



EARLY MODERN VERSE, RHETORIC, AND TEXT ANALYSIS

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2016

Our Mission: Brave Spirits Theatre is dedicated to plays from the era of verse and violence which contrast the baseness of humanity with the elegance of poetry. By staging dark, visceral, intimate productions of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, we strive to tear down the perception of these plays as proper and intellectual and instead use them to explore the boundaries of acceptable human behavior.

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WELCOME

OUR MISSION

Brave Spirits Theatre is dedicated to plays from the era of verse and violence which contrast the baseness of humanity with the elegance of poetry. By staging dark, visceral, intimate productions of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, we strive to tear down the perception of these plays as proper and intellectual and instead use them to explore the boundaries of acceptable human behavior.

OUR VALUES

TEXT

We are unabashedly obsessed with language. We believe the text itself holds all the clues we need to perform an early modern play with truth and vitality. We examine imagery, verse, rhetorical devices, and embedded stage directions. Shakespeare and his contemporaries wrote beautiful imagery, but they also used language that was bawdy, gritty, and realistic; we embrace both with equal relish. In short, we trust the text and it is the basis of our work.

ACTOR

We are a company that believes the actor is at the center of the artistic process. We seek out artists who are willing to take creative risks, who are bold and courageous, who are ensemble-driven, and who are professionally minded in their commitment to the art. The actor is the vessel through which the text comes to life, and as such the actor must be intellectually, emotionally, and physically adept.

WOMEN

Brave Spirits believes we have an ethical responsibility to address the disparity of the female presence in classical theatre. Though women make up 51% of the population, only 16% of Shakespeare's characters are female. By engaging in cross-gender casting and re-gendering characters, we seek to increase women's access to and voice in the canon of great dramatic works. We also strive to stage productions that focus on the traditionally silenced female narrative and question the patriarchal constructs present in these works.

AUDIENCE

We feel that the audience is the final ingredient needed to bring the play to life. In keeping with the early modern aesthetic, there is no fourth wall, and we welcome the audience as an active participant in the world of the play. Actors may invite the audience to turn into a raucous mob, their confidants, or the butt of a joke. By playing with the audience rather than to them, we make these plays exciting, accessible, and relevant.

OUR HISTORY

Brave Spirits Theatre is dedicated not only to Shakespeare, but also to the other playwrights writing in the same era. We believe in exploring the theatrical power of forgotten works and sharing these rarely produced gems with our audience. We've presented the professional DC-area premiere of several plays: Shakespeare and Fletcher's *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, Anonymous's *Arden of Faversham*, and Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Maid's Tragedy*. Our summer 2015 production of Middleton and Dekker's *The Bloody Banquet* was the first time that play had been professionally performed anywhere in the world in four hundred years.

2011: *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*; *What, Lamb! What, Ladybird!* (Capital Fringe Festival)

2012: *Richard III*

2013: *Romeo and Juliet*

2014-15: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* in repertory; *Arden of Faversham*

2015-16: *The Bloody Banquet* (Capital Fringe Festival); *The Re-Gendered Henry IV Repertory*; *The Maid's Tragedy*

2016-17: *Antony and Cleopatra*; *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* and *A King and No King* in repertory

ENSEMBLE

We're excited to welcome you to the Brave Spirits family. As may be clear from our values, but hasn't yet been explicitly stated, developing a sense of ensemble, not only in a production, but across seasons, is very important to us. We hope Brave Spirits is a company to which actors will want to return, that allows them to grow as performers, and gets them excited to be in a rehearsal room, whether around a table or up on their feet.

We look to foster ensemble in several ways. First, we ask that all actors be present for the entire tablework process, whether we are discussing a scene they are in or not. This way, everyone has a full understanding of the play and the discussion around it. We also love for actors to be present to help sort out a textual question, a difficult line to scan, or an unclear meaning. Secondly, we are developing a series of company training workshops to be held at the start of each season. Finally, we keep cast sizes small and acting tracks large—you may find yourself playing up to six different characters in a play. By necessity then, every actor is instrumental to the final product and there are no true leads. We expect messengers and random lords to be as fully realized as title characters.

Welcome on board! We hope you find your time with us to be both fun and enriching.

STEPS TO TEXT ANALYSIS

1. **Definitions** and notes: look up unfamiliar words and phrases.
2. **Paraphrase**: word-for-word substitutions.
3. **Scan** verse: note irregularities and think about what they mean for the character.
4. Divide verse and prose into **sense units**.
5. **Operative words**: pick the most important word for each sense unit.
6. **Rhetoric**: identify patterns of language.
7. Look for opportunities for **audience contact**.
8. **Other elements**: thee vs. you, modes of address, alliteration, assonance, embedded stage directions, archaic language, monosyllabic lines, rhyme, bawdy, etc.

None of these steps should be thought of as merely an intellectual exercise. At every step, ask what does this mean for my character, in performance? Each step is open to interpretation.

STEP ONE: DEFINITIONS AND NOTES

Look up words and meanings using the Oxford English Dictionary, Shakespeare Lexicons, Arden editions, and other resources. Over 90% of words in this era are in use today with the same meaning. **Early modern plays were written in today's English**, *not* Old English or medieval English. Occasionally, however, you will run across words that are familiar to you, but the meaning has changed. One example is "naughty." Today naughty means disobedient or mischievous. In Shakespeare's era, the word had the stronger meaning of evil or wicked.

PORTIA: O, these naughty times
 Put bars between the owners and their rights!
 — *The Merchant of Venice*

What makes Shakespeare and his contemporaries difficult to understand is not necessarily the individual words themselves, since not many of them are actually archaic, but the order in which the words appear. Playwrights of the era often use unconventional and complex word order which is why step two is so important. Often the words are simple, but the ideas or imagery the character is trying to express is complicated, which is what also leads to the lines being difficult to understand. Frequently when people talk about Shakespeare being hard to understand, they talk about the words he uses, when in fact Shakespeare can be hard to understand because of complex poetry and word order.

Spending quality time looking up definitions and meanings is even more important to BST since we often produce early modern plays with less performance and editorial history. If you are unsure of meaning, flag the phrase or word to discuss during tablework, and/or email the director and dramaturg.

STEP TWO: PARAPHRASING

Paraphrasing is ideally undertaken well in advance of the rehearsal period. If you wait until the last minute to paraphrase, it will make memorizing the script's text more difficult. Paraphrase when you first get your script and then put the paraphrases away until table work.

Paraphrasing is not writing out a general sense of the meaning; it is a **word-for-word substitution**. Following this step is imperative: the actor must have full grasp of what he or she is saying in order to properly convey meaning to the audience.

GUIDELINES FOR PARAPHRASING

- Replace all nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs.
- Don't worry about proper nouns, pronouns, and conjunctions.
- Match word order.
- When the playwright is using a word with multiple meanings, sometimes you can find a paraphrase that covers them all, but more often you may need to write two or three options.
- When the playwright repeats a word multiple times, you may choose to repeat a paraphrase, or you may choose a different paraphrase for each repetition, if they mean something different.
- If you are repeating another character's word, pick a paraphrase for yourself, but when we read the paraphrases to each other, use the other actor's choice (unless your character is changing the meaning of the word, of course).
- Extra points if you can retain rhyme in your paraphrase. This is especially important if you have a final rhyming couplet.

Paraphrasing is not just about knowing what your lines mean. It is about owning every word and understanding the shades of meaning and the word play that Shakespeare employs. Feel free to have fun with the exercise: you can use colloquialisms or modern phrases, but watch out for being too loose with the way you paraphrase.

BEATRICE: Why, he is the prince's jester: a very dull fool; only his gift is in devising impossible slanders: none but libertines delight in him; and the commendation is not in his wit, but in his villainy: for he both pleases men and angers them, and then they laugh at him and beat him. I am sure he is in the fleet: I would he had boarded me.

— *Much Ado About Nothing*

Paraphrase: Why, he is the prince's clown: a quite tedious idiot; his single skill is in forming outrageous libels: none but rakes thrill in him; and their recommendation is not of his intellect, but of his malice: for he both delights people and infuriates them, and then they snicker at him and whip him. I am positive he is in the group: I wish he had tackled me.

It is impossible to paraphrase perfectly: the example loses the nautical link of "fleet" and "boarded," but I think "tackled" gets both other meanings of "boarded," as in engaged in witty battle and also includes a sexual connotation.

STEP THREE: VERSE OR PROSE?

Identify which sections of your text are in verse and which are in prose. If each line of your speech begins with a capital letter, the speech is in verse. Prose runs to the margins and the next line does not begin with a capital letter.

Does your character only speak verse? Does your character only speak prose? Do they switch depending on whom they are talking to? Does a scene switch between verse and prose in the middle? If so, why? It's often repeated that lower class characters speak in prose while upper class characters speak in verse. This is an oversimplification. For example, *Much Ado About Nothing* is almost entirely in prose, regardless of the characters' statuses. The play contains two sections of prose: 1, the wedding scene, presumably giving an air of formality to the proceeding; and 2, Beatrice's only soliloquy. In the latter case, a possible acting choice is that verse represents the only time Beatrice lets her heart speak. In all other cases, her head and wit are ruling her voice.

Due to the conditions of early modern printing, sometimes editors are unsure whether a section is in verse or prose. Sometimes one version of the play from the era prints a section in prose, while another prints it in verse. The Arden edition will usually have notes on this if so. If it is a section that could be either, the director/dramaturg/text coach may have already picked and set the text as such in the script, or they may be planning to look at it in tablework. The verse/prose distinction particularly gets muddy later in Shakespeare's writing and in the Jacobean era. Because the iambic rhythm is natural to English, prose sections can often have an iambic rhythm. As always, ask yourself why your character speaks in verse, why they speak in prose, and why they might speak in something that is in between the two.

