

A Musical Adaptation of Something Rotten in the State of Denmark

Student Instructions

Activity 2.1 / Shakespeare Learning Commons

1. Introduction

In this activity you will use parody to adapt a familiar character from one of Shakespeare's plays. Your challenge is to use parody to lift a difficult issue from Shakespeare's play and highlight it for your audience. As an example, you will begin by watching a short scene from *Slings & Arrows*.

Slings & Arrows is a television series about a Shakespearean theatre company whose artistic director, Oliver Welles, has just died leaving an old friend, Geoffrey Tennant, to take his place. In this scene, two actors gossip about the madness of the new artistic director. Watch for an appearance from what is left of Oliver Welles. (A great adaptation of the "Grave Diggers" scene from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*).

Shakespeare's
London
circa. 1600

2. Blank Slate

Use this space to make notes about how the two actors in this scene from *Slings & Arrows* parody the gravediggers from *Hamlet*.

4.

Choose a character from the Shakespeare play you are studying to parody and select two scenes from different parts of the play that feature your chosen character.

Using the worksheet, create a list of character traits and actions that your character displays in these scenes. Pay attention to how other characters react to your chosen character to better understand them.

6.

Present your musical adaptation to the class -- you may choose to record your new song and play it for the class, perform it live in class, trade songs with a classmate and perform each others' songs, or find some other creative way to perform or publish your work.

5.

Using one of the familiar melodies your teacher has suggested or another melody of your choice, write a musical adaptation of your character that exaggerates, highlights, criticizes, or comments on the character traits you have identified in your brainstorming. Look back to the definition of parody you created as a class for ideas on how to approach writing your parody.

