

# Shakespeare For You 2023



## As You Like It

## Study Guide

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The possibilities are numerous for using the elements of this workshop as a jumping off point for cross-curriculum and interdisciplinary study in your classroom. With activities that introduce Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* while incorporating drama, writing, and the visual arts, this study guide offers many chances to reach any number of curriculum goals for all grade levels.

# As You Like It

## Synopsis

Orlando, youngest son of Sir Rowland de Boys, is at odds with his brother, Oliver, who is withholding the inheritance left him in their father's will. Oliver plans to have Orlando maimed or even killed in a wrestling match held before Duke Frederick (who has recently usurped the realm from his brother, Duke Senior), but Orlando wins the bout - and with it the heart of Rosalind, daughter of the banished Duke.

When Rosalind too is banished, she decides to join her father, who is holding court with a group of other exiled nobles, including the melancholy philosopher Jaques, in the nearby Forest of Arden. Her cousin Celia, Duke Frederick's daughter, promises to go with her. For safety's sake, Rosalind disguises herself as a young man and takes the name Ganymede.

Learning that Oliver is still plotting against his life, Orlando too flees to the forest. Duke Frederick sends Oliver in pursuit, with instructions to bring back his brother dead or alive.

Orlando does not recognize his beloved when he meets her dressed in her disguise as the youth Ganymede. Seeing in this an opportunity to test his sincerity, Rosalind does not undeceive him; instead, she proposes a game of role-playing: by "pretending" to be Rosalind, "Ganymede" will attempt to cure Orlando of his lovesickness. At the same time, she finds herself having to deflect the attentions of Phebe, a shepherdess who finds Ganymede a much more attractive proposition than the adoring shepherd Silvius.

To resolve these romantic complications, Rosalind organizes a masque, in the course of which she at last reveals her true identity. Meanwhile, the two sets of brothers are almost miraculously reconciled: Orlando saves Oliver from an attacking lion, and Duke Frederick, having undergone a religious conversion, restores Duke Senior's crown and lands.

## Did You Know?

Though not based on historical characters or events, *As You Like It* does draw on popular folk tales and literary sources of Shakespeare's time. Shakespeare's placing of the outlawed but happy Duke Senior in the forest, for example, recalls the Robin Hood legends that were popular in his time. Shakespeare may have been capitalizing on a contemporary vogue for plays romanticizing outlaws, including two versions of *Robin Hood* that were presented by a rival theatre company, the Admiral's Men, in 1598.

The play's main plot comes from English poet Thomas Lodge's 1590 romance *Rosalynde or Euphues' Golden Legacy*. Lodge's story of a young man mistreated by his brother was inspired by a 14th-century poem, *The Tale of Gamelyn*. Lodge's version turned the tale about outlaws and revenge into a pastoral comedy about love. Shakespeare further softened the story by removing much of its violence.

Jorge de Montemayor's romance *Diana Enamorada*, with a plot involving multiple lovers, is mentioned in the play and may have been an influence.

The Rosalind/Celia plot and the subplot involving Corin, Silvius and Phebe were Shakespeare's own inventions, as were most of the other characters, including Jaques, Touchstone and Amiens.

Orlando may have been named after the hero of *Orlando Furioso*, a 16th-century romance by the Italian poet Ludovico Ariosto. Ganymede, the name chosen by Rosalind as her male persona, was the name of a Trojan boy whom Zeus carried off to serve as his cupbearer.

It is believed that Shakespeare wrote the role of the fool Touchstone for the great English comic Robert Armin, who joined his acting company in 1599. A touchstone is an object used to test the genuineness of some other material, such as gold. As a professional fool, Touchstone is constantly testing others.

### Some Interesting Tidbits...

The actors in the original production of *As You Like It* did not want the play to be published, because once a play was printed they lost their monopoly over the text and therefore their profits. As a result, the play was not published in Shakespeare's lifetime.

*As You Like It* is one of several Shakespearean comedies (also including *The Taming of the Shrew*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Much Ado About Nothing*) that feature weddings as part of their plots.

*As You Like It* contains more songs than any other play by Shakespeare. The song "It was a lover and his lass" was published (with musical setting) in Thomas Morley's *First Book of Airs* in 1600. Shakespeare is known to have played the role of Orlando's aged servant Adam.

## Big Ideas

Love  
Urban vs. rural / court vs. country  
Family  
Liberty and Freedom  
Deception, disguise, gender  
Tolerance and goodwill

## Characters

The Court

DUKE FREDERICK – younger brother of Duke Senior and usurper of his dominions  
He is hungry for power, has a volatile temper and banishes his niece.

CELIA - daughter to Duke Frederick  
She is devoted to Rosalind and goes into exile with her disguised as 'Aliena'.