STEP FOUR: SCAN THE TEXT, IF IN VERSE

Most of Shakespeare, and by extension early modern drama, is written in *blank verse*. Blank verse is also known as unrhymed *iambic pentameter*. Iambic pentameter is a specific form of poetry.

one unit of rhythm = foot

pentameter = a line of verse made up of five feet

iamb = a unit of rhythm with two beats: a weak stress followed by a strong stress

noted as: de dum or - / or x / or u /

iambic pentameter = a line of verse with five iambic feet

a perfect line iambic pentameter has ten syllables, alternating unstressed and stressed:

- / - / - / - / - /

If **music** **be** the **food** of **love** play **on**

Including the foot dividers this line would be written

If **mu** | sic **be** | the **food** | of **love** | play **on**

(But that can get hard to read so the rest of this packet does not include foot dividers.)

WHY WRITE IN IAMBIC PENTAMETER?

Three reasons are generally given for why iambic pentameter became the preferred verse form of the early modern stage:

1. It's the verse form that most closely approximates English speech. We often speak iambically without even realizing it. This is also why there are prose sections that seem like verse.
2. It imitates the sound of the human heartbeat, so feels very organic, very rooted in our bodies. (*Though some point out that the heartbeat is more trochaic, going dum de, instead of de dum.*) Just like the heartbeat is subject to irregularities due to physical and emotional stress, iambic pentameter becomes irregular when the speaker is emotional or under stress.
3. It's dramatic: the final strong stress of the iamb lifts and propels the verse forward.

WHY DO SCANSION AND VERSE MATTER?

We scan text for a specific reason - because knowing what the stresses are tells us what the important information of the line is. For the actor, scansion tells us about the character and the situation. Shakespeare and the other playwrights of the era stretched the form in order to emphasize an emotional outbreak, create a sense of spontaneity, and a dramatic tension. Irregularities in verse help create a sense of alertness in the audience. Scansion also leads the ear of the audience to the important information. *** Pronouns, conjunctions, and negatives are rarely stressed, even though American actors tend to want to stress them. Avoid it unless the verse is clearly telling you or you have a compelling reason.*

- / - / - / - / - / -
 To **be** or **not** to **be**; that **is** the **question**.
 — *Hamlet*

“Be not be is quest.” The stressed beats of the most famous line sum up the entire play.

- / - / - / - / - / -
 Tomorrow **and** Tomorrow **and** Tomorrow
 — *Macbeth*

Stressed syllables: “mar and mar and mar” or “more and more and more” — critical meaning
 Unstressed syllables: “to oh to oh to oh” — no meaning, just sounds

Yes, this example breaks the “don’t stress conjunctions” rule, but it does so for a very powerful reason. The entire point of this line is the “and.” Macbeth is lamenting the unceasing movement of time. Both of these lines have 11 syllables, ending on an amphibrach. More on that below (page 22).

Verse is discussed in greater detail in the next section (page 20).

Parts of speech in order of operative word likelihood:

1. Verbs – always consider the verb **first**
2. Nouns
3. Adverbs
4. Adjectives
5. Prepositions
6. Conjunctions
7. Pronouns
8. Interjections
9. Negatives

In modern speech we tend to stress pronouns and negatives. **It is very rare in iambic pentameter for these parts of speech to be the operative words, or even stressed at all.** Please resist. Also notice that the verb and noun is more important than the adverb and adjective. This seems counterintuitive, but in most cases the adverb and adjective do their own work, as it were, and it's the noun that is more important for audience comprehension. To find the operative word: *say the thought out loud*. Test each operative word possibility. How does each one change the sound of the thought? How does each one change how your character is feeling? Some thoughts may have multiple possibilities. Mark them and play with them in rehearsal. The operative word you use may change during the rehearsal process.

STEP SEVEN: ANALYZE RHETORIC

Rhetoric is figures of speech, or patterns of language, employed to persuade an audience. These patterns will give you clues for performance. Rhetoric is important for verse speaking, but essential for prose speaking. Verse comes with its own rhythm. Rhetoric provides the rhythm for prose. Don't think of rhetorical devices as coming from Shakespeare, think of them as coming from the character. The character *chooses* the rhetorical device. The more complex the rhetoric, the smarter the character. Rhetoric is discussed more below (page 31).

STEP EIGHT: AUDIENCE CONTACT

The early modern theatre employed universal lighting, which means that the audience was illuminated, instead of sitting in the darkness as we do today. The plays of this era are full of moments where you can directly speak to a member of the audience. Soliloquies are never internal reflection—the audience is your scene partner for the working out of a problem. Audience contact will be discussed more below (pg. 42).

STEP NINE: OTHER TEXTUAL ELEMENTS

MODES OF ADDRESS

THEE VS. YOU

thee / thou / thine informal, intimate, insulting, parents to children, superiors to inferiors, lovers

you / your formal, public, respectful, children to parents, subjects to rulers, strangers

Notice which your character uses, whether it changes based on to whom he or she is speaking. Also notice if you use both forms and switch—why is the switch happening? Did the other person upset you? Are you pulling rank? Has your relationship become more intimate? Notice that the intimate form can be used for opposite reasons—it can be loving, or it can be insulting.

STATUS

Look at the way your character addresses others: does he or she use a title or a low form of address? Does he or she command or make a polite request? Does your character bother with a form of address, or is he or she too much in a hurry?

sirrah, sir, majesty, highness, lady, etc.
Please note: sirrah is pronounced SIR-uh.

Brakenbury's "I **beseech** your **graces** both to pardon me."
is very different from
Richard's "**Boy!**"

ENGLISH HIERARCHY

The relationships and situations in many early modern plays, especially Histories, rely on what one character's status is compared to another. This list will give you a reference as to who is more important than whom.

1. The Sovereign
2. The Prince of Wales
3. The Younger sons of the Sovereign
4. The Grandsons of the Sovereign
5. The Brothers of the Sovereign
6. The Uncles
7. The Archbishop of Canterbury
8. The Archbishop of York

SOUNDS

Look for repeated sounds among consonants (alliteration) and vowels (assonance). Play the sound in your attempt to win your objective. What do the sounds feel like? Let the sound guide your acting tactic. “What? Is it too short?” from *2 Henry 6* can’t be played caressingly.

ALLITERATION

DON JOHN: So will you say when you have seen the sequel.
— *Much Ado About Nothing*

MARGARET: For queen, a very caitiff, crowned with care.
— *Richard III*

ASSONANCE

MERCUTIO: Come, come, thou art as hot a jack in thy mood as any in Italy, and as soon moved to be moody, and as soon moody to be moved.
— *Romeo and Juliet*

OBERON: Be as thou wast wont to be;
 See as thou wast wont to see.
— *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*

RHYME

Rhyme is often used for ritualistic or choral effects and for highly lyrical or sententious passages that give advice or point to a moral. Rhyme is used for songs, in examples of bad verse, in Prologues, Epilogues, and Choruses, in masques, and in plays-within-plays, where it distinguishes these imaginary performances from the “real world” of the play. It is also used for many manifestations of the supernatural (e.g. the witches in *Macbeth*; the fairies in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*; Ariel in *The Tempest*), but not for ghosts (e.g. Hamlet’s father), who retain the human use of blank verse.

Rhymes are never accidents. The character always chooses the rhyme. Lift the first word of the rhyming pair, not the second. Look especially for rhyming couplets. They are often used to signal the end of a scene, or call attention to a character’s exit. If your character has a rhyming couplet, and yet remains on stage, why? Did they try to leave and something pulled him or her back? If your character does get to end the scene with a rhyming couplet, this often denotes some level of power. (Rulers often end scenes with rhyming couplets.)

SINGLE RHYMING COUPLET MARKING THE END OF A SCENE

HENRY V: Therefore let every man now task his **thought**,
 That this fair action may on foot be **brought**.
— *Henry V*

SINGLE RHYMING COUPLET MARKING THE END OF A PLAY

PRINCE: For never was a story of more **woe**,
Than this of Juliet and her **Romeo**.
— *Romeo and Juliet*

MULTIPLE RHYMING COUPLETS AT THE END

If there is a rhyming couplet, but the scene goes on, ask yourself why. Did another character steal the thunder? Did the character's attempt to create resolution fail? If there are multiple rhyming couplets at the end, it could mean several things. One, your character decided he or she couldn't get his or her point across with the first and needs to try a second. Also, another character could steal the power by denying the first character the final word. Does the rhyming couplet imply a false exit?

LADY MACBETH: This night's great business into my dispatch
Which shall to all our nights and days to **come**
Give solely sovereign sway and **masterdom**.
MACBETH: We will speak further.
LADY MACBETH: Only look up clear;
To alter favour ever is to fear:
Leave all the rest to me.

— *Macbeth*

The rhyming couplets give these two actors a lot to play with: does Lady Macbeth start to exit on the first one and then is interrupted by Macbeth? What is her attitude and tone when she has to make a second rhyming couplet to end the scene? How does Macbeth respond? What does he do so that Lady Macbeth has to still add "Leave all the rest to me."

RICHARD III: Go, gentleman, every man unto his charge
Let not our babbling dreams affright our souls:
Conscience is but a word that cowards use,
Devised at first to keep the strong in awe:
Our strong arms be our conscience, swords our law.
March on, join bravely, let us to't pell-**mell**
If not to heaven, then hand in hand to **hell**.
What shall I say more than I have infer'd? ...

