

# TWO RIVER THEATER

## Curriculum Design Goals

The curriculum for student matinees at Two River Theater is designed with the following intent. The material and activities should be a resource for any school faculty or staff to utilize with students in hopes of engaging them further in the process of attending a production at the theater.

### Pre Show:

- Pre-show Questions
  - These are designed to be used by classroom teachers or visiting teaching artists in any capacity (journal writing, class discussion, etc.) and touch on the main themes of the production.
- Pre-show Activity (“If you only do one activity before seeing the show, do this”)
  - Activities in the pre-show section are appropriate for either a classroom teacher or a visiting teaching artist. These activities are intended to raise questions about and promote interest in a key element of the show.

### Pre- or Post-Show:

- This section includes a range of activities that touch on themes and elements of the production that can be done either before or after the performance. The **majority of these activities are appropriate for classes other than English and Drama**, including History, Government, Digital Design, and Media Studies. The activities are designed with the goal of providing access to the themes of the show to teachers in a variety of curricular areas.

*(All Common Core standards met by each activity are listed in the Common Core Connections Guide)*

- While the activities have specific indicated times, they are also designed to be adaptable to the needs and limits of the teachers who use them.

### Post-Show

- Post-Show Questions
  - These are designed to be used after seeing the show for a reflection on the content, themes, and language of the play. These are pulled from the two discussion activities as a quick way to reflect on the show with limited time. (“If you only look at one thing after seeing the show, look at this”)
- Discussion
  - The discussion section is designed to be adaptable to teacher needs and preferences. There are two structured discussion protocols with discussion questions and prompts. The protocols can be used as written, or teachers could use the questions provided through their own methods.
- There are additional post-show activities available in the pre or post-show activity section for teachers who wish to spend more time reflecting on the play through active and engaging lessons.

# *Little Shakes: The Merry Wives of Windsor*

## Activity: What Did You Call Me?

Pre or Post-Show Activity

Appropriate for: Grades 4-12

Appropriate for: Advisory, English, Humanities, Drama, Visiting Teaching Artist, Elementary\*

Time: 30 minutes

Materials Needed:

Insult list

### Insulting Basics (10)

*The Merry Wives of Windsor* is chock full of colorful Shakespearian insults.

Practice saying the one of the following in angry, teasing, mocking, or scornful ways:

“Mechanical, salt-butter rogue!”

“You Banbury cheese!”

“You cony-catching rascal!”

This four-column insult generator can create striking, impressive insults for any situation.

Briefly go over the insult charts – create an insult by combining one word/phrase from each column.

- Students (to themselves) create an insult they like from the chart. It’s not important to know the exact meaning of the word – choose words they know, think are funny sounding, or think are interesting sounding. The insult will be largely in the delivery.
- Student mill about the room as if at a social gathering. At the sound of a signal (a clap, for example), they stop, turn to the nearest person, and deliver their insult in the most insulting manner possible.
- Introduce the Shakespearian concept of “thumbing your nose”. Repeat the above, adding a nose thumb during, immediately before, or immediately after the insult.

### Insult Catwalk (15)

- Place students in pairs.
- Each pair chooses an insult and rehearses trading their insults, adding a nose thumb or similar (school appropriate) gesture.
- Pairs create two lines, facing their partners. Working down the line, each pair of partners approaches each other, trades insults, and returns to their spot in line.

### Debrief (5)

- Which pair was particularly effective? Why? How?
- Why is this activity funny? What makes it funny?
- (Post show) Do you recognize any insults from the play? How were insults used in that context? How did characters in this play express scorn or anger?

\*For elementary, consider using only two or three columns.



## *Little Shakes: The Merry Wives of Windsor* Activity: What Did You Call Me?

Column A	Column B	Column C	Column D
Away I say	Artless	Addle-pated	Barnacle
Bathe thyself	Blubbering	Beef-witted	Bladder
Be not deaf	Bootless	Beetle-headed	Boar-pig
Beware my sting	Cantankerous	Boil-brained	Canker-blossom
Clean thine ears	Churlish	Clapper-clawed	Clackdish
Eat a crocodile	Craven	Clay-brained	Clotpole
Eat my knickers	Dankish	Crook-pated	Coxcomb
Fie upon thee	Dissembling	Dismal-dreaming	Death-token
Forsooth I say	Droning	Dizzy-eyed	Dewberry
Get thee gone	Fobbing	Dog-hearted	Dotard
Get thee hence	Errant	Earth-vexing	Flap-dragon
Hear me now	Fool-born	Elf-skinned	Flea
I'll see thee hanged	Foppish	Fly-bitten	Flirt-gill
Kiss my codpiece	Gleeking	Foul-practicing	Foot-licker
"Phui" I say	Goatish	Half-faced	Giglet
Sit thee on a spit	Gorbellied	Hedge-born	Harpy
Swim with leeches	Ill nurtured	Knotty-pated	Hedge-pig
Trip on thy sword	Infectious	Mad-brained	Horn-beast
Wipe thy ugly face	Lumpish	Milk-livered	Hugger-mugger
Thou art a/an	Loutish	Pox-marked	Joltster
	Mammering	Rude-growing	Knave
	Mangled	Sheep-biting	Lout
	Mewling	Tickle-brained	Maggot-pie

# TWO RIVER THEATER

## *Little Shakes: The Merry Wives of Windsor* Activity: Slapstick and Physical Comedy

### Pre and Post Show Activity

Appropriate for: Grades 4-12

Appropriate for: Advisory, English, Drama, Media Studies, Visiting Teaching Artist, Elementary

Time: 1 hour

### Materials Needed:

Projector and internet access

(Props and costume pieces, if wanted)

### Introduction (10)

#### Discuss:

- What purposes does comedy serve?
- What makes something funny? What makes an attempt at humor fail?
- Is there anything that's universally funny? Why are some things considered funny in one context and not in another?
- What's challenging about creating and performing comedy?

### Physical Comedy and Slapstick (20)

Watch the following examples of physical comedy:

- Buster Keaton's cyclone sequence (from 3:00 – 4:00)
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CmyNiMjXMUw>
- Chico and Harpo Marx Hat Switching Sequence
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q9OUIk4Oaq4>

#### Discuss:

- How do the actors use physicality to create a comic effect?
- How are issues of power, status, and strength used to create comedy?
- Where else do you see examples of this kind of comedy? (Bugs Bunny and Wile E. Coyote, Three Stooges, Adam Sandler, etc.)

### “I Love Lucy” (10)

- Watch the famous (and much emulated) chocolate factory scene from “I Love Lucy”
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8NPzLBSBzPI>
- Where is the comedy? Why is this funny? How is the comedy rooted in the physicality, rather than in the dialogue?
- Much of the comedy in physical and slapstick comedy comes from a character’s inefficient or ineffective reaction to something going wrong. In this situation:
  - What is the task?
  - What goes wrong?
  - What are the characters’ solutions?

### Create (20)

In pairs, triads, or small groups, students create and present a physical comedy sequence using the following three steps:

- Performing an everyday activity
- Something goes wrong
- React inefficiently or ineffectively

Possible situations:

- Hanging a photograph
- Frying an egg
- Unwrapping a package
- Sealing an envelope
- Putting on a jacket

### Post Show:

- Where and how did you see slapstick and physical comedy utilized in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*?