

Designing Shakespeare

Student Instructions

Activity 4.1 / Shakespeare Learning Commons

1. Introduction

Your task: You are to create a set design portfolio for a scene of your choosing from the play by Shakespeare that you are currently studying in class. In the end, you will hand in four components: your rough brainstorming worksheet, a 2-3 page written rationale for your design choices, your technical drawing, and a full-colour sketch(es) of your design. Use the materials discussed and provided in class as inspiration, but make your design personal and be creative!

2. Choose a scene from the play you are studying in class that you would like to design.

3. When Choosing...

It might be helpful to look for a scene that describes an interesting group of images or that contains a rich moment in the action. Remember that the goal of set design is to create more than just a static painted backdrop against which actors perform. Your aim is to **create an environment** in which the action will take place, to enhance the quality of a performance, and to generate an appropriate atmosphere.

4. Begin by filling out the sections on the brainstorming worksheet to collect your thoughts. (You may work in point form.) Then, using your responses as a starting point, start to write a 2-3 page rationale for your design. You may need to begin work on the drawings before you write your rationale.

6. Next, begin to develop the technical drawing (or blueprint) of your stage design. Use the templates provided. Be sure to indicate where important props and set pieces will be located. Think of the technical drawing as the "mapping out" of the stage space; leave the smaller details for your final sketch. Try to keep everything to scale, but don't worry about precise measurements. Remember, there must be room on the stage for the actors to navigate easily through the space.

5. The Sketch

Finally, create a full-colour sketch of your stage design. You may use any media you like (pencil crayon, pastels, paint, pen and ink, magazine collage, computer animation etc.) Be sure to include any important props and set devices critical to your scene. You may need to create more than one sketch to fully detail your stage environment. Show as much detail as possible.