— *Richard III*

Before the battle of Bosworth, Richard III tries to rouse his soldiers with a quick speech. The rhyming couplets afford some interesting opportunities. Does he try and leave after the first one? Does he try and leave again after the second and they still aren't following? What is his attitude when he then has to give a much longer oration? As always, what character opportunities are in these textual elements?

SHARED RHYMING COUPLET

If two characters share a rhyme, it tells us something about their relationship. They may be extremely close, like the father-son pair in the example; they may be lovers; they may be in a battle of wits.

TALBOT: Shall all thy mother's hope lie in one **tomb**?
 JOHN: Ay, rather than I'll shame my mother's **womb**.
 — *Henry VI*

SUPERNATURAL CHARACTERS

Shakespeare often uses rhyme to mark a character's supernatural status.

FIRST WITCH: When shall we three meet again
 In thunder, lightning, or in rain?
 SECOND WITCH: When the hurlyburly's **done**,
 When the battle's lost and **won**.
 THIRD WITCH: That will be ere the set of **sun**.
 FIRST WITCH: Where the place?
 SECOND WITCH: Upon the heath.
 THIRD WITCH: There to meet with Macbeth.
 — *Macbeth*

PUCK: Through the forest have I gone.
 But Athenian found I none,
 On whose eyes I might **approve**
 This flower's force in stirring **love**.
 — *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

SONG

AMIENS: Under the greenwood **tree**,
 Who loves to lie with **me**,
 And turn his merry **note**
 Unto the sweet bird's **throat**,
 Come hither, come hither, come hither:
 Here shall he **see**
 No **enemy**
 But winter and rough weather.
 — *As You Like It*

BAD RHYME

Rhyme can also be employed for comic effect.

BOTTOM: But stay, O **spite**!
 But mark, poor **knight**,
 What dreadful dole is here!
 Eyes, do you **see**?
 How can it **be**?
 O dainty duck! O dear!
 Thy mantle **good**,
 What, stain'd with **blood**!
 Approach, ye Furies fell!
 O Fates, come, **come**,
 Cut thread and **thrum**;
 Quail, crush, conclude, and quell!
 — *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

WORD CHOICE

OATHS

Does your character use oaths? Are they mild, common, contrived, rare, shocking?

- By heaven
- 'Zounds (= "God's wounds")
- by Saint Paul
- by my troth (Please note: "troth" rhymes with "oath")
- 'Sblood (= "God's blood")

BAWDY JOKES

Shakespeare was a dirty, dirty man. Enjoy it. But see if you can color the language vocally before resorting to pelvic thrusting. We're not against lewd gestures in of themselves, but we've found that surprisingly they often detract from the scene, rather than illuminate it.

A character may be making a sexual reference purposefully, or inadvertently.

MERCUTIO: By her fine foot, straight leg, and quivering thigh,
And the demesnes that there adjacent lie.
— *Romeo and Juliet*

PISTOL: Pistol's cock is up,
And flashing fire will follow.
— *Henry V*

CLOTEN: Come on, tune: if you can penetrate her with your fingering, so; we'll try
with tongue too.
— *Cymbeline*

INARTICULATE SPEECH

Play these—do not run over them. They are an opportunity to express emotion, desire, humor, indignation, etc. Especially "O." O is a very large, very long vowel.

RICHARD III: What? I, that killed her husband and his father,
To take her in her heart's extremest hate,
And yet to win her, all the world to nothing!
Ha!
— *Richard III*

CLEOPATRA: **O** happy horse, to bear the weight of Antony!
— *Antony and Cleopatra*

EDMUND: **Fut!** I should have been that I am, had the maidenliest star in the
firmament twinkled on my bastardizing.
— *King Lear*

OTHER TEXTUAL CLUES

MONOSYLLABIC LINES

Monosyllabic lines are a sign to slow down. It takes longer to say these lines because there are more words. Try to say them fast and it's likely your tongue will trip. Explore what playing with pace gets you—do you speed up the lines leading into it in order to create a bigger juxtaposition?

ELIZABETH: Oh, he is young and his minority
Is put unto the trust of Richard Gloucester,
A man that loves not me, nor none of you.
— *Richard III*

HENRY IV: The happiest youth, viewing his progress through,
What perils past, what crosses to ensue,
Would shut the book, and sit him down and die.
— *Henry IV*

EMBEDDED STAGE DIRECTIONS

Does the text instruct some sort of movement? Kneeling, kissing, stopping movement, sitting, standing? What happens if the character purposely ignores the instruction?

VOLUMNIA: Whilst, with no softer cushion than the flint
I **kneel** before thee.
— *Coriolanus*

LYSANDER: Now **she holds me not**;
Now **follow**, if thou darest, to try whose right,
Of thine or mine, is most in Helena.

DEMETRIUS: Follow! nay, I'll go with thee, **cheek by jowl**.
— *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

CORNWALL I have received a hurt: **follow me, lady**.
Turn out that eyeless villain; throw this slave
Upon the dunghill. Regan, I bleed apace:
Untimely comes this hurt: **give me your arm**.
— *King Lear*

PUNCTUATION

Use punctuation when it is helpful; ignore it when it is not. Punctuation is a tricky topic because we have no way to know how Shakespeare punctuated his scripts, despite some practitioners' insistence on the supremacy of the First Folio. Modern editors add, delete, and change punctuation without warning. (Early modern editors did too!) Punctuation, however, can be useful as a guide to the logic of your character's argument. It can help structure long sentences, in both verse and prose. At the very least, it is very helpful to notice where your full stops are—periods, question marks, and exclamation marks. Shakespearean text has to keep moving, but the largest places to breathe are at full stops.

ENJAMBED LINES VS. END-STOPPED LINES

Does the thought end at the end of the verse line (end-stopped), or does it continue into the next line (enjambéd)? End-stopped is more controlled. If lines are enjambéd, the character's thoughts are pouring out. Enjambement is not, however, an invitation to ignore the end of the verse line. Often playing these verse line endings can reveal interesting choices and can make the thoughts sound more realistic. What do you get if the character finds what he or she is saying next right at that line ending? Earlier plays tend to be more end-stopped, whereas later plays tend to be more enjambéd.

PROTEUS: He after honour hunts, I after love:
 He leaves his friends to dignify them more,
 I leave myself, my friends and all, for love.
 Thou, Julia, thou hast metamorphosed me,
 Made me neglect my studies, lose my time,
 War with good counsel, set the world at nought;
 Made wit with musing weak, heart sick with thought.
 — *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (early play, end-stopped)

MACBETH: If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
 It were done quickly: if the assassination
 Could trammel up the consequence, and catch
 With his surcease success; that but this blow
 Might be the be-all and the end-all here,
 But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
 We'd jump the life to come. But in these cases
 We still have judgment here; that we but teach
 Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
 To plague the inventor: this even-handed justice
 Commends the ingredients of our poison'd chalice
 To our own lips.
 — *Macbeth* (late play, enjambéd)

VERSE

INTRODUCTION TO VERSE

TYPES OF FEET IN POETRY

1. iamb	=	2 syllables	unstressed, stressed	- /
2. trochee	=	2 syllables	stressed, unstressed	/ -
3. pyrrhic	=	2 syllables	unstressed, unstressed	- -
4. spondee	=	2 syllables	stressed, stressed	/ /
5. anapest	=	3 syllables	unstressed, unstressed, stressed	- - /
6. amphibrach	=	3 syllables	unstressed, stressed, unstressed	- / -
7. dactyl	=	3 syllables	stressed, stressed, unstressed	/ / -

TYPES OF METER IN POETRY

1. Monometer = One Foot
2. Dimeter = Two Feet
3. Trimeter = Three Feet
4. *Tetrameter = Four Feet
5. *Pentameter = Five Feet
6. *Hexameter = Six Feet
7. Heptameter = Seven Feet
8. Octameter = Eight Feet

* These are the three meters most commonly employed in early modern drama. Very early works, such as *Sir Clyomon and Sir Clamydes*, also employed heptameter, or 14-syllable lines, also called fourteeners.

TETRAMETER

Tetrameter is poetry where the verse lines are made up of four feet. Shakespeare often uses rhyming trochaic tetrameter for supernatural characters, such as the fairies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or the witches in *Macbeth*. (Longfellow's *The Song of Hiawatha* is the most famous poem in perfect trochaic tetrameter.)

PUCK:

/ - / - / - /
Captain of our fairy band
 / - / - / - /
Helena is here at hand
 / - / - / - / - /
And the youth mistook by me
 / - / - / - / - /
Pleading for a lover's fee.

— *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

FIRST WITCH:

/ - / - / - /
When shall we three meet again
 - / - / - / - /
 In **thunder, lightning, or in rain?**

— *Macbeth*

You'll notice these lines are missing the final unstressed syllable. Shakespeare is writing in what's technically called catalectic trochaic tetrameter, but you don't need to know that.

HEXAMETER

Hexameter, or 12-syllable lines, are also known as *alexandrines*. This is the most common mode of verse in French literature, particularly the plays of Corneille and Racine. The form was common in English morality plays and earlier heroic drama. Some scholars argue that Shakespeare never uses

hexameter and there's always a way to make the line into pentameter, but others find hexameter in his plays occasionally, particularly in the early ones.

DUKE OF YORK - / - / - / - / - / - /
 — *Richard II* The **nobles they** are **dead**, the **commons they** are **cold**.

- Unlike iambic pentameter, a line of hexameter can be divided equally in half. This can result in a heightening of emotional content.
- There is a sense of cramming too much (meaning? emotion?) into a limited space (“12 into 10”). After WWII when the House of Commons was being rebuilt, Sir Winston Churchill had it done so that it would be too small to seat every member. He wrote that part of the reason he supported this building plan was that it would give “great occasions a sense of crowd and urgency.” An actor may need to speak fast or in a higher emotional state using these lines.
- Hexameters can end with amphibrachs resulting in a 13-syllable line. (More on amphibrachs below.)