ROSALIND - daughter to Duke Senior  
The heroine and protagonist of the story who is clever, resourceful and quick-witted. She goes into exile and escapes to the Forest of Arden disguised as 'Ganymede'.

TOUCHSTONE - a fool (clown or court jester) at the Duke's court  
He accompanies Rosalind and Celia when they go into exile in the Forest of Arden. Upon arrival he quickly pursues the simple-minded goatherd, Audrey.

The De Boys (or de Bois) Household

OLIVER - eldest son of Sir Rowland de Boys

He is the sole inheritor of the de Boys/de Bois estate and hates Orlando, denying him an education, and attempts to bring about Orlando's downfall.

JACQUES – second son of Sir Rowland de Boys  
He appears at the end of the play bringing news of Duke Frederick’s conversion and repentance.

ORLANDO - youngest son of Sir Rowland de Boys  
Denied a gentleman’s education by his selfish older brother, he proves to be a brave and worthy suitor for Rosalind.

The Forest of Arden

DUKE SENIOR – the rightful duke and elder brother to Duke Frederick  
He is Rosalind’s father who is a kind and fair-minded ruler living in exile in the Forest of Arden.

JACQUES – courtier attending on Duke Senior  
This melancholy and cynical courtier accompanies the exiled duke into the Forest of Arden, watching and judging all he meets.

SILVIUS - shepherd in the Forest of Arden  
He is in love with the disdainful Phoebe.

PHOEBE - a shepherdess  
She spurns Silvius’ affections and instead falls in love with Ganymede (who is Rosalind in disguise).

AUDREY - a goatherd  
She is simple-minded and marries Touchstone.

WILLIAM - a country fellow  
He is in love with Audrey.

## For Discussion

(or ideas to be used as writing prompts)

### Before your workshop:

1. Jaques has a famous speech that starts with “All the World’s a Stage”. What do you think this means? What do you think the next line(s) of the speech will be?
2. A lot of Shakespeare’s characters fall in love at first sight (Romeo and Juliet), including several in *As You Like It*. Do you believe in love at first sight?

### After your workshop:

1. Do you think Orlando was completely fooled with Rosalind’s disguise as ‘Ganymede’?
2. Create a character web showing how all the characters are connected to each other. Discuss the complexity of these relationships and how they affect the progression of the play.

## Visual Art Prompts

### Court vs The Forest of Arden

Draw contrasting pictures of both settings.

## Drama Activities

### **The Hot Seat: Gaining Perspective**

A story can change depending on who tells it. People see the world from different viewpoints. A group of people might see the same event from completely different perspectives and tell about the event in very different ways.

Objective: Students will analyze events from the play through the perspective of different characters.

Step 1: Make a list of the important events in the story of *As You Like It*.

Step 2: Set up the “hot seat”: a single chair in front of your classroom.

Step 3: Have students or a group of students choose one of the characters from the story.

Step 4: One by one, each student or group of students takes the “hot seat.” Have them introduce themselves in the voice and manner of the chosen character.

Step 4: Using the list you made of important events in the story of *As You Like It*, ask the “characters” in the “hot seat” questions about how these events affect them.

Step 5: After the class has interviewed several “characters,” discuss how the characters’ viewpoints differed. How were they alike? Was there a point in the story when most of the characters’ viewpoints were the same?

**Writing Extension:** Describe 5 of the characters in the play: write down 10 adjectives describing them then use your adjectives to write a paragraph description of each character. Now write about one of the characters, describing them as another character sees them. Describe one character from the perspective of a different character.

### **Conversations for Two**

This improvisational activity will help you to begin thinking about the themes of the story. With a partner, students brainstorm different scenarios that would fit the following situations. They then carry out a conversation. If comfortable, students can share their conversations with the rest of the class. Discuss the different choices made by pairs working with the same scenario.

1. Two friends discuss running away and how they should disguise themselves.
2. Two brothers fight over their dad’s inheritance. The older brother is preventing the younger brother from getting his share.
3. Two friends debate the merits of city life versus the country life. Each person chooses a side to defend.
4. Two friends are talking about a strange happening. One friend has just fallen in love at first sight. The other friend is skeptical.

### **Revisiting the Story**

Below, the plot of *As You Like It* has been simplified into five basic actions, one to accompany each act.

Act 1: The banishment

Act 2: The arrival at the Forest of Arden

Act 3: Relationships

Act 4: Wooing

Act 5: Happily ever after?

1. In groups, using the same outline, students create and present a series of five tableaux depicting each of these key images that summarize the story of *As You Like It*.
2. Students then add seven more key images or actions to the summary.
3. Students can present their twelve part tableaux sequence adding background music to bridge the transition from one tableau to the next in the sequence.

