

Enactment of a Scene--Directions: With thespian comrades, enact a short excerpt or excerpts from one of the plays we will be reading on the given week. Wise students will read through the play ahead of time, and begin practicing early, so their short performance is polished before they present it to the class. Half the grade comes from group performance, and the other half comes from each individual's performance.

Your group performance will be graded primarily on the following features:

(1) **Appropriate Length and Preparation:** Did you pick an excerpt that you can successfully finish within the time-line, neither too long nor too short? Does the performance suggest the students have undertaken appropriate preparation? The scene should be at least five minutes long, but no longer than ten minutes. Time yourselves as you rehearse to get an idea of length.

(2) **Originality and Textual Faithfulness:** Here's the tricky part. On one hand, you want to be original. Don't simply mimic the setup you saw in Olivier or Branagh; make it something new. On the other hand, you also want to be faithful to the text, and convey a sense of what the scene is about. Balance the two.

(3) **Interaction:** Do the performers believably interact with each other, and play off each other's gestures, words, and expressions? Do they interact with the audience (if applicable)? Does the group work together to support each other's performance? Was every member of the group fully involved in some way?

(4) **Blocking:** How do the actors position themselves on stage in relation to each other? Blocking may be particularly tricky in a small room, so plan ahead, especially for appropriate entrances and exits!

(5) **Casting:** Did you pick the right actor to handle the right job? For instance, if references are made to a character's short stature, you should pick a short actor. In some cases, such as playing a character like Falstaff, the actor may have to stuff his clothes to look appropriately obese.

Bonus points for finding appropriate props, backdrop, makeup, or dressing in costume!

Individual performers will be graded on the following features:

(6) **Memorization:** Though it is permissible that performers carry xerox copies of their lines or 3X5 index cards, I will be most impressed by those performers who take the time to memorize their lines, and give them more points than those who don't. You may ask a class member to "prompt" you for missing lines if you forget.

(7) **Vocalization, Pronunciation, Delivery and Meter:** It is not necessary to imitate a Standard Regional (SR) British accent or cockney accent. Still, if you are playing a gruff, fifty-year old sailor, you should speak differently than a twelve-year-old stable boy. Project! The students in the back must be able to hear you clearly.

(8) **Interpretation of Character:** Does the performer give a sense of having genuinely entered into the character? Does the student participate fully in the performance even when he or she is not speaking? Does the actor respond appropriately to others? Hint: Do not stand inertly while other characters perform their lines. React!

(9) **Share of Performance:** An individual that has only a few lines, or (worse yet) no lines will have to work harder to fulfill his share of the performance. Try to find a balanced amount of activity for each participant.

(10) **Pizzazz:** Pizzazz is the intangible and subjective stuff, the overall effect of the entire production. It encompasses diverse elements such as a powerful emotional punch, cleverness, humor, and memorability. The key here--don't bore the audience.

Due date: On whatever day you selected on the sign-up sheet.

Assessment: As a group, you should type a short assessment of the scene--perhaps 3-5 pages long with each student typing one page. Include the following information: 1) Explain why the group choose that particular part of the play. What qualities make it worth staging? 2) Explain what material you included and abridged (if any) in order to fit the scene within the time-limit, and why you thought that appropriate. 3) Explain what you could have done differently to create a different effect, and then illustrate the advantages of performing the scene in the manner you did. 4) All participants should include a short section describing their interpretations of their roles as characters and what they contributed to the performance (labor, research, practicums, etc.) As always, proofread your writing before submission.