DOGGEREL

Doggerel is a loose verse form, irregular in rhythm and in rhyme. Doggerel occasionally shows up in early modern drama, often for comic effect and spoken by servants or lower class characters.

SPEED: - / - / - / - / - / - /
 O **jest** unseen, inscrutable, invisible,
 - - / - - / - - / - - / - - / - -
 As a **nose** on a **man's face**, or a **weathercock** on a **steeple!**
 - / - / - / - / - / - /
 My **master** **sues** to **her**, and **she** hath **taught** her **suitor**,
 - / - / - / - / - / - /
 He **being** her **pupil**, to **become** her **tutor**.
 - / - / - / - / - / - /
 O **excellent** device! **was** there **ever** **heard** a **better**,
 / - / - / - / - / - / - /
 — *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* **That** my **master**, **being** **scribe**, to **himself** should **write** the **letter?**

VARIATIONS IN IAMBIC PENTAMETER

FEET VARIATIONS

AMPHIBRACH

The most common variation to a line of iambic pentameter is for the line to contain 11 syllables, and for that extra syllable to come at the end of the line and be unstressed. (*This is commonly known as a feminine ending because it ends with a “weak” stress, but there’s no reason for us to continue the use of sexist terms when the academic one will do just fine.*)

These two lines contain antithesis between “light love and dark night.” (“Dis-cov-er-ed” is an example of expansion; see below.)

ANAPEST

Anapests are also known as “crowded feet” because they contain an extra third syllable, instead of just two. Often you slide quickly over that extra unstressed syllable in order to cram it into the same amount of time.

CORNELIUS By watching, weeping, tendance, kissing, to
 O’ercome you with her show, and in time,
 - / - / - / - - / - /
 When **she** had **fitted you** with her craft, to **work**
 Her son into the adoption of the crown

— *Cymbeline*

GLOUCESTER - / - - / - / - / - /
 You **made** in a day, my **lord**, whole **towns** to **fly**.

— *2 Henry VI*

HEADLESS LINES

Sometimes you will come across an 9- or 11-syllable line, where the meter seems regular at the end; i.e. the line ends with a stressed syllable—there is no final amphibrach to explain the eleventh syllable, and there is no opportunity to expand a word in order to make up an extra syllable. These lines might be headless—meaning they are missing the initial unstressed syllable. Frequently they then start with a stressed syllable and then the meter continues normally. In later plays, however, headless lines can include other variations. What’s going on with the character to prevent them from having normal meter? Starting off with the stressed syllable can imply a feeling of abruptness.

MARSHAL: (-) / - / - / - / - /
 Stay! The **King** has **thrown** his **warder down**.

— *Richard II*

LADY MACBETH: Thou’ldst have, great Glamis,
 (-) / - / - / - / - /
 That which **cries**, “Thus **thou** must **do**,” if **thou** have **it**;

— *Macbeth*

This example could be a headless Alexandrine. But you could also elide hav’it and make a case for a headless pentameter line with an amphibrach. You could also play a trochee on the “thus thou” instead of an iamb.

OTHER VERSE ELEMENTS

SHARED LINES

Sometimes a line of pentameter is shared between two characters. Traditional actor training teaches that the second speaker jumps right in. Shared lines could be used to demonstrate comfortable

OTHER VARIATIONS

Remember that every stressed syllable is not created equal; same with unstressed syllables. Sometimes an unstressed syllable will want to jump up to meet the stressed syllable next to it. Kristin Linklater refers to this as a “sprung rhythm” and marks it with a *. George T. Wright calls it a medial stress and marks it with a \ (instead of a /). Linklater says this happens when “the stress of the verse is challenged by the emphasis of sense.”

- / * / - / - / * /
 Or **what** *strong* **hand** can **hold** his *swift* **foot** **back**?
 — Sonnet 65

“Strong hand” is antithetical to “swift foot.”

PROSE

Prose too often gets the short end of the stick when it comes to text analysis. Casually dismissed (inaccurately) as what lower-class characters speak, the richness and structure of prose is frequently ignored. Prose can be spoken by lower-class characters without much intelligence, but prose can also be smartly formed and full of persuasive devices. While verse takes its structure from meter, prose gets its structure from rhetoric (see page 31).

Typical uses for prose: in serious letters, in proclamations, in the speeches of characters actually or pretending to be mad, for cynical commentary (e.g. Jacques and Touchstone in *As You Like It*; Edmund in *King Lear*). It is used for simple exposition, transitions, or contrast. It is used for scenes of everyday life; for low comedy and for bantering, relaxed, or unbuttoned conversation.

Prose is not limited to lower-class characters, just as verse is not limited to upper-class characters. Rosalind and Celia speak prose to one another in *As You Like It*, as do King Henry and Katherine of France in *Henry V*. Hamlet tends to use prose both when he is being very rational and when he is very irrational (but the passionate Hamlet speaks in verse). Similarly, when the lower classes figure in serious or romantic situations, they may speak verse (e.g. Silvius and Phebe in *As You Like It*; the gardeners in *Richard II*).

Peter Hall on prose: “The meaning needs unpicking and telling with the rational care of a lawyer making his case.” and “There is always a formality about Shakespeare’s prose ... it is about high seriousness, and it is often comic as a consequence.”

George Wright: “The shift to verse usually heralds a higher emotional temperature ... prose asserts the rational.”

Cicely Berry: “What we have to recognize is that there is a pleasure in being articulate.”

Matt Davies: “The more you have to make someone understand your argument, the better the prose will be.” (Thanks to Dr. Matt Davies for much of this information on and categorization of prose.)

USES OF PROSE

FORMAL PROSE SPEECH

HAMLET

Speak the **s**peech, I **p**ray you, as I **p**ronounced it to you, *trippingly* on the *tongue*: but if you mouth *it*, as many of your **p**layers do, I had as lief the *town-crier* spoke my lines.

— *Hamlet*

FORMAL RHETORIC

BRUTUS:

(Q) **Had you rather Caesar were living and die all slaves, than that Caesar were dead, to live all free men?** (1) *As Caesar loved me, I WEEP FOR HIM;* (2) *as he was fortunate, I REJOICE AT IT;* (3) *as he was valiant, I HONOUR HIM;* (4) *but, as he was ambitious, I SLEW HIM.* (1) There is **tears** for his **love**; (2) **joy** for his **fortune**; (3) **honour** for his **valour**; (4) and **death** for his **ambition**. (Q1) **Who is here so base that would be a bondman?** (A1) If any, speak; for him have I offended. (Q2) **Who is here so rude that would not be a Roman?** (A2) If any, speak; for him have I offended. (Q3) **Who is here so vile that will not love his country?** (A3) If any, speak; for him have I offended.

— *Julius Caesar*

INFORMAL RHETORIC

TRINCULO:

(Q1) **What have we here?** (Q2) **a man or a fish?** (Q3) **dead or alive?** (A) (1) A fish: (2) he smells like a fish; (3) a very ancient and fish-like smell; (4) a kind of not of the newest Poor-John. (A) (5) A strange fish!

— *The Tempest*

EUPHUISTIC SPEECH

Euphuistic speeches contain an elaborate, affected style, characterized by excessive use of balance, antithesis, and alliteration and by frequent use of similes drawn from mythology and nature. Playwright John Lyly is well-known for this type of writing.

BENEDICK:

(1) O, she misused me past the endurance of a block! (2) an oak but with one green leaf on it would have answered her; (3) my very visor began to assume life and scold with her. She told me, not thinking I had been myself, (1) that I was the prince’s jester, (2) that I was duller than a great thaw; huddling jest upon jest with such impossible conveyance upon me that I stood *like a man at a mark*, with a whole army shooting at me. She *speaks poniards*, and every word stabs: if her breath were as terrible as her terminations, there were no living near her; she would infect to the north star. I would not marry her, though she were endowed with all that Adam

had left him before he transgressed: she would have made Hercules have turned spit, yea, and have cleft his club to make the fire too. Come, talk not of her: you shall find her the infernal Ate in good apparel.

— *Much Ado About Nothing*

PERFORMING PROSE

POINTING AND OVERSTRESSING

Prose should be treated as a character choice and not just as an unintelligent character's only option for speaking. When performing prose, highlight the rhetoric through pointing and stressing, build emphasis through a list, and use punctuation and phrases to structure long sentences. Be alert to syntax, thought cadence, inflection, the lifting phrase within each clause. Variation in pitch is essential in order to engage the audience. In large speeches also look for crescendo and increased tempo as the movement gathers pace.

“Where the verse trips along and is depending on a sense of line, the prose demands specific pointing.” (Peter Hall)

In order to point prose, use turns of pitch and tempo changes.