## **Movement**

- 1.As in a game of 'Simon Says' invite the whole group to play 'Duke Frederick Says', gaining a sense of the command of the Duke in the court. If the action is not prefaced with 'Duke Frederick Says...' students should not obey the command. If they do, then they will be out of the game/banished.
- 2.Ask students to walk around the room, confining their movements to straight lines and angled turns only. Challenge them, as they walk, to make sure they don't make eye contact with anyone. Once they are moving, ask them to create movements for the following verbs, using only their hands:
  - Fighting
  - Wooing
  - Dancing
- 3.Reflect on what it would be like to live in a place that was this restricted.
- 4.Then, invite the group to run through the space, avoiding contact with others but trying to make eye contact as much as they can. As they run, have them rename objects the room as they pass and touch them - e.g. a chair becomes the sky; the floor is a potato and so on.
- 5.Collectively discuss the differences between the worlds, how they felt in experiencing each of them, and what might happen to someone who had come from the first world into the second?

## **Sculpture Gallery**

- 1.Divide the class into groups of 3.
- 2.Instruct each group to designate each group member as either A, B or C. Group member A will be the "artist" and group members B and C are the 'clay'.
- 3.Instruct the artists to use the clay to create a sculpture that captures the essence of the given line. Artists must be sure to work gently with their clay, and remember that the clay can be transformed into both inanimate objects or people, and can be manipulated to create facial expression, suggest bold movement, or to create different levels. Artists must also be sure to creatively incorporate the index card into the sculpture so that it may easily be read.
- 4.After about 5 minutes, the artists may finish and be invited to freely walk through the sculpture gallery and appreciate each others' wonderful works of art.
- 5.Repeat so that group members B and C each have turns to be the artist.

The following are examples of quotes that may be used to create beautiful sculptures!

How weary are my spirits!  
Here lie I down, and measure out my grave.  
Sell while you can – you are not for all markets.  
Sweet Phoebe, do not scorn me.  
My father was no traitor!  
I cannot live out of her company.  
Let me be your servant.  
Have I not cause to weep?  
O Phoebe, Phoebe, Phoebe!  
All the world's a stage.

## **Writing Prompts**

### **Point of View Questions**

Example point of view questions:

-Use clues from the play and your own ideas to identify (character's name) point of view. How might the story be different if it was told by (another character's name)?

- Identify the main point of view or perspective in the play by using details and your own background knowledge. Explain another point of view or perspective that could exist.
- How might (character's name) point of view differ from your own? Use three details from the play in the explanation of your thinking.
- How might your background, experiences and perspective have influenced the way you understood the play?
- Using evidence from the play and what you can infer about the character's point of view, explain how it is similar or different from your own perspective.
- What does the character's decision mean to you and how might it affect other characters in the story?

### **Monologue Writing**

**Objective:** In the exercise, students will map out the character traits of several of the characters in the play. Then they will write a short monologue from the perspective of one of the characters. Students will demonstrate an understanding of character traits, recall facts, characters and events from the story.

#### **Discussion Outline:**

1. Use the character of Rosalind. This could be either a whole class or small group discussion. • First plot out the main points of what happens to Rosalind in the play: her dad is banished, she falls in love with Orlando at a wrestling match, she is banished by her uncle, she disguises herself as Ganymede, she pretends to cure Orlando of his love, she arranges marriages for everyone and is reunited with her dad.

- Discuss what Rosalind does in each section.
- Discuss how Rosalind acts and interacts with different characters in each section.
- Make a list of words that describe Rosalind during each section.
- Choose four words from the list that best encompass her whole character.
- Discuss where in the play these character traits reveal themselves. (At this point, students are acting like detectives to find evidence to back up the character traits they have chosen. What the character does or says in the play is the proof that this word helps describe him/her.)

2. Then, have students choose one of the characters from the play and on their own complete the character analysis process used above. Students fill in a character analysis diagram for their character. In the middle of the diagram is written their character, then the four character traits are drawn in circles flowing out of the center, then come out the proof is drawn in circles coming out of the traits. An example of what this diagram looks like is at:

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/graphicorganizers/cloud/43.shtml>

3. Students think about what their character wants in the play. It should be expressed in the form of a "to" verb. This is the character's objective. Their objective should encompass what drives them through the whole play.

4. Students write: My name is \_\_\_\_\_ (Fill in name of character.) I want to \_\_\_\_\_. (Fill in what the character wants in the overall play.)

5. Students use the character's objective as a jumping off point to write a short monologue from their character's point of view. The monologue should start with their completed sentence, I want \_\_\_\_\_. The rest should tell how they go about getting what they want or not. Or why they want it so much and why is it important to them.

**Drama Extension:** Students perform their monologues for the class.