

12 IDEAS FOR TWELFTH NIGHT

EMOTION BASED ACTIVITIES FOR SECONDARY ENGLISH STUDENTS

1. Honest love letter

Write a love letter from any of the key characters to the person of his/her affection. Unlike a typical love letter, this creative writing exercise is designed to consider the character's true motivations. Encourage students to consider the deeper emotions of the character – why does Orsino want the one woman he can't have? Why Viola would chose a man who is obsessed with another woman?

2. Love is

Using a whiteboard or large piece of paper, have students plot one character's emotions throughout the play on a chart. [Include photo example]. For characters who impersonate another gender, change pen colour based on character's 'gender' at that moment in the play.

Discuss each character's emotional journey as a class. Discuss if the male or female status impacted the students' choice of emotional vocabulary.

3. Emotional poem

Write a poem using emotion words and phrases from the text. Students can use whichever poetic form they like, but cannot add any external words.

4. Essay or short answer questions

On Identity:

What did identity mean in the Elizabethan era? How is this reflected in Malvolio's humiliation with the yellow stockings? What would be an equivalent modern day humiliation?

On Gender:

Why does Shakespeare write so many female characters that disguise themselves as men? What is he saying about appropriate gender behaviour? How does this reflect the cultural context of the period? What social constructs of gender from the Renaissance do we still have today?

On Madness:

Madness or insanity appears in many of Shakespeare's plays. Compare the use of madness in Twelfth Night to its purpose in a tragedy like Macbeth or Hamlet.

On Disguise:

Is the use of disguise a form of self-deception? Include examples from the use of disguises in the play and in our own culture. What characteristics are we trying to accentuate or hide?

5. Emotion tracker

Students brainstorm all their known words, metaphors, or similes for love, such as 'blind', 'appetite', 'plague', 'unconditional', 'a battlefield'.

Discuss why a positive emotion like love invites so many negative comparisons. Discuss what Shakespeare is saying about love.

6. How do we feel when...

Write a series of emotions around the room and have students stand in the middle. Call out a point in the play and ask students to move to the emotion the audience would be feeling. Discuss differences in opinion – do we feel sympathy or glee as Malvolio is deceived?

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7. Be the director

Select a piece of text and print with double spacing. Ask students to write what emotion is being expressed. Then the students can 'be the director' and describe how they would direct the actor to communicate that line's emotion onstage using gesture, verbals (? verbal cues?), use of space and levels.

8. Gesturing emotions

Students select emotions from Twelfth Night and create a gesture to communicate that emotion. Challenge students by requiring both an Elizabethan theatrical gesture (large gesture suitable for outdoor performances), and a gesture suitable for a small intimate stage. What are the similarities between the two gestures?

9. Soundtrack

Twelfth Night is the most musical of Shakespeare's plays, and frequently uses music to communicate the characters' emotions. Students are asked to design a soundtrack for a film version of the play, selecting one song for each key plot event, justifying why that song reflects the scene's emotions.

10. "The clothes make the man"

Assign each group one character to costume for the play. Costumes can be hand drawn or photographs, but must be annotated describing how that item reflects the character's emotion.

Encourage the consideration of costume colour, texture, and scale- does red velvet communicate a different emotion to green khaki?

Consider potential accessories – a large sunflower in the hair for joy, or a very tall top-hat for pride.

Encourage creativity and use of technology – perhaps an ipad stitched into the character's shirt could display emotions in response to the scene.

11. "If music be the food of love"

To begin the play Orsino wallows in his unrequited love, requesting sad songs of the musicians. Still today, we select songs to emphasise particular emotions at important moments in our lives. Invite students to visit <http://www.abc.net.au/arts/playlist> where they can create a playlist for life events, take quizzes, or answer surveys on the role of music in their own life.

12. Gender swap

When performing scenes, have students perform a character of the opposite gender. Discuss the challenge an actor would have in Elizabethan theatre being a man, playing a woman, playing a man.