/ = a turn of pitch

// = a breath

BENEDICK:

I do much wonder that one man, / seeing how much another man is a *fool* when he dedicates his behaviors to love, / will, / after he hath laughed at such shallow *follies* in others, / become the argument of his own scorn by *falling* in love: //
and such a man is Claudio. //

I have known when there was no music with him but the **drum and the fife**; / and now had he rather hear the **tabour and the pipe**: //

I have known when he would have **walked ten mile a-foot** to see a good *armour*; / and now will he **lie ten nights awake**, *carving the fashion of a new doublet*. //

He was wont to **speak plain and to the purpose**, / like an honest man and a soldier; / and now is he turned **orthography**; / his words are a very fantastical banquet, / just so many strange dishes. //

May I be so converted and see with these eyes? //

I cannot tell; //

I think not: //

I will not be sworn, but love may transform me to an oyster; / but I'll take my oath on it, / till he have made an oyster of me, / he shall never make me such a *fool*. //

One woman is FAIR, / **yet I am well**; //

another is WISE, / **yet I am well**; //

another VIRTUOUS, **yet I am well**; //

but till all GRACES be in one woman, / one woman shall not come in my GRACE. //

Rich she shall be, / that's certain; //

wise, / or I'll none; / *virtuous*, / or I'll never cheapen her; / *fair*, / or I'll never look on her; //

*mild, / or come not near me; / noble, or not I for an angel; //
of good discourse, / an excellent musician, / and her hair shall be
of what colour it please God.*

— *Much Ado About Nothing*

PROSE AND VERSE INTERCHANGES

When a dialogue moves between verse and prose, ask why. What causes the changes? Why would one character speak in prose and another in verse? Does one character get the other to switch over to their mode of speaking? What are the power dynamics?

VIOLA: [P] Good madam, let me see your face.
OLIVIA: [P] Have you any commission from your lord to negotiate with my face? You are now out of your text: but we will draw the curtain and show you the picture. Look you, sir, such a one I was this present: is't not well done?
VIOLA: [P] Excellently done, if God did all.
OLIVIA: [P] 'Tis in grain, sir; 'twill endure wind and weather.
VIOLA: [V] 'Tis beauty truly blent, whose red and white Nature's own sweet and cunning hand laid on: Lady, you are the cruell'st she alive, If you will lead these graces to the grave And leave the world no copy.
OLIVIA: [P] O, sir, I will not be so hard-hearted; I will give out divers schedules of my beauty: it shall be inventoried, and every particle and utensil labelled to my will: as, item, two lips, indifferent red; item, two grey eyes, with lids to them; item, one neck, one chin, and so forth. Were you sent hither to praise me?
VIOLA: [V] I see you what you are, you are too proud; But, if you were the devil, you are fair. My lord and master loves you: O, such love Could be but recompensed, though you were crown'd The nonpareil of beauty!
OLIVIA: [V] How does he love me?
VIOLA: [V] With adorations, fertile tears, With groans that thunder love, with sighs of fire.
OLIVIA: [V] Your lord does know my mind; I cannot love him: Yet I suppose him virtuous, know him noble, Of great estate, of fresh and stainless youth; In voices well divulged, free, learn'd and valiant; And in dimension and the shape of nature A gracious person: but yet I cannot love him; He might have took his answer long ago.

— *Twelfth Night*

The conversation starts in prose. Viola switches to verse when, as Cesario, she is praising Olivia. Are these lines the memorized message? Or is Viola moved to speak verse because she wants the man she loves to get what he wants? Olivia initially remains in prose, dismissing the lines with wit. Viola remains in verse, despite Olivia speaking in prose and the fact that this second set of lines is clearly not from Orsino's message. Olivia then switches to verse and responds more earnestly and less flippantly. Has she been moved by Viola's (Cesario's) speech? Does this flip into verse indicate the moment Olivia falls in love with Cesario? Whatever the choice, the emotional quality of Olivia's previous prose speech and her verse speech are different—use the verse/prose switches as an actor to effect a change in the character.

RHETORIC

Rhetoric is always chosen by the character in an effort to win his or her objective. Let your character use the rhetoric. The more complicated the rhetorical device, the more intelligent the character. (Special thanks to Cass Morris and the Education Department at the American Shakespeare Center for their development of these over-arching categories.) You can find many more examples of these rhetorical devices in Scott Kaiser’s book, *Shakespeare’s Wordcraft*. There are hundreds of rhetorical devices; I’ve included the ones I think are most important for character analysis and textual analysis.

REPETITION

Repetition of words or phrases is often used when a character wants to drive home a point or illuminate a theme.

MACBETH: If it were **done** when ‘tis **done**, then ‘twere well
It were **done** quickly.

— *Macbeth*

EDMUND: Well, then,
Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land:
Our father’s love is to the bastard Edmund
As to the **legitimate**: fine word,—**legitimate!**
Well, my **legitimate**, if this letter speed,
And my invention thrive, Edmund the base
Shall top the **legitimate**.

— *King Lear*

If one character repeats the word or phrase of another character, it is often to one-up them, to win a point, or to twist the meaning. If there are several repetitions back and forth, think of it as a tennis match between the two characters—each is trying to score on the other. It is a game of wits.

LEAR: I **gave** you all.
REGAN: And in good time you **gave** it.

— *King Lear*

PORTIA: Then **must** the Jew be merciful.
SHYLOCK: On what compulsion **must** I? Tell me that.

— *The Merchant of Venice*

IMMEDIATELY, OR, EPIZEUXIS

When a single word or phrase is repeated immediately in one character’s line, he or she is often trying to express deep emotions, articulate big realizations, or amplify strong actions. I learned this Greek term by always saying, “Epizeuxis, epizeuxis, epizeuxis!” instead of just “epizeuxis.”

ANNE: **Blush, blush** thou lump of foul deformity.

— *Richard III*

ISABELLA **Seeming, seeming!**
I will proclaim thee, Angelo, look for't.
— *Measure for Measure*

LEAR: Why should a dog, a horse, a rat have life,
And thou no breath at all? Thou'lt come no more,
Never, never, never, never, never.
— *King Lear*

OF BEGINNINGS, OR, ANAPHORA

Repeating beginnings are incredibly obvious wordplay, and their apparentness causes each successive repetition to grow in importance.

ANNE: **Cursed** be the hand that made these fatal holes.
Cursed the heart that had the heart to do it.
Cursed the blood that let this blood from hence.
— *Richard III*

RICHARD II: **With mine own** tears I wash away my balm,
With mine own hands I give away my crown,
With mine own tongue deny my sacred state,
With mine own breath release all duteous oaths
— *Richard II*

OF ENDS, OR, EPISTROPHE

Scott Kaiser notes that final repetitions “work like a linguistic whip, where each successive phrase ends with the same resounding crack.” In Greek, strophe means “to turn.” I remember this term by thinking of catastrophe; they share the same suffix. Catastrophe can refer to the final event; epistrophe is the repetition of the final words.

ANNE: It is a quarrel just and reasonable,
To be revenged on him that killed my **husband**.
RICHARD: He that bereft thee, lady, of thy **husband**,
Did it to help thee to a better **husband**.
— *Richard III*

SHYLOCK: I will buy **with you**, sell **with you**, talk **with you**, walk **with you**, and
so following; but I will not eat **with you**, drink **with you**, nor pray **with**
you.
— *The Merchant of Venice*

OF THE BEGINNING AT THE END, OR, EPANALEPSIS

RICHMOND: **Kings** it makes gods, and meaner creatures **Kings**.
— *Richard III*

HENRY V: **Once more** unto the breach, dear friends, **once more**.
— *Henry V*

OF THE END AT THE NEXT BEGINNING, OR, ANADIPLOSIS

BOLINGBROKE: As **I was banished, I was banished** Hereford,
But as **I come, I come** for Lancaster.
— *Richard II*

OCTAVIA: Husband **win, win** brother,
Prays and destroys the prayer; no midway
'Twixt these extremes at all.
— *Antony and Cleopatra*

A STRING OF ANADIPLOSIS, OR, GRADATIO

This is a progression where the word or phrase at the end of each sequence is repeated at the beginning of the next. These sequences build one phase on top of another.

DROMIO: She is so hot because **the meat is cold.**
The meat is cold because *you come not home.*
You come not home because **you have no stomach.**
You have no stomach, having broken your fast.
— *The Comedy of Errors*

HENRY VI: How many makes the **hour** full complete,
How many **hours** brings about the *day*,
How many *days* will finish up the **year**,
How many **years** a mortal man may live.
— *3 Henry VI*
(with bonus anaphora)

OF THE SAME WORD IN DIFFERENT FORMS, OR, POLYPTOTON

Polyptoton is a pretty smart rhetorical device.

ANNE: Thou **bloodless** remnant of that royal **blood!**
— *Richard III*

DUCHESS OF YORK: A **beggar begs** that never **begged** before.
— *Richard II*

KATHERINE: **Moved?** In good time! Let him that **moved** you hither
Remove you hence. I knew you at the first
You were a **moveable**.
— *The Taming of the Shrew*

OF THE SAME WORD IN DIFFERENT SENSES, OR, ANTANACLASIS

This is a more sophisticated rhetorical device and requires a higher degree of intelligence.

HENRY V: Shall this his **mock, mock** out of their dear husbands
(first noun, second verb)

— *Henry V*

ISABELLA: I am a woeful suitor to **your honor**,
Please but **your honor** hear me.
(the first time is a idea noun, the second is his title)

— *Measure for Measure*

GAUNT: Old **Gaunt** indeed, and **gaunt** in being old.
(the first is his name, the second is an adjective.)

— *Richard II*

OF GRAMMATICAL FORMS, OR, ISOCOLON

MARGARET: *Earth gapes, bell burns, fields roar, saints pray*
(*noun verb, noun verb, noun verb, noun, verb*)

— *Richard III*

(this example also has asyndeton)

MERCUTIO: *He heareth not, he stirreth not, he moveth not.*
(*he verbeth not, he verbeth not, he verbeth not*)

— *Romeo and Juliet*

BRUTUS: There is **tears** for his love; **joy** for his fortune; **honor** for his valor; and
death for his ambition. (**noun** for his noun)

— *Julius Caesar*

IN DIFFERENT WORDS, OR, ACCUMULATIO

Why would a character need to say the same thing in multiple ways?

