



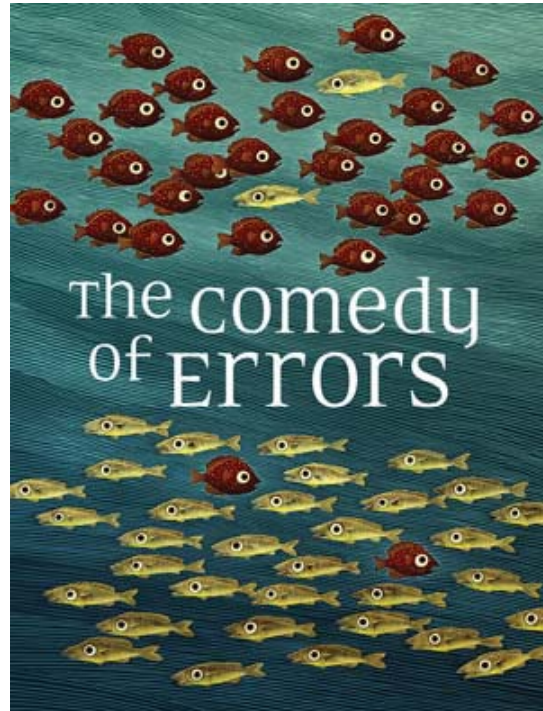
Margot Harley
Co-Founder and Producing Director

The Comedy of Errors

By William Shakespeare
Directed by Ian Belknap

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The Acting Company!
See page 27 for info!**

Teacher Resource Guide
by Paul Michael Fontana



**It is strongly suggested that students read at least some of
The Comedy of Errors
before seeing the performance.
This guide contains selections for classroom use.**



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National Learning Standards:

Theater; Oral and Visual Communications; Reading; Comprehension; Research / Inquiry Process; English Language Acquisition - Listening and Reading.



Section 1: Introduction

“Learn to jest in good time: there's a time for all things.”

Antipholus of Syracuse, *The Comedy of Errors*, Act 2, scene 2

Thanks for taking some of your classroom time to work on *The Comedy of Errors*! This play asks the same questions about identity, Fate, family, and the transformative power of love that we ask today – even though it is one of Shakespeare’s earliest plays, written over 400 years ago. Although your students will enjoy the play without preparation, the experience can be deepened by some pre- and post-performance classroom work.

The exercises in this guide are intended to help you and your students get the most out of the performance. Please do not feel that you need to do everything in this guide! They provide a wide variety of drama-based teaching techniques that you can use as they are presented or you can adapt for your class or for other pieces of literature. You can experiment with them and add the ones that work for you to your “bag of tricks.”

The education programs of The Acting Company are intended to mirror the mission of the company itself: to celebrate language, to deepen creative exploration, to go places where theater isn’t always available. We try to use the same skills in our outreach programs that actors use in the preparation of a role. Many of the exercises here are adaptations of rehearsal “games” and techniques.

In addition to the **Teacher Resource Guides** for our performances, the Education Department provides week-long artist-in-residence experiences called **Literacy Through Theater**; Actor-driven **Workshops Classes**; **Primary Shakespeare**, which brings the Bard to younger audiences; post-performance **Question and Answer Sessions**; **Shakespeare for Teachers workshops**, and a variety of specially-designed outreach programs for high school students, college students, and adults.

To connect our audiences across the country to one another and to us we have a **Facebook** page and a **Twitter** feed. If you need more information on any of these programs, please call the Education Department at 212-258-3111 or e-mail Justin Gallo, our Director of Education at JGallo@TheActingCompany.org.

We wish to be of service to you and your students. Please contact us if there is anything we can do for you.

Enjoy the Show!

Paul Michael Fontana
Education Consultant
The Acting Company



Section 2: Getting Started

- **Overall Learning Objective:** The students will have an introduction to the world of William Shakespeare's play, *The Comedy of Errors*

Brainstorm from the Title: Shakespeare's Play

This exercise is designed to be used BEFORE seeing the play!

Learning Objective:

- The students will explore the title of Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors*.

Exercise: Have the students brainstorm a list of the types of characters, situations, emotions, themes, locations, and images they think might be included in a play called *The Comedy of Errors*. Write the list on newsprint. Post it before seeing *The Comedy of Errors*.

What is "comedy"? What is an "error"? Why did Shakespeare choose this title? Did he feel the title would help sell tickets to the play? A 1734 adaptation was called *See if you Like It; or, It's All a Mistake*. Other titles by which the play's been called are *The Twins* and *Every Body Mistaken*. Are these better titles? The 1938 Rodgers and Hart musical was called *The Boys from Syracuse*. Is that a good title?

