

REIMAGINING SHAKESPEARE

STUDENT WORKSHEET #2

Write your own script inspired by Shakespeare's stories.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED



- A loose sheet of paper and scissors.
- A notebook and something to write with.
- A computer with internet connection ready to play [this video](#).
- Two hats, bowls or containers for a lucky dip.

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY



Watch [the video](#) on Reimagining Shakespeare featuring playwright and Bell Shakespeare Head of Education Joanna Erskine.

Note down the **three** tips mentioned by Joanna for writing your own script inspired by Shakespeare's plays.

ACTIVITY



Try these exercises to put some of the ideas discussed in the video into practice.

1. **Cut up some paper** into small pieces. Give each student or member of your group two pieces each.
2. On one piece of paper write a **setting** (a time and/or place). This can be real or imaginary. e.g., the beach on Saturday afternoon, or a space station in the year 3000.
3. On the second piece of paper, write an **occupation**. Again, this can be real or imaginary, e.g., a carpenter, or a wizard.
4. Put all the pieces of paper with a **setting** in a bowl / hat, and all the pieces of paper with an occupation in another bowl / hat.

ACTIVITY CONT.

5. Now **read** the summary (see below) of the play *Macbeth* **aloud** as a class or as a group. **Note:** You do not have to use *Macbeth* for this exercise, you may choose a summary of any other Shakespeare play.

Macbeth is a general in the Scottish army, famed for his exploits on the battlefield and beloved of King Duncan. Following a bloody battle, he and his comrade Banquo are met by three Weird Sisters who prophesy their future, telling Macbeth he will one day be king. Unable to shake the thought from his mind, Macbeth tells his wife, Lady Macbeth, and the two set and execute a plan to murder King Duncan at their castle, assuming the crown and taking fate into their own hands.

But the Macbeths cannot enjoy their newly gained power, and their once strong union crumbles. Lady Macbeth is plagued with guilt and Macbeth is consumed by an unquenchable thirst for power, setting in motion a bloody chain of events. King Duncan's son Malcolm, the rightful heir to the throne, raises an army against Macbeth. With the help of the noble general Macduff, Macbeth is finally defeated, and order is restored to Scotland.

6. Now, **shuffle** the pieces of paper in each bowl / hat and draw one setting and one occupation.
7. **Apply** the new setting and occupation to the story of *Macbeth*. For example, you may find that now instead of medieval Scotland, the story of *Macbeth* is set on the local football field, and *Macbeth* is a doctor, not a Scottish general in the army.
8. **Write** down the key details of the new story. **When** and **where** is the new story set? **Who** are the characters in this story? **What** happens in the story? **Why** do the characters do these things? Use your imagination to fill any gaps in the story.
9. Now create a new **ending** to your story. What might happen? List a few alternative plots, no matter how silly or strange. Have fun!
10. **Repeat** the exercise again, choosing a **new** setting and occupation. You may even swap settings and occupations with other students in your class. How many different stories can you make up?
11. **Choose ONE** of the story options that you would like to work with. Now **select a scene** or moment from *Macbeth* to rewrite or reimagine. **Write a new scene** for this moment in the story, *using your new setting and occupation*. For example, it might be when *Macbeth* is trying to decide whether to kill King Duncan, or when he sees Banquo's ghost at the banquet, or the witches' prophecies.

The scene can be in any style you like, funny or dramatic – you have full creative license! All that matters is that it makes sense within your new storyline. For
12. Get together with classmates, friends, or members of your family and **rehearse** your new scene.
13. **Present** it in front of an audience. Ask the audience to guess what your new setting and occupation are, and what they imagine will happen next.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY



Write an alternative ending to your new scene.

What could happen differently? Brainstorm several different endings, from small changes to the complete opposite. For example, what if King Duncan wakes up and kills Macbeth instead? How might that change the entire story? Choose one alternative ending and change your scene accordingly. Which one is more interesting to you?

ABOUT JOANNA ERSKINE

Joanna Erskine is an award-winning playwright, teacher, producer and arts education specialist. She is Head of Education at Bell Shakespeare working with the company since 2008, overseeing artistic direction and delivery of its renowned national education program reaching 80,000+ students and teachers face to face each year.

For Bell Shakespeare Joanna is the writer of The Players' in school performances, established the primary Shakespeare program, co-wrote the award-winning app *Starting Shakespeare*, expanded digital activity and increased the Company's commitment to teachers through the Regional Teacher Mentorship. Under her direction, Bell Shakespeare's acclaimed Juvenile Justice program has expanded into multiple states and regional centres. She has pioneered many Shakespeare programs for marginalised Australians, including the Women in Shakespeare program for Western Sydney girls' schools