VOLUMNIA: Should we **be silent** and **not speak**
(*being silent and not speaking mean the same thing*)

— *Coriolanus*

OF A PHRASE OR QUESTION, IN ORDER TO DWELL ON A POINT, OR, EPIMONE

MARC ANTONY Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest—
For Brutus is an honourable man;
So are they all, all honourable men—
Come I to speak in Caesar's funeral.
He was my friend, faithful and just to me:
But Brutus says he was ambitious;
And Brutus is an honourable man.
He hath brought many captives home to Rome
Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill:
Did this in Caesar seem ambitious?
When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept:
Ambition should be made of sterner stuff:
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;
And Brutus is an honourable man.
You all did see that on the Lupercal

RIVERS: **Drown** desperate *sorrow* in dead Edward's GRAVE
And **plant** your *joys* in living Edward's THRONE.
— *Richard III*

GAUNT: Things **sweet** to taste prove in digestion **sour**.
— *Richard II*

PORTIA: So is the will of a living **daughter** curbed by the will of a dead **father**.
— *The Merchant of Venice*

POSTHUMUS: The stone's too **hard** to come by.
IACHIMO: Not a whit,
Your lady being so **easy**.
— *Cymbeline*

GERTRUDE: **Come, come**, you *answer* with an idle tongue.
HAMLET: **Go, go**, you *question* with a wicked tongue.
(also epizeuxis and isocolon)
— *Hamlet*

OF WORDS THAT SOUND ALIKE, BUT DIFFER IN SPELLING OR MEANING, OR, PARONOMASIA, OR, A PUN

WINCHESTER: **Rome** shall remedy this.
GLOUCESTER: **Roam** thither then.
— *Henry VI*

POLONIUS: I did enact Julius Caesar. I was killed i'th' **Capitol**. *Brutus* killed me.
HAMLET: It was a *brute* part of him to kill so **capital** a calf there.
— *Hamlet*

MERCUTIO: Ask for me tomorrow, and you shall find me a **grave** man.
— *Romeo and Juliet*

SUBSTITUTION

OF ONE PART OF SPEECH FOR ANOTHER, OR, ANTHIMERIA

NOUNS USED AS VERBS

LUCIO: It was a mad fantastical trick of him to steal from the state, and usurp the beggary he was never born to. Lord Angelo **dukes** it well in his absence; he puts transgression to 't.
— *Measure for Measure*

CLEOPATRA: He **words** me girls, he **words** me.
— *Antony and Cleopatra*

ADJECTIVES USED AS VERBS

CAPULET: Thank me no thankings, nor **proud** me no prouds.
— *Romeo and Juliet*

VERBS USED AS NOUNS

GLOUCESTER: And dogged York, that reached as the moon,
Whose overweening arm I have plucked back,
By false **accuse** doth level at my life.
— *2 Henry VI*

NOUNS USED AS ADJECTIVES

HOTSPUR: Why, what a **candy** deal of courtesy
This fawning greyhound then did proffer me!
— *1 Henry IV*

OF AN INAPPROPRIATE WORD, CREATES AN IMPLIED METAPHOR, OR, CATACHRESIS

HAMLET: I will speak **daggers** to her, but use none.
— *Hamlet*

ROMEO: If I profane with my unworhiest hand
This **holy shrine**, the gentler sin is this:
My lips, two **blushing pilgrims**, ready stand
To smooth that rough touch with a holy kiss.
— *Romeo and Juliet*

OF AN ELEMENT OR PART FOR THE WHOLE, OR, SYNECDOCHE

MACBETH: Take thy **face** hence.
(face for self)
— *Macbeth*

HAMLET: I'll lugs the **guts** into the neighbor room.
(guts for Polonius's body)
— *Hamlet*

OF AN INCORRECT WORD FOR A CORRECT ONE, OR, MALAPROPISM

DOGBERRY: Dost thou not **suspect** my place? Dost thou not **suspect** my years?
(suspect for respect)
— *Much Ado About Nothing*

ELBOW: My wife, sire, whom I **detest** before heaven and your honor—
 (detest for protest)
 — *Measure for Measure*

OMISSION

OF WORDS

The general term for omission is ellipsis. Omission could happen when the character doesn't have time to bother with the missing words, or also when a character purposely leaves them out to make the audience fill in the blanks. Villains frequently do this—they use omission to force the audience to occupy the same head space—if you are able to fill in the missing words, then you understand the brain of the villain and are linked to him or her.

MARGARET: I called thee then vain flourish of my fortune;
 I called thee then poor shadow, painted queen,
 (*I called thee then*) The presentation of but what I was,
 (*I called thee then*) The flattering index of a direful pageant
 — *Richard III*

ANTONY: Not Caesar's valor
 Hath o'erthrown Antony, but Antony's (*valor*)
 Hath triumphed on itself.
 — *Antony and Cleopatra*

OF A VERB FROM PARALLEL CLAUSES, OR, ZEUGMA

MARGARET: A husband and a son thou **owest** to me;
 And thou a kingdom; all of you allegiance.
 (*And thou owest me a kingdom; all of you owe me allegiance*)
 — *Richard III*

AUMERLE: No, good my lord, let's fight with gentle words,
 Till time **lend** friends, and friends their helpful swords.
 (*and friends lend their helpful swords*)
 — *Richard II*

OF CONJUNCTIONS FROM CLAUSES, OR, ASYNDETON

Often asyndeton happens in conjunction with a list. So what's going on with the character? Did the list get out of control and he or she didn't know when the end was? Is he or she just in a rush can doesn't have time to include a conjunction? I remember this term thanks to a friend in graduate school who thought that asyndeton sounding like a type of dinosaur and drew a picture of a dinosaur eating conjunctions.

MARGARET: Did York's dread curse prevail so much with heaven
 That **Henry's death, my lovely Edward's death,**
Their kingdom's loss, my woeful banishment,
 Could all but answer for that peevish brat?
 (*and my woeful banishment*)
 — *Richard III*

VALENTINE: If I be not by her fair influence
Fostered, illumined, cherished, kept alive.
(and kept alive)
— *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*

ADDITION

BY CORRECTION, OR, EPANORTHOSIS

Epanorthosis is a useful acting tool that can be applied to rhetorical devices asyndeton, polysyndeton, and auxesis. You play each new phrase or word as though correcting the previous word or phrase, as though it is a better option than the one before.

PHEBE: It is a pretty youth, not very pretty.
— *As You Like It*

OF CONJUNCTIONS AND PREPOSITIONS, OR, POLYSYNDETON

RICHARD III: When have I injured thee? when done thee wrong?
Or thee? **or** thee? **or** any of your faction?
— *Richard III*

HAMLET: Since I have cause, **and** will, **and** strength, **and** means to do it.
— *Hamlet*

There are two main ways to play polysyndeton:

1. as God, knowing before hand everything you are going to say
2. coming up with each one on the spot, not knowing when the list will end

OF A POP UP IDEA, OR PARENTHESIS

Explore what you get by playing parenthesis exactly as described: as a pop-up idea that occurs to the character in the middle of speaking their original thought. They didn't plan to say that parenthesis all along—it occurs to them in the moment. Why does this new thought occur, and why does it occur at the exact moment it does?

CLARENCE: O, I have passed a miserable night,
So full of ugly sights, of ghastly dreams,
That, (**as I am a Christian faithful man**),
I would not spend another such a night,
Though 'twere to buy a world of happy days."
— *Richard III*

HAMLET: Why she, even she —
Oh God! A beast that wants discourse of reason
Would have mourned longer — married with mine uncle,

RICHARD III: Is the chair empty? Is the sword unswayed?
Is the King dead? The empire unpossessed?
What heir of York is there alive but we?
And who is England's king but great York's heir?

— *Richard III*

PROVIDING YOUR OWN ANSWER

HENRY V: **Show men dutiful?**
Why, so didst thou. Seem they grave and learned?
Why, so didst thou. Come they of noble family?
Why, so didst thou. Seem they religious?
Why, so didst thou.

— *Henry V*

SHYLOCK: *If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? **Revenge.** If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? **Why, revenge.***

— *The Merchant of Venice*

DEPARTURE OF NORMAL WORD ORDER FOR AN EFFECT, OR, HYPERBATON

Is your character departing from normal word order to be obtuse? Is s/he trying to hide meaning?

DUCHESS OF YORK: Bloody thou art; bloody will be thy end.

— *Richard III*

Normal order: Thou art bloody; thy end will be bloody.

ISABELLA: More than our brother is our chastity.

— *Measure for Measure*

Normal order: Our chastity is more than our brother.

CLAUDIUS: Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death
The memory be green, and that it us befitted
To bear our hearts in grief and our whole kingdom
To be contracted in one brow of woe,
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature
That we with wisest sorrow think on him,
Together with remembrance of ourselves;
Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,
The imperial jointress to this warlike state,
Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy,—
With an auspicious and a dropping eye,
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight and dole,—
Taken to wife: nor have we herein barr'd
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone
With this affair along.

— *Hamlet*

“Our sometime sister have we taken to wife.” Normal order: “We have taken our sister to wife.” You can understand why Claudius is obscuring this information through not only abnormal word order, but by separating the noun from the verb with five lines—stuffing in a bunch of extra information.

AUDIENCE CONTACT

The theatre of Shakespeare's era was lit either via the sun, if it was performed outdoors, or via candles, if it was indoors. Though the companies had ways of creating lighting effects, their use of lighting design was considerably different from modern theatre. Significantly, the audience would have been more or less in the same amount of light as the actors. Unlike today's proscenium stage, where audience members sit in complete darkness and cannot be seen, audience members in the early modern theatre could be seen, and thus interacted with, by the actors. Moments that seem specifically designed for audience interaction are prevalent throughout early modern drama. This technique is part of the fabric of how these plays work, so we encourage you to find moments to talk directly with the audience and to experiment with how you can involve them in the world of the play. (Special thanks to the Education Department at the American Shakespeare Center for some of these ways of categorizing Audience Contact.)

