The Tempest: Ye Elves Language Analysis

DURATION: 45 mins

OBJECTIVE: To analyse the language in “Ye Elves...” (Act 5: Scene 1) speech.

KEY LEARNING POINTS:
- The effects of literary devices and language on the audience.
- Using literary devices in creative writing.
- Comparing Shakespeare speeches.

YOU WILL NEED:
- A copy of The Tempest: “Ye Elves...” (Act 5: Scene 1) speech and glossary per participant - see below
- Pens, one per participant
- Language devices worksheet, one per participant – see below.

ACTIVITY:
- This activity follows on well from The Tempest: Prospero Ye Elves speech. If you have completed that activity you can skip the first four stages of this exercise.
- Ask the participants to identify where in the play this speech comes. Ask the participants to explain the action to this point. The tempest has shipwrecked everyone on the island. Miranda and Ferdinand have met and fallen in love. Caliban has met Stephano and Trinculo, and together they have decided to murder Prospero. Prospero has made life difficult for the noblemen - his brother Antonio, the King of Naples, Alonso, Sebastian (the King’s brother) and Gonzalo, who are lost on the island. Ferdinand and Miranda have just got married and Prospero is about to return to the noblemen.
- Give participants the “Ye Elves...” speech and read it as a whole group. Explain that you are not going to read a line each, rather a thought, or part of a thought. Ask participants how they might know when a character’s thought changes, develops or ends? Clarify that participants will read aloud to the next punctuation point. Encourage participants not to worry too much about pronunciation – just give it a go.
- Notice that the speech is quite complex, with lots of images. Explain that you’d like participants to work together to understand what Prospero is saying and why.
- Split participants into small groups and ask them to work together and use the glossary to identify any words they don’t understand or
want to clarify the definition of. Ask each group to feed back what they think is happening and why Prospero is speaking.

- Explain to participants that you are going to ask them to fill in a table. They should identify where each language device is used in the speech and what affect this has on the audience.
- Introduce each literary device and ensure all participants understand the terms.
  - Metaphor
  - Alliteration
  - Assonance
  - Imagery
  - Pathos
  - Antithesis
- Give each participant a worksheet. You could split the participants into groups to look at one or two devices each and share these back.
- Ask participants which device they think is the most successful.
- Ask participants to rewrite this speech, or a section of it, in their own words, using at least three of the language devices.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY:
- You can extend this by asking participants to compare this speech to another in the play. You could use the literary devices table to do this.
- You could do The Tempest: Reinventing Shakespeare exercise.

KEY WORDS:
Metaphor - A figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable or a thing regarded as representative or symbolic of something else. A metaphor does not include the words like or as. An example would be when Prospero says, “We are such stuff / As dreams are made on, and our little life / Is rounded with a sleep” (Act 5: Scene 1).
Alliteration - when the same letter or sound occurs at the beginning of closely connected words. An example would be “midnight mushrooms” (Act 5: Scene 1).
Assonance - when two, or more, words close to one another repeat the same vowel sound but start with different consonant sounds. An example would be “green sea” and “azured vault” (Act 5: Scene 1).
Imagery - descriptive language that appeals to our senses, mainly our sight, to create mental pictures when we read or hear text. An example would be “graves at my command / Have waked their sleepers, oped, and let ‘em forth” (Act 3: Scene 2).
Pathos - a quality that evokes pity or sadness. An example would be “But this rough magic / I here abjure” (Act 5: Scene 1).
Antithesis - a contrast or opposition between two things. “And ’twixt the green sea and the azured vault” (Act 5: Scene 1).
The Tempest (Act 5: Scene 1)

PROSPERO
Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes and groves,
And ye that on the sands with printless foot
Do chase the ebbing Neptune and do fly him
When he comes back; you demi-puppets that
By moonshine do the green sour ringlets make,
Whereof the ewe not bites, and you whose pastime
Is to make midnight mushrooms, that rejoice
To hear the solemn curfew; by whose aid -
Weak masters though ye be - I have bedimm'd
The noontide sun, call'd forth the mutinous winds,
And 'twixt the green sea and the azured vault
Set roaring war: to the dread rattling thunder
Have I given fire and rifted Jove's stout oak
With his own bolt; the strong-based promontory
Have I made shake and by the spurs pluck'd up
The pine and cedar: graves at my command
Have waked their sleepers, oped, and let 'em forth
By my so potent art. But this rough magic
I here abjure, and, when I have required
Some heavenly music, which even now I do,
To work mine end upon their senses that
This airy charm is for, I'll break my staff,
Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
And deeper than did ever plummet sound
I'll drown my book.
Ye Elves Speech Glossary:

**Brooks** – little streams
**Standing lakes** – not flowing water
**Groves** – small groups of trees
**Ye** – you

**Printless foot** – not leaving any footprints because they are spirits or fairies

_Do chase the ebbing Neptune and do fly him / When he comes back_ – playing with the waves as they go in and out. Neptune is God of the Sea.

**Demi-puppets** – little fairies

**Green sour ringlets** – dark circles of grass said to be made by fairies and supposed to taste nasty to animals that would usually eat grass.

**Ewe** – female sheep

**Midnight mushrooms** – mushrooms in the grass grow overnight, are often poisonous and were thought to be made by fairies

**Solemn curfew** – the evening bell that lets everyone know it’s bedtime

**Aid** – help

**Weak masters** – tired spirits or fairies

**Bedimm’d** – made dark

**Mutinous** – disobedient

’twixt – between

**Azured vault** – blue skies (and often referred to the blue painted ceiling in the original theatres)

**Set** – made or created

 rifted Jove’s stout oak / With his own bolt – split the God Jove’s favourite tree with his own weapon the lightening bolt

**Strong-based promontory** – the rocky cliffs

**Spurs** – roots

**Oped, and let ‘em forth** – opened and let the dead bodies out

**Potent art** – powerful magic

**Abjure** – abandon or renounce, with great seriousness

**Fathoms** – a sea measurement of six feet

**Plummet** – a rope with a lead weight on the bottom

**Sound** – touch the sea bed
## Language Devices worksheet

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