The Tempest language and poetry workshop with Michael Rosen

ENGLISH

These resources can be used in conjunction with my 'Will's Wonderful Words' workshop which will be available on the Shakespeare Week website from Thursday 24 March 2022.

You can read the extracts from the play that I quote in the workshop in this resource pack. There are also lots of ideas for ways that you can write creatively too.

It's also a good idea to read a short version of the play, such as versions by Marcia Williams. Alternatively there are some short versions written by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust which are available in the resources section of the Shakespeare Week website.

I hope you have fun!



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Extract One

ENGLISH

I boarded the ship…

(The Tempest Act 1, Scene 2)

In this first extract one of the magician Prospero's slaves - called Ariel - tells Prospero how he created fire on board a ship to scare the people on the ship.

I boarded the king's ship; now on the beak,
Now in the waist, the deck, in every cabin,
I flamed amazement: sometime I'ld divide,
And burn in many places; on the topmast,
The yards and bowsprit, would I flame distinctly,
Then meet and join. Jove's lightnings, the precursors
O' the dreadful thunder-claps, more momentary
And sight-outrunning were not; the fire and cracks
Of sulphurous roaring the most mighty Neptune
Seem to besiege and make his bold waves tremble,
Yea, his dread trident shake.
Not a soul but felt a fever of the mad and play'd
Some tricks of desperation. All but mariners
Plunged in the foaming brine and quit the vessel,
Then all afire with me: the king's son, Ferdinand,
With hair up-staring,—then like reeds, not hair,—
Was the first man that leap'd; cried, 'Hell is empty
And all the devils are here.'



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Extract One

ENGLISH

Ways to explore the text

Do you think you could write something like this speech?

Imagine you're someone with magical powers.

You've just come back from a place where you used those magical powers and you're telling someone about all the stuff that you just did.

You're very proud of yourself.

- What magical power are you going to have?
- Are you going to use it to do good or to do harm?
- Are you going to build and make wonderful things like…a magic cake, or a palace..?
- Or are you going to destroy things with fire, or earthquakes or volcanoes or something else?

If you work in pairs, you could first try good and then harm.

See what comes out the best.

When you look at the way Shakespeare wrote it, he not only tells us about what Ariel did - fire and lightning but also the effect it had on people…things like plunging into the brine - that means the sea…or hair up staring..

See if you can do that in your writing.



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Extract Two

ENGLISH

Full fathom five

(Act 1 Scene 2)

In this next piece, Ariel is being wicked. He is telling a story that is not true. You remember Ferdinand is the king's son. Here he is telling Ferdinand that his father is dead. He's on the bottom of the sea and has turned into coral, his eyes have turned to pearls. Everything about him has been changed by the sea.

Full fathom five thy father lies;
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes:
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:
Ding-dong.
Hark! now I hear them,—ding-dong, bell.



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Extract Two

ENGLISH

Ways to explore the text

This time you could see if you could write something where you are invisible and you come up to someone and whisper or sing something that is not true. It's a trick, a very mischievous trick…

What's it going to be?

It could be that something amazing and wonderful is going to happen to them. Or something awful.

You could try both and see what comes out the best.

Did you see how Shakespeare made some of the words sound sing-song?

Full fathom five…they all begin with 'f'…

In fact in each line there is a sound that is repeated;

- line 2 the 's' on the end of 'his' and 'bones'
- line 3 the 's' in 'pearls' and the 's' in 'eyes'
- line 4 the 'th' of 'nothing' and 'doth'
- line 5 the 's' of 'suffer' and in 'sea-change'
- line 6 the 's' of 'something' and 'strange'
- line 7 the 's' of 'sea' and the 's' in 'nymphs'
- line 8 the 'd' and 'ng' sounds on the ends of 'ding' and 'dong'

You could have fun where one of you reads the words of 'Full fathom five…'and someone else, perhaps the whole class, makes the sound that carries all through the line, like a backing group: a 'ssssss' or a 'th'.

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Extract Three

ENGLISH

This island's mine

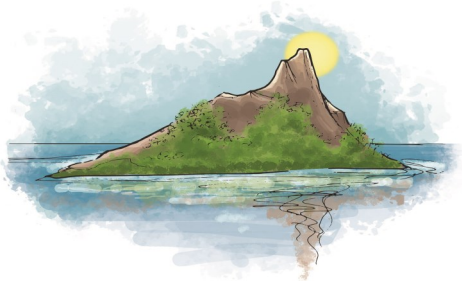
(Act 1 Scene 2)

The other person that Prospero has made into a slave is Caliban. He hates Prospero and Prospero hates him.

Here, Caliban is telling Prospero that Prospero has stolen the island from him and it's not fair because he, Caliban showed Prospero how to survive.

He also curses Prospero because Prospero has put him in a kind of prison and not let him be free.

This island's mine, by Sycorax my mother,
Which thou takest from me. When thou camest first,
Thou strokedst me and madest much of me, wouldst give me
Water with berries in't, and teach me how
To name the bigger light, and how the less,
That burn by day and night: and then I loved thee
And show'd thee all the qualities o' the isle,
The fresh springs, brine-pits, barren place and fertile:
Cursed be I that did so! All the charms
Of Sycorax, toads, beetles, bats, light on you!
For I am all the subjects that you have,
Which first was mine own king: and here you sty me
In this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me
The rest o' the island.



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Extract Three

ENGLISH

Ways to explore the text

Have you ever thought things are unfair? Did you ever think that someone had taken something from you?