TYPES OF CONTACT MOMENTS

ASIDES

An aside is a line of text that a character delivers only to a single audience member. Though the entire audience hears it, the other characters on stage do not. Again, the defining feature of an aside is that it **excludes other characters on stage**. The information in the line is secret or would change the narrative if other characters knew it. Do beware however: the majority of marked "aside" moments in a script are editorial. That stage direction is usually added in a modern text, not written by the original author. So test the assumption—does that line actually have to be a secret to the audience? What happens if you deliver it to another character?

INCLUSIONS

The majority of audience contact moments fall under the category of inclusions. This simply means that the information delivered to the audience **can be heard by the other characters on stage**.

SOLILOQUIES

A soliloquy is a speech delivered by one character when there are **no other characters on stage**. Often in soliloquies, a character is working through an issue, trying to solve a problem, letting the audience know what they are thinking or planning, or letting the audience in on a secret. During these moments, a character is *not* talking to him or herself; he or she is talking to the audience. Use soliloquies as an opportunity to engage with the audience, to ask them questions (and possibly receive answers), and to bring them into the story generally.

HOW TO MAKE CONTACT WITH AUDIENCE MEMBERS

WAYS TO MAKE AUDIENCE CONTACT

1. The Wash: having your eyes sweep over a large portion of the audience; perhaps not truly audience contact because it is not one-on-one.
2. The Gaze: direct sustained eye contact.
3. The Single Out: direct sustained eye contact plus a gesture.
4. The Touch: actor invites some sort of physical contact, like a hand shake or a high five.
5. The Join Us: actor gets audience member up and into the scene. Use sparingly and remember that many audience members do not want to be asked to perform. Audience participation is different from audience contact and the idea of audience participation makes some audience members very nervous.

WAYS TO USE AUDIENCE CONTACT

CASTING THE AUDIENCE

Making the audience members into characters who have an implied involvement in the scene or in the greater world of the play but who do not actually appear on stage. They may be named or unnamed, but must be specific identities. Audience members can be cast as a group, such as during an oration to an army, or cast individually, such as during a conversation about a particular person. Typically, the rest of the audience has a huge amount of fun reacting to these moments.

- Casting the audience as a group

FALSTAFF	Tut, never fear me: I am as vigilant as a cat to steal cream.
PRINCE HENRY	I think, to steal cream indeed, for thy theft hath already made thee butter. But tell me, Jack, whose fellows are these that come after?
FALSTAFF	Mine, Hal, mine.
PRINCE HENRY	I did never see such pitiful rascals .
FALSTAFF	Tut, tut; good enough to toss; food for powder, food for powder; they'll fill a pit as well as better: tush, man, mortal men, mortal men .
WESTMORELAND	Ay, but, Sir John, methinks they are exceeding poor and bare, too beggarly .
FALSTAFF	'Faith, for their poverty, I know not where they had that; and for their bareness, I am sure they never learned that of me.

— 2 *Henry IV*

- Casting the audience as an individual person

NERISSA	But what warmth is there in your affection towards any of these princely suitors that are already come?
PORTIA	I pray thee, over-name them; and as thou namest them, I will describe them; and, according to my description, level at my affection.
NERISSA	First, there is the Neapolitan prince .
PORTIA	Ay, that's a colt indeed, for he doth nothing but talk of his horse; and he

NERISSA
PORTIA

makes it a great appropriation to his own good parts, that he can shoe him himself. I am much afeard my lady his mother played false with a smith. Then there is **the County Palatine**.

He doth nothing but frown, as who should say 'If you will not have me, choose:' he hears merry tales and smiles not: I fear he will prove the weeping philosopher when he grows old, being so full of unmannerly sadness in his youth. I had rather be married to a death's-head with a bone in his mouth than to either of these. God defend me from **these two!**

NERISSA
PORTIA

How say you by **the French lord, Monsieur Le Bon?**

God made him, and therefore let him pass for a man.

— *The Merchant of Venice*

There is lots of fun to be had whether the audience member matches the description or whether they don't. Take for instance the County Palatine, who Portia says, "doth nothing but frown." Audience enjoyment occurs if Nerissa finds someone who doesn't look particularly engaged, or if she finds someone who can't stop laughing.

ALLYING WITH THE AUDIENCE

Making audience members colleagues or co-conspirators, looking to the audience for support or affirmation.

- Sharing schemes or ideas with the audience

IAGO:

I hate the Moor:
And it is thought abroad, that 'twixt my sheets
He has done my office: I know not if't be true;
But I, for mere suspicion in that kind,
Will do as if for surety. He holds me well;
The better shall my purpose work on him.
Cassio's a proper man: let me see now:
To get his place and to plume up my will
In double knavery—How, how? Let's see:—
After some time, to abuse Othello's ear
That he is too familiar with his wife.
He hath a person and a smooth dispose
To be suspected, framed to make women false.

— *Othello*

- Making a joke with the audience (often at another character's expense)

VALENTINE:

Last night she enjoined me to write some lines to one she loves.

SPEED:

And have you?

VALENTINE:

I have.

SPEED:

Are they not lamely writ?

VALENTINE:

No, boy, but as well as I can do them. Peace! here she comes.

SPEED:

O excellent motion! O exceeding puppet!

Now will he interpret to her.

— *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*

SEEKING INFORMATION FROM THE AUDIENCE

Questions that can be taken to the audience instead of, in addition to, or in the absence of other characters on stage. Really attempt to get the audience member to answer you. Where does it lead the speech?

FALSTAFF ‘Tis not due yet; I would be loath to pay him before his day. What need I be so forward with him that calls not on me? Well, ‘tis no matter; honour pricks me on. Yea, but how if honour prick me off when I come on? how then? **Can honour set to a leg? no: or an arm? no: or take away the grief of a wound? no. Honour hath no skill in surgery, then? no.** What is honour? a word. What is in that word honour? what is that honour? air. A trim reckoning! Who hath it? he that died o’ Wednesday. **Doth he feel it? no. Doth he hear it? no. ‘Tis insensible, then? Yea,** to the dead. But will it not live with the living? no. Why? detraction will not suffer it. Therefore I’ll none of it. Honour is a mere scutcheon: and so ends my catechism.

— *1 Henry IV*

If Falstaff asks all these questions to different audience members, feeding them the “no” answer over and over, he can build an expectation. When he asks, “‘Tis insensible, then?” the audience may automatically answer “no,” which allows the actors to correct them with the actual text: “Yea.”

POLONIUS: Marry, sir, here’s my drift;
And I believe, it is a fetch of wit:
You laying these slight sullies on my son,
As ‘twere a thing a little soil’d i’ the working, Mark you,
Your party in converse, him you would sound,
Having ever seen in the prenominate crimes
The youth you breathe of guilty, be assured
He closes with you in this consequence;
‘Good sir,’ or so, or ‘friend,’ or ‘gentleman,’
According to the phrase or the addition
Of man and country.
REYNALDO: Very good, my lord.
POLONIUS: And then, sir, does he this—he does—**what was I about to say?** By the mass, I was about to say something: **where did I leave?**
REYNALDO At ‘closes in the consequence,’ at ‘friend or so,’ and ‘gentleman.’
— *Hamlet*

The actors paying Polonius could ask an audience member these questions. If they don’t have any clue how to respond, Reynaldo has the appropriate text to help out. But a savvy audience member might just know where Polonius left off.

MAKING THE AUDIENCE MEMBER THE OBJECT OF THE LINE

This is not casting the audience member as an unstaged character, but applying descriptive text to a particular audience member. They are not a member of the world of the play, but more of a helpful illustration. Often this involves making him or her the butt of a joke. There are many instances in the plays of a character talking about a bald man or a man with or without a beard.

BENEDICK: **One woman is fair**, yet I am well; **another is wise**, yet I am well; **another virtuous**, yet I am well; but till all graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace.
— *Much Ado About Nothing*

USING THE AUDIENCE MEMBER AS A PROP

This is sort of a catch-all category that covers any way of making an audience member or their belongings part of a bit. Examples could include:

- giving the audience member something to hold
- taking the audience member's program and looking at it
- taking the audience member's chair
- digging through their purse
- sitting on him or her
- hiding with the audience

OTHER TIPS

DO'S OF AUDIENCE CONTACT

1. Have a reason.
2. Choose a single person.
3. Make eye contact.
4. Use an entire phrase, not just a couple of words.
5. Have a reason to go to next person.
6. Have a reason to return to the stage world.
7. Be careful who you deliver insulting text to: will they take it good-naturedly, or could you upset or hurt them?
8. Don't forget your scene partners and your objectives toward them.