Discussion: Judging a Book by its Cover

This exercise is designed to be used BEFORE seeing the play!

Learning Objective:

- The students will discuss their expectations of *The Comedy of Errors* from looking at the words and images on the cover of a published edition of the play.
- The students will discuss their expectations of *The Comedy of Errors* from looking at the words and images on the poster for The Acting Company's production of the play.
- The students will discuss the choices made by publishers and executives to put the images and words on the cover.

Exercise: Bring in a few different copies of the script of *The Comedy of Errors*. Ask the students to look at the cover of their copy and the other copies in the room.

Ask them to share with the class images on the covers. What function do those images have? Note too the colors on the cover. What do the colors mean and why were they chosen? Do these images help sell this edition?

What words did the publishers choose to put on the cover? In what font is the title of the play? What other words or phrases are on the cover? Do these words and phrases help sell this edition? Are you more likely to buy a book or magazine based on images or words? Are there images and words on the back cover?

Examine the poster for The Acting Company's production of the play in the same way. The poster can be found on the press page of our website (TheActingCompany.org/press). Print it up or look at it on your classroom SmartBoard or computer.

Post Performance follow up: Ask the students to create a poster or book cover for *The Comedy of Errors*. They can cut images out of magazines and newspapers or draw them. What words will they include and why?

The Plot

This exercise is designed to be used BEFORE seeing the play!

Learning Objective:

- The students will discuss their reactions to the plot of *The Comedy of Errors*
- The students will compare the plot to their expectations for the story

Facts: Shakespeare's plays, including *The Comedy of Errors*, are written in five acts. It is not known whether, during performances at Elizabethan theaters, there were intermissions during these acts, brief musical interludes or if the play went on for two hours with no pauses.

Synopsis: The play opens with Ægeon, a merchant of Syracuse, being arrested in Ephesus because of enmity between Ephesus and Syracuse. Ægeon tells Solinus, the Duke of Ephesus, his tale: he was shipwrecked many years ago while sailing with his wife, Æmilia, and two pairs of identical twins—their twin sons, both named Antipholus, and twin servants, both named Dromio. In the course of the storm, his wife, one of their sons, and one their servants, were lost. At eighteen, Ægeon had allowed the remaining Antipholus and Dromio to leave Syracuse for Ephesus to search for their long-lost twins, at which point both of them had disappeared as well. After five years, Ægeon had come to Ephesus to find them.

Solinus, moved by the old man's tale, postpones Ægeon's sentence; Ægeon has until nightfall to produce a ransom, or he will be put to death. At this point in the action, Antipholus of Syracuse arrives in Ephesus, and the farce commences as everyone—including the twins themselves—confuses the identities of the sets of identical twins. Antipholus of Syracuse ends up invited to dinner at the home of Antipholus of Ephesus and dines with his twin's wife, Adriana. Meanwhile, Angelo, a merchant, gives a gold chain commissioned by Antipholus of Ephesus to Antipholus of Syracuse by mistake, telling him he'll come back later for payment. When Antipholus of Ephesus refuses to pay later on, Angelo has him arrested. All this time, Adriana and her sister, Luciana, are convinced that Antipholus and Dromio (of Ephesus) have gone mad, which leads them to forcibly restrain them and take them to a doctor.

Of course, when Adriana later encounters Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse, she thinks they've escaped from the doctor. The pair from Syracuse are forced to flee into a nearby abbey for refuge. In the meantime, Antipholus and Dromio of Ephesus do escape from the doctor, and arrive to petition the Duke as Ægeon is being led to his death. In the midst of everyone trying to tell their varying accounts of the day, Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse arrive with the abbess—who turns out to be Æmilia, Ægeon's long-lost wife. The twins all sort out their stories in the presence of the Duke. In the end, Ægeon is released from his death sentence and reunited with his wife and sons, Antipholus of Syracuse is set to marry Luciana, and all has been put to right.

Synopsis from the **Shakespeare Resource Center** (www.bardweb.net)

Exercise: Relate the plot synopsis above to your students. Discuss the title of *The Comedy of*

Errors in relation to its story. Discuss the brainstormed list from the previous exercise. Were any of the items on the list included in the synopsis? After seeing *The Comedy of Errors*, check how many items from the list were in the play.

Text-based Improv: Insult-Building

Learning Objective:

- The students will explore Shakespearean language by constructing insults.
- The students will use an insult in *Comedy* to create a physical representation.

