

Handout:

To Perform or Not to Perform? That is the Question

1. Create a display in a corner of your classroom with books and other interesting pieces that children can use as a reference corner.

2. Use the following books to find stories based on Shakespeare's plays and information about the Elizabethan Era:
 - The Children's Shakespeare, by E. Nesbit
 - Tales from Shakespeare, by Charles and Mary Lamb
 - The Best-Loved Plays of Shakespeare, by Jennifer Mulherin and Abigail Frost
 - Shakespeare - His Work and His World, by Michael Rosen and Robert Ingpen
 - Good Queen Bess - The Story of Elizabeth of England, by Diane Stanley and Peter Vennema

3. Read a story each day and have the children select their favorite characters and prepare a half-page write-up for homework. They should write what they like most about the character and in what way they could relate to the character. Discuss these papers in class as a follow-up to their homework. (Time duration: 2 weeks at least.)

4. Make a selection from one of the plays. The write-ups will assist you in narrowing down a play selection by finding out where the students' interests lie. You can also take a vote.

5. Assign acting parts after holding small, informal class auditions. Give one or two days of notice for auditions - just to be fair.

6. Have students begin memorizing lines. You should be very strict about deadlines for memorizing lines. This is one of the most challenging aspects of doing a play.

7. Rehearse in small groups and pairs. Have the children study lines as partners. It is encouraging to start small. Then, move into larger groups and, finally, rehearse with the whole cast.

8. Find costume pieces and hats. Students can use clothing items and hats from the school-play costume stash, or ask families and friends for donations. In order to keep things organized, place the students' costumes in individual bags marked with their names.

9. Dress rehearsals in full costume. Give the kids at least one full dress rehearsal, but preferably more, 1-2 weeks before show time.

10. Performance Day! Have fun!!!