AS YOU LIKE IT
– Orlando's Poetry: Imitation is the Sincerest Form of Flattery

Overview

- 1. Students will do close readings of specific passages in the play to glean clues about Orlando's level of education and familiarize themselves with the style of poetry he writes to Rosalind.

- 2. Students will then write their own poems imitating Orlando's style and structure. As an extension, they may write a second poem in their own style, improving Orlando's efforts.

Grade Level	Subject Area	Curriculum Expectations and Learning Outcome		Time Needed	Space	Materials
5-10	English/ Language Arts	Reading (understanding of content, making inferences/inter-preting texts, extending understanding of texts, identifying text features/patterns, indentifying elements of style);	Writing (using knowledge of form and style - form, voice, diction/word choice, publishing, producing finished works).	1-2 class Periods	Small group and individual work required	Copies of the text or handouts of the selected passages

ACTIVITY

- Divide the class into 4 groups. Each group will receive a copy of one of the four excerpts from *As You Like It* (or have them read the relevant passages from their own texts). Each group should read their text out loud a couple of times and then jot down any information they can glean from the text regarding Orlando's upbringing, level of education and/or ability to write (good) poetry. Each group will then share their findings. Alternately, you could set this up so that each group works with each section of text, adding their notes observations to a common chart that then gets passed on to the next group – that all of the groups will have a chance to read all of the excerpts of text.

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- Next, as a whole group, take a closer look at Orlando's poetry. Analyse the structure of his verse (the rhythm , the rhyme scheme, the number of lines and/or stanzas, etc). Also note the style of his verse (does he use familiar or formal language? Is it full of metaphors, figures of speech, classical or contemporary allusions, etc.). He writes in catalectic trochaic tetrameter, or, four alternating 'feet' of stressed and unstressed syllables with the last foot being incomplete (DUM dee, DUM dee, DUM dee, DUM dee, DUM.) In the first poem he writes pairs of lines rhyming 'Rosalind' with something (sometimes he pronounces her name 'Rosalined' and sometimes 'Rosalynnd'). Discuss anything else you discover about Orlando's verse.

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- Touchstone then imitates this poem with one of his own. Individually, students will then write their own "Rosalind" poems in imitation of Orlando much as Touchstone does. As an extension, students may then write a second poem in their own style, improving upon Orlando's attempts. How might they write a poem to properly win Rosalind's heart?

Here's an example to get you started:
If you're ill with love sick flu,
Roz can fix it up for you.
Broken limb can heal just fine,
With the crutch of Rosalind
Skin disorder, chronic gas,
She can heal with grace and class.
Once a man was leg'lly blind,
Regained his sight on Rosalind.

EXTENSION

Send your students' poems to us and we'll include them in the show!

Here are the details:

Calling all young poets!
Students aged 8 to 14: we need your verses as props in our play! As you've learned, in *As You Like It*, Orlando writes a whole bunch of love poems to Rosalind and sticks them on the trees in the forest. We would like to use your poems to decorate our "forest"! Your poem must:

- ☐ Rhyme
- ☐ Use the word "Rosalind"
- ☐ Be anonymous/unsigned
- ☐ Be hand-written (in crayon, pencil, pencil-crayon, marker or pen) on a piece of paper roughly half the size of an 8 ½ by 11" sheet. You may use white paper, coloured paper, lined paper, graph paper... You may also cut it out in any shape you like should you so choose. Be creative!

You may send us more than one submission! Start sending them now – and throughout the season – and come see your work decorating our production! Direct your poems to:

The Education Department
Stratford Festival
P.O. Box 520
Stratford, ON N5A 6V2