

Lesson ideas and material

***As You Like It* (William Shakespeare)**



Based on: Act 2 Scene 1*

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Plot summary of the act/scene

In Act 2, Scene 1, Duke Senior and his loyal followers, exiled in the Forest of Arden, reflect on the simplicity and wisdom of their rustic life compared to the dangers and flattery of the court. The melancholy Jaques is introduced indirectly through a humorous and moralizing account of his reaction to a wounded deer, which he uses as a metaphor for human cruelty and societal flaws. The scene highlights contrasting attitudes toward adversity and sets the tone for the philosophical musings in the forest.

Teaching aims

Students explore the portrayal of nature in Act 2, Scene 1 by engaging in close reading. They explore how different characters offer contrasting interpretations of nature and its lessons.

Description of materials

The following material consists of:

- pictures of different stage designs for the Forest of Arden (material 1)
- annotated script for Act 2, Scene 1 (material 2)
- reading comprehension quiz for the whole Act 2 (material 3)
- “Learning from nature” (material 4) + expectation grid



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***[As You Like It, CSS edition]** Shakespeare, William: *As You Like It* (Cambridge School Shakespeare, edited by Linzy Brady). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Overview of lesson design:

Phase / Teaching activity / Impulse	Material
<p>Activity 1 [plenary discussion]</p> <p>Teacher introduces the focus on nature in <i>As You Like It</i>, specifically Act 2, highlighting the shift from the court to the forest. Students examine stage designs of the Forest of Arden and discuss the atmosphere they create.</p>	WS 1: stage designs
<p>Activity 2 [individual work]</p> <p>Students engage in an intensive reading of Act 2, Scene 1, considering whether life in the forest seems pleasant or tough and taking notes on what Duke Senior appreciates about it (while-reading activity). Students complete a short quiz to review key details from the scene. (Post-reading activity).</p>	WS 2: annotated scene + WS 3: quiz
<p>Activity 3 [individual work, plenary discussion]</p> <p>Students complete Task 1a and 1b on the worksheet. Teacher asks students to explain the three lessons for Jacques: <i>Try to picture the scene with the hurt deer. What does Jaques learn about people from it?</i></p>	WS 4: Learning from nature
<p>Activity 4 [individual work, plenary discussion]</p> <p>Students complete Task 1c: they reflect on how Duke Senior might feel about Jaques' criticism, considering his earlier pride in forest life.</p>	WS 4: Learning from nature
<p>Activity 5 [individual work, partner work]</p> <p>Students work in pairs or individually on Task 2: They write one paragraph arguing for and one against the idea, using examples or quotes from the play. They explore what people might learn from nature compared to the city.</p> <p>Conclusion / Sharing [plenary discussion]</p> <p>Students give short presentations, sharing their arguments and discussing the most interesting or surprising points as a class.</p>	WS 4: Learning from nature



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