and delight;
And there the snake throws her enamell'd skin,
Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in;
And with the juice of this I'll streak her eyes,
And make her full of hateful fantasies.
Take thou some of it, and seek through this grove:
A sweet Athenian lady is in love

With a disdainful youth; anoint his eyes;
But do it when the next thing he espies
May be the lady.

4. The Tempest, Act 1 Scene 2

This speech takes place on a magical island, home to Prospero and his daughter MIRANDA. Prospero and Miranda watch a ship being caught in a storm. Suspecting that her father has caused the storm, Miranda begs him to spare the sailors' lives.

Miranda

If by your art, my dearest father, you have
Put the wild waters in this roar, allay them.
The sky, it seems, would pour down stinking pitch
But that the sea, mounting to th' welkin's cheek,
Dashes the fire out. O, I have suffered
With those that I saw suffer – a brave vessel,
(Who had no doubt some noble creature in her)
Dashed all to pieces. O, the cry did knock
Against my very heart! Poor souls, they perished.
Had I been any god of power, I would
Have sunk the sea within the earth or ere
It should the good ship so have swallowed and

The fraughting souls within her.

5. As You Like It, Act 2 Scene 7

ORLANDO has fled his home for the Forest of Arden. Just before this speech, Orlando comes across Duke Senior and his friends having a feast. Thinking them dangerous, Orlando ambushes their meal; however, he is calmed by Duke Senior's welcome. In this speech, Orlando seeks forgiveness for his actions.

Orlando

Speak you so gently? Pardon me, I pray you.
I thought that all things had been savage here,
And therefore put I on the countenance
Of stern commandment. But whate'er you are
That in this desert inaccessible
Under the shade of melancholy boughs,
Lose and neglect the creeping hours of time;
If ever you have look'd on better days;
If ever been where bells have knoll'd to church;
If ever sat at any good man's feast;
If ever from your eyelids wip'd a tear,
And know what 'tis to pity and be pitied,

Let gentleness my strong enforcement be;
In the which hope, I blush, and hide my sword.

6. Romeo and Juliet, Act 3 Scene 2

JULIET has fallen in love with Romeo having met him at the Capulet's ball. Romeo is a Montague and Juliet is a Capulet: two families who are enemies. Therefore, their love and marriage are forbidden. Before this speech, Romeo has killed Juliet's cousin Tybalt and has consequently been sent away from Verona. This speech explores Juliet's conflicting feelings towards Romeo.

Juliet

O serpent heart, hid with a flowering face.
Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave?
Beautiful tyrant, fiend angelical,
Dove-feather'd raven, wolvish-ravening lamb!
Despised substance of divinest show!
Just opposite to what thou justly seem'st!
A damned saint, an honourable villain!
O nature what hadst thou to do in hell
When thou didst bower the spirit of a fiend
In mortal paradise of such sweet flesh?
Was ever book containing such vile matter

So fairly bound? O, that deceit should dwell
In such a gorgeous palace.

7. A Midsummer Night's Dream, Act 2 Scene 1

This speech takes place in a magical wood, which is home to Oberon and Titania: King and Queen of the fairies. In this speech, Oberon's trickster PUCK speaks to Titania's Fairy. Puck tells Fairy about who they are and the mischief they get up to.

Puck

Thou speak'st aright:

I am that merry wanderer of the night.

I jest to Oberon, and make him smile

When I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile,

Neighing in likeness of a filly foal;

And sometime lurk I in a gossip's bowl

In very likeness of a roasted crab,

And when she drinks, against her lips I bob,

And on her wither'd dewlap pour the ale.

The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,

Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh me;

Then slip I from her bum, down topples she,

And 'tailor' cries, and falls into a cough;
And then the whole quire hold their hips and loffe
And waxen in their mirth, and neeze, and swear
A merrier hour was never wasted there.

8. As You Like It, Act 2 Scene 1

Duke Senior has been sent to the Forest of Arden where he lives with his friends, including the FIRST LORD. Just before this speech, Duke Senior suggests going for a hunt, but is also troubled by the idea of hurting an animal. In this speech, the First Lord recalls how Jaques – Duke Senior's fool – shares this sympathy for the animals of the forest.

First Lord

To-day my Lord of Amiens and myself
Did steal behind him as he lay along
Under an oak, whose antique root peeps out
Upon the brook that brawls along this wood;
To the which place a poor sequester'd stag,
That from the hunter's aim had ta'en a hurt,
Did come to languish; and indeed my lord,
The wretched animal heav'd forth such groans
That their discharge did stretch his leathern coat
Almost to bursting, and the big round tears
Cours'd one another down his innocent nose
In piteous chase; and thus the hairy fool,

Much marked of the melancholy Jaques,
Stood on th'extremest verge of the swift brook,
Augmenting it with tears.