

"Shakespeare and Star Wars": Lesson Plan Day 3
by Adam Watson (NBCT)

Academic Goals:

Analyze the impact of an author's different language choices.

Comprehend Shakespearean language.

Translate text into a different form of writing, for a different purpose.

Core Content Standards (for Reading Literature, 9th Grade):

9-10.RL.1, -4, -9

Handout:

[WSSW Act One Language](#)

Instructional Plan:

1. With the whole class, discuss Doescher's choice of language for R2-D2 (I:ii, lines 46-98). Artoo goes from beeping noises (just as he talks in the film) to a quite articulate English. Why the difference? What is ironic? What is implied here? One possible answer could be the humorous effect Doescher creates by taking one of the seemingly least articulate character in *Star Wars* and reveals, thanks to dramatic devices such as asides and soliloquies, that Artoo is actually one of the most intelligent characters in the cast. (Or at least thinks he is!)
2. Get students together in partners and hand out [WSSW Act One Language](#) (one per pair). Have students take any ten lines from Act One to copy, then translate into "modern" and "SMS/Tweet" English. For the SMS/Tweet, make sure students take advantage of all the possibilities, such as acronyms, emoticons, etc. The last question will have students analyze what is lost and gained from the translation of one form of the text to another.
3. Have students share. One of the partners can be the spokesperson. Start by having students read their ten Shakespearean lines, but then have some read their "modern" version and others their "SMS/Tweet" version -- mix it up. However, make sure each finishes with their last analysis from question #4.
4. As closure, really try to hammer home the idea that each form of language has its own purpose, strengths and weaknesses. Try to get students to see past a language hierarchy. For all of its beauty, power, and strength, the Shakespearean language is simply one form of text fit for certain purposes, just as SMS has another form and purpose -- one is not necessarily "better" than the other.

Suggested Extensions and/or Alterations :

Students could tweet what they came up with for #3 on the handout. Use the same hashtag you used for Lesson 2.

Characterization can be revealed through an author's use of language. Since C-3PO and R2-D2 are so prominent in the first two Acts, let us consider them first. Compare and contrast the ways C-3PO and R2-D2 talk, and connect to their personalities and motivations. It is ironic that C-3PO is fluent in "six million forms of communication" but uses that ability to mainly fret, complain, and be indecisive. (The supremely intelligent Hamlet has similar issues.) On the other hand, R2-D2 seems to be more direct -- simple beeps and boops correspond to this -- and yet achieves his goals through cunning subterfuge, such as withholding the entire truth of his mission from other characters (as revealed by the "real" way he talks in Doescher's play).

Take an exchange of dialogue between two or more characters in WSSW and transform the language into SMS. Have the students stand in front of class as the characters, and "perform" their SMS lines.

Take a scene involving two or more characters from a popular movie or TV show, and have students transform the "normal" dialogue into Shakespearean language (in iambic pentameter!) for 10 or 15 lines.

Post-Lesson Reflection:

Although I finished this activity in one period (50 minutes), it was a bit rushed. With some extensions, this might possibly be made into a two day lesson.

For the full unit overview, [click here](#).