



talk like Shakespeare!

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Chicago Shakespeare Theater

Shakespearean Slander

In groups of 4-6: Practice aloud—at each other with feeling!—some of the insults that the characters from *Romeo and Juliet* sling at each other. (Or, if you're studying another Shakespeare play, find your own!) If the meaning of a word is not clear, don't get stuck! Keep repeating the insult and you'll be closer to the meaning than you might think.

Once you've slung quite enough at each other, do it now in turn, and after someone has hurled an insult, it's a race among the rest to imagine a contemporary situation that might provoke such a rebuke!

(Illinois English Language Arts Goals 1abc, 2ab, 4ab)

Thou wilt fall backward when thou hast more wit.

Her vestal Livery is but sick and green / And none but fools do wear it.

She speaks, yet she says nothing.

O flesh, flesh, how art thou fishified.

I will bite thee by the ear for that jest.

The love I bear thee can afford no better term than this: thou art a villain.

O serpent heart, hid with a flowering face.

Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave?

Beautiful tyrant, fiend angelical,

Dove-feather'd raven, volkish-ravens lamb!

Blister'd be thy tongue for such a wish.

Thy noble shape is but a form of wax

Digressing from the valor of a man.

Peace, you mumbling fool! Utter your gravity o'er the gossip's bowl,

For here we need it not.

Thus I enforce thy rotten jaws to open, And in despite I'll cram thee with more food.