See if you can use that feeling to recite this poem full of feeling. See if you can mix being angry at the beginning with sounding soft and kind when you remember the nice things you did for Prospero and then get angry again when you curse him and then at the end you can be sad when you think how he 'styes' you and keeps you away from the rest of the island.



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Extract Four

ENGLISH

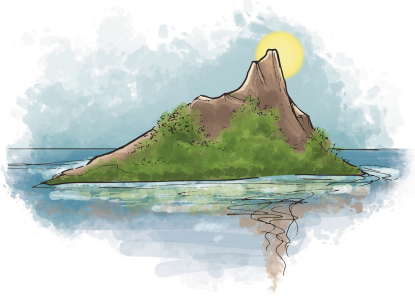
All the infections…

(Act 2 Scene 2)

More curses now!

But also descriptions of all the pains and nasty tricks that Prospero inflicts on Caliban.

All the infections that the sun sucks up
From bogs, fens, flats, on Prospero fall and make him
By inch-meal a disease! His spirits hear me
And yet I needs must curse. But they'll nor pinch,
Fright me with urchin—shows, pitch me i' the mire,
Nor lead me, like a firebrand, in the dark
Out of my way, unless he bid 'em; but
For every trifle are they set upon me;
Sometime like apes that mow and chatter at me
And after bite me, then like hedgehogs which
Lie tumbling in my barefoot way and mount
Their pricks at my footfall; sometime am I
All wound with adders who with cloven tongues
Do hiss me into madness.



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Extract Four

Ways to explore the text

ENGLISH

Can you imagine that someone has betwitched you and is driving you crazy with spells that make you hurt?

You feel like you've been bitten, or stung, or beaten or who knows what else!

Now tell someone how angry you are that this person has cast these spells on you that make you hurt!



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Extract Five

ENGLISH

The isle is full of noises

(Act 3 Scene 2)

This time Caliban conjures up a beautiful but sad scene: the magical island full of sounds. He is telling two people from the boat not to be afraid of the sounds…but then he shows how sad it is for him. He dreams that he is going to be rich but when he wakes up he finds that it's nothing.

Be not afeard; the isle is full of noises,
Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight, and hurt not.
Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
Will hum about mine ears; and sometime voices,
That, if I then had waked after long sleep,
Will make me sleep again: and then, in dreaming,
The clouds methought would open, and show riches
Ready to drop upon me; that, when I waked,
I cried to dream again.



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Extract Five

Ways to explore the text

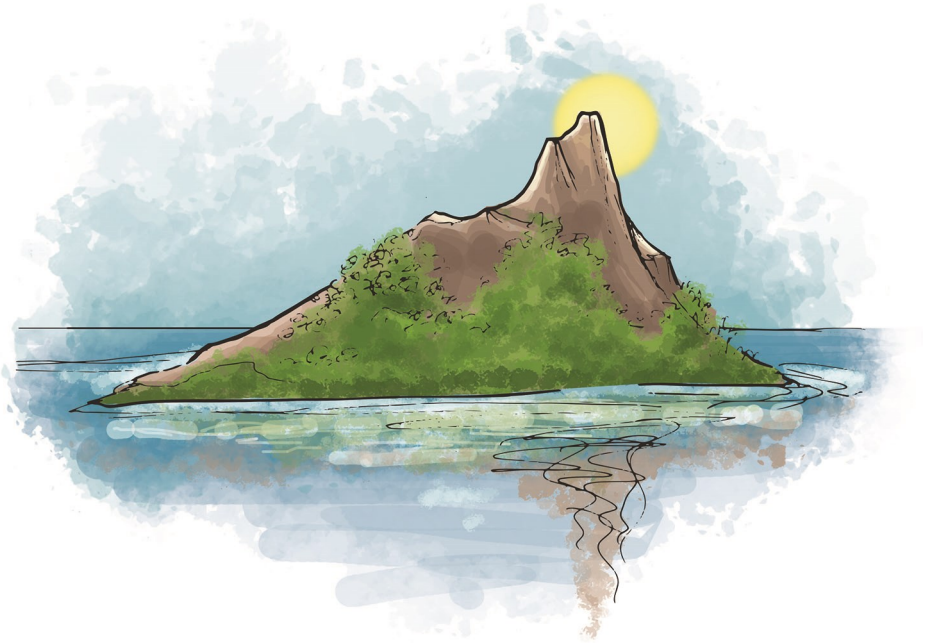
ENGLISH

What do you dream about?

- Can you tell the story of a dream you've had?
- And then tell us what it felt like to wake up straight after.

Was that disappointing? Or sad? Or funny? Or scary perhaps?

- Add that to your dream just as Caliban has…



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Extract Six

ENGLISH

Where the bee sucks

(Act 5 Scene 1)

Now to finish - here's a happy poem.

Ariel has pleaded with Prospero to be set free from being a slave. Finally, Prospero says yes and Ariel is so happy, he thinks that he's going to be as happy as a bee!

Where the bee sucks, there suck I:
In a cowslip's bell I lie;
There I couch when owls do cry.
On the bat's back I do fly
After summer merrily.
Merrily, merrily shall I live now
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.



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Extract Six

ENGLISH

Ways to explore the text

- Think about a time you've been really, really happy.
- Now imagine that you were as happy as a ….what?
  A cat? A dog? A bird? What kind of bird?
- When you've chosen, now imagine how you can do all the things that your happy cat or happy dog might do, and you're going to do the same!

That's what Ariel has done. He says he's going to be as happy as a bee and do what bees do.







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