

SHAKE FEST STUDIO



Choosing the focus for your SCENE

What to consider and questions to ask

Please note: The content here should be considered a guide only and is not designed to box you in – only to get you thinking. At the end of the day we want you to stay creative and go with your gut instincts!

Shakespeare wrote at least 37 plays, so how can you choose between them when picking the focus for your Shake Fest entry? Use this worksheet the help you find a choice you are passionate about!

What are your strengths?

No matter which category you are participating in, it's important to play to your strengths. So write them here! As a group, where do your strengths lie? Can you bring the drama to the stage, or work together to make an audience howl with laughter? Are your personalities as actors suited best to playing friends, enemies, lovers or family? Let this guide you to find a scene that will suit all of you!

Once this is filled out hunt down two characters that suit you – synopsis are your friend here, you never know what you might find!

What themes and issues resonate with you?

One awesome thing about Shakespeare is that he wrote about the human condition – that's one of the reasons why he is still celebrated today. Write a list of the things that resonate with you in your life today, so you can see if anything matches up to an existing storyline or theme in a Shakespeare Play, or the experience of one of the characters. When on your search, don't forget to strip back the fancy names and kingdoms so you can focus on the relationships and problems between the characters.

Examples: Unbridled ambition? Head to Macbeth. Friendship betrayal? Julius Caesar could be for you. Dealing with a love triangle? Check out loads of Shakespearean comedies like Twelfth Night, A Midsummer Night's Dream.

What are the scenes in the play that are intriguing to your audience?

After you have found a play and characters that you resonate with and plays to your strengths, consider your audience. What are the moments in the play are interesting for your audience watch? It could be...

- A scene where characters have conflicting objectives
- One character trying to convince other characters of something
- A confrontation or fight between two characters or groups of people
- A character playing a prank/trick/teasing another character
- Characters trying to compete through their banter
- A scene where characters go through a change of heart or mind, make a decision.

Try to find scenes which work specifically with ensemble reactions. It's not only about finding a scene with lines for each actor to say – but look out for a plot that gives scope for reaction. Consider if you need to fragment (reduce or change) the order of the text to suit the time frame or the size of your group.

Write a list of the moments in the play between your characters that could be intriguing for your audience.