SIGNS OF A GOOD MARK FOR AUDIENCE CONTACT

1. Paying attention
2. Smiling
3. Nodding
4. Returning audience member

EXAMPLES OF SPEECH ANALYSIS

PROSE: LORD CHIEF JUSTICE FROM HENRY IV, PART TWO

LORD CHIEF JUSTICE

Do you set down your name in the scroll of youth that are
written down old with all the characters of age? Have you not a
moist eye? a dry hand? a yellow cheek? a white beard? a
decreasing leg? an increasing belly? Is not your voice broken?
your wind short? your chin double? your wit single? and every
part about you blasted with antiquity? and will you yet call
yourself young? Fie, fie, fie, Sir John! epizeuxis

antithesis

series of questions
→ erotema

list → anaphora

isocolon
w/antithesis

isocolon

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

thoughts
operative words

overarching antithesis
Young vs. Old

2 *Henry IV* 1.2.177-185: LORD CHIEF JUSTICE

A1 Do you set down your name in the scroll of **youth**,
 A2 that are written down old with all the characters of **age**?
 B1a Have you not a *moist* eye?
 B1b a *dry* hand?
 B2a a **yellow** cheek?
 B2b a **white** beard?
 B3a a *decreasing* leg?
 B3b an *increasing* belly?
 C1a is not your voice **broken**?
 C1b your wind **short**?
 C2a your chin *double*?
 C2b your wit *single*?
 D and every part about you blasted with antiquity?
 E and will you yet call yourself young?
 F Fie, fie, fie, Sir John!

A1-2: [R] antithesis // [V] scroll, written, character

B1-B3: [R] isocolon “a adjective noun” // [R] ellipses “have you not”...

B1: [R] antithesis B3: [R] antithesis

C1-2: [R] isocolon “your noun adjective” (the isocolon reverses in B what it was doing in A)

C2: [R] antithesis F: [F] epizeuxis

In a prose speech such as this, you can imagine it as a mathematical equation in how you deliver it.

A1A2: $\{(B1a+B1b+B2a+B2b+B3a+B3b) + (C1a+C1b+C2a+C2b)\} + D\} + E = F$

B, C, D are the list of characteristics of age, mentioned in A2; E is in a way a restating of A1; F is the summation.

Here’s another way of visualizing this relationship:

A1 Do you set down your name in the scroll of **youth**,
 A2 that are written down old with all the characters of **age**?
 B1a Have you not a *moist* eye?
 B1b a *dry* hand?
 B2a a **yellow** cheek?
 B2b a **white** beard?
 B3a a *decreasing* leg?
 B3b an *increasing* belly?
 C1a is not your voice **broken**?
 C1b your wind **short**?
 C2a your chin *double*?
 C2b your wit *single*?
 D and every part about you blasted with antiquity?
 E and will you yet call yourself young?
 F Fie, fie, fie, Sir John!

VERSE: VOLUMNIA FROM CORIOLANUS

4 sentences

Operative words Caesuras

Thoughts

VOLUMNIA • Should we be silent and not speak our raiment

Graphoach
note stress on 'and'

• And state of bodies would bewray what life

could be trochaic

• We have led since thy exile | Think with thyself

We've

• How more unfortunate than all living women

Graphoach

• Are we come hither: | since that thy sight, which should

anapest

• Make our eyes flow with joy, hearts dance with comforts,

Graphoach
trochaic beginning
sprung rhythm

• Constrains them weep and shake with fear and sorrow;

Graphoach

• Making the mother, wife and child to see

trochaic beginning

• The son, the husband and the father tearing

Graphoach

• His country's bowels out | And to poor we

• Thine enmity's most capital: | thou barr'st us

Graphoach

• Our prayers to the gods, | which is a comfort

Graphoach

That all but we enjoy; | for how can we,

Alas, how can we for our country pray,

• Whereto we are bound, together with thy victory,

we're
Graphoach

• Whereto we are bound? | alack, or we must lose

we're

• The country, our dear nurse, or else thy person,

Graphoach

Our comfort in the country. | ...

• = enjambed lines

thy/thou - intimate, parent to child

VOLUMNIA Should we **be silent** and **not speak**, our raiment accumulation

And state of bodies would **bewray** what life bewray - archaic language

We have led since thy exile. Think with **thyself**

How more unfortunate than all living women hyperbaton
 "how more unfortunate are we come hither than all living women"

Are we come hither: since that **thy** sight, which should

highly intelligent construction

Make our **eyes flow** with **joy**, **hearts dance** with **comforts**,

(and make an) ellipses

isocolon

Constrains them weep and **shake with fear** and **sorrow;**

antithesis

flow - weep
 joy - sorrow
 dance - shake
 comforts - fear

Making the **mother**, **wife** and **child** to see

anaphora - two

The **son**, the **husband** and the **father** tearing

antithetical lists

His country's bowels out. **And to poor we**

hyperbaton

Thine enmity's most capital: **thou** barr'st us

"And thine enmity to poor we is most capital"

Our **prayers** to the gods, (which is a comfort)

parenthesis

polyptoton prayers/pray

That all but we enjoy; **for how can we,** repetition

Alas, **how can we** for our **country** pray,

hyperbaton

"how can we pray for our country"

Whereto we are bound, together with **thy** **victory**,

Whereto we are bound? alack, or we must lose

antithesis

country - victory

The **country**, our dear nurse, or else **thy** person,

hyperbaton

antithesis

country - person
 nurse - comfort

Our comfort in the **country.**

Coriolanus 5.3.95-112: VOLUMNIA

1 Should we *be silent and not speak* [R][M], || our raiment [E] ENJ
 2 And state of bodies || would bewray [V] what life ENJ
 3 We have [M1] led since thy [P] exile. [M2] || Think with [M3] thyself ENJ
 4 How more *unfortunate* [M] || *than all living women* ENJ
 5 Are we *come hither* [R][E][M], || since that thy sight, which should ENJ
 6 Make [M1] our eyes [M2] flow with joy, [R1][R2] || hearts [M3] dance with comforts [R3],
 7 Constrains them weep and shake || with fear and sorrow [R],
 8 Making [M] the mother, wife, and child [R] to see ENJ
 9 The son, || the husband, and the father [R1][R2]tearing ENJ
 10 His country's bowels out; || and to poor we ENJ
 11 Thine enmity's most capital. [R] || Thou barr'st us ENJ
 12 Our prayers to the gods, || which is a comfort ENJ
 13 That all but we enjoy. [R] || For how can we,
 14 Alas, how can we [M] [R1] for our country pray [R2],
 15 Whereto we are [M] bound, || together with thy victory [R],
 16 Whereto we are [M] bound? [R1] [R2] || Alack, or we must lose ENJ
 17 The country, our dear nurse, || or else [R] thy person,
 18 Our comfort in the country. [R1][R2]

R = rhetorical device, M = meter, V = vocabulary, P = person, E = embedded stage direction

Line 1. R: accumulatio // M: possible pyrrhic spondee, performance mileage can be gained either from *AND not SPEAK* or *and NOT SPEAK* // E: indicate clothing

Line 2. V: archaic language

Line 3. M1: elide // P-familiar // M2: regular scansion, but note: exILE // M3: trochee (after the caesura)

Line 4. M: unfortunate is three syllables, not four

Line 5. R: hyperbaton “how more unfortunate are we come hither than all living women” // E: indicate group of women // M: amphibrach (Epic Caesura)

Line 6. M1: trochee // M2: medial stress // R1: asyndeton // R2: ellipses “(and) make our” // M3: medial stress // R3: isocolon

Line 7. R: complex antithesis (flow/weep, dance/shake, joy/sorrow, comforts/fear)

Line 8. M: trochee // R: auxesis

Line 9. R1: auxesis // R2: antithesis (mother/son, wife/husband, child/father)

Line 11. R: hyperbaton “thine enmity to poor we is most capital”

Line 13. R: parenthesis

Line 14. M: regular scansion, but note how phrase changes on repetition: HOW can WE / aLAS, how CAN we // R1: diacope // R2: hyperbaton “pray for our country”

Line 15. M: elide // R: antithesis (country/victory)

Line 16. M: elide // R1: anaphora // R2: erotema

Line 17. R1: zeugma “lose”

Line 18. R1: antithesis (country, our dear nurse/thy person, our comfort in the country) // R2: repetition (country...country)

What does all this analysis tell us about Volumnia? The enjambment suggests these thoughts are pouring out of her, and the amphibrach endings could mean that she is unsteady, unsure. But the passage contains several rhetorical devices, demonstrating the intelligence of Volumnia. Volumnia is a highly accomplished speaker. She is speaking as a mother to a son, as shown by the use of “thy.” The actor can use the meter and rhetorical devices to guide when Volumnia is in control, when she is not in control, and when she may be playing at being out of control in order to persuade Coriolanus not to destroy Rome. The accumulatio in line one and the use of “bewray” in line two suggests a formality to the beginning of this speech. The accumulatio is why I prefer to keep the line metrically regular: should WE be SIL-ent AND not SPEAK, as opposed to using a pyrrhic spondee: should WE be SIL-ent and NOT SPEAK. Stressing the “and” makes the rhetorical device clearer. Lines six and seven contain a highly complex antithesis where the order of elements is flipped. To accomplish this, Volumnia must be very smart, and on top of the argument she is making.

Of course, this is not the “right” way to analyze or play this speech. It is merely one interpretation.

FURTHER READING

ON VERSE AND SCANSION

The Actor and the Text by Cicely Berry

Freeing Shakespeare's Voice by Kristin Linklater

Speaking Shakespeare by Patsy Rodenburg

Playing Shakespeare by John Barton

Shakespeare's Advice to the Players by Peter Hall

Shakespeare's Metrical Art by George T. Wright

ON RHETORIC

Shakespeare's Wordcraft by Scott Kaiser

ON LANGUAGE

Shakespeare's Words: A Glossary and Language Companion by David and Ben Crystal

"Think on My Words": Exploring Shakespeare's Language by David Crystal

Shakespeare's Lexicon by Alexander Schmidt

All the Words on Stage: A Complete Pronunciation Dictionary for the Plays of William Shakespeare by Louis Scheeder and Shane Ann Younts

ON PERFORMANCE

Mastering Shakespeare by Scott Kaiser