Exercise: Throughout *The Comedy of Errors*, insults are thrown around, especially heaped on the heads of the Dromios. Give each student a copy of the Insult-building worksheet below. To construct a Shakespearean insult, ask them to combine one word from each of the three columns below, and preface it with "Thou."

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
<u>Adjectives</u>	<u>Adjectives</u>	<u>Nouns</u>
artless	base-court	apple-john
bawdy	bat-fowling	baggage
beslubbering	beef-witted	barnacle
bootless	beetle-headed	bladder
churlish	boil-brained	boar-pig
cockered	clapper-clawed	bugbear
clouted	clay-brained	bum-bailey
craven	common-kissing	canker-blossom
currish	crook-pated	clack-dish
dankish	dismal-dreaming	clotpole
dissembling	dizzy-eyed	coxcomb
droning	doghearted	codpiece
errant	dread-bolted	death-token
fawning	earth-vexing	dewberry
fobbing	elf-skinned	flap-dragon
froward	fat-kidneyed	flax-wench
frothy	fen-sucked	flirt-gill
gleeking	flap-mouthed	foot-licker
goatish	fly-bitten	fustilarian
gorbellied	folly-fallen	giglet
impertinent	fool-born	gudgeon
infectious	full-gorged	haggard
jarring	guts-gripping	harpy
loggerheaded	half-faced	hedge-pig
lumpish	hasty-witted	horn-beast
mammering	hedge-born	hugger-mugger
mangled	hell-hated	joithead
mewling	idle-headed	lewdster
paunchy	ill-breeding	lout
pribbling	ill-nurtured	maggot-pie
puking	knotty-pated	malt-worm
puny	milk-livered	mammet
qualling	motley-minded	measle
rank	onion-eyed	minnow
reeky	plume-plucked	miscreant
roguish	pottle-deep	oldwarp
ruttish	pox-marked	mumble-news
saucy	reeling-ripe	nut-hook
spleeny	rough-hewn	pigeon-egg
spongy	rude-growing	pignut
surly	rump-fed	puttock

tottering	shard-borne	pumpion
unmuzzled	sheep-biting	ratsbane
vain	spur-galled	scut
venomed	swag-bellied	skainsmate
villainous	tardy-gaited	strumpet
warped	tickle-brained	varlet
wayward	toad-spotted	vassal
weedy	unchin-snouted	whey-face
yeasty	weather-bitten	wagtail

Another list of Shakespearean insults is found as in the Appendix to this Guide.

Exercise: What is thought to be the longest insult in all of the plays of Shakespeare is found in *The Comedy of Errors*, 5, 1:

Antipholus of Ephesus

Along with them

They brought one Pinch, a hungry lean-faced villain,
 A mere anatomy, a mountebank,
 A threadbare juggler and a fortune-teller,
 A needy, hollow-eyed, sharp-looking wretch,
 A dead-looking man...

As you read the description aloud, ask your students to create an image (either drawn or with their bodies) of Doctor Pinch. Does knowing that Antipholus of Ephesus is very angry lead them to think that much of the description may be exaggeration?

Note: The technique of creating non-moving visual pictures with the body is called "Tableaux". It is a very simple technique that has built-in ease of classroom management.

Mapping: Ephesus & Syracuse

This exercise is designed to be used BEFORE seeing the play!

Learning Objectives

- The students will examine a map of Europe
- The students will explore choices made by an author

Exercise: Is Ephesus a real place or a fictional one? How about Syracuse? Help the students to locate these cities on a modern map of Italy. Other Mediterranean cities are mentioned in the play: Epidamnium, Corinth, Epidaurus, etc. Point out London, where Shakespeare lived. Remind them that Shakespeare probably never visited Ephesus or any of the other Southern European cities mentioned.

Is the Ephesus of *The Comedy of Errors* a real place or a fictional one? A little bit of both.

Brainstorm with the students why Shakespeare might have set the play in Ephesus. Would the play be different if he had set it in China? Or Denmark? Or in the New World of the Americas?

How did Shakespeare learn enough about the cities to write about them? Did he make some details up?

Ephesians: Subservient Women?

This exercise is designed to be used AFTER seeing the play!

Learning Objectives

- The students will examine possible source for *The Comedy of Errors*
- The students will explore characters' opinions

Fact: Some scholars believe that most of what Shakespeare knew about Ephesus, he learned about in Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians in the Bible. This book stresses the need for unity in the Early Christian community. It also contains the command that "Wives be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. The husband is the head of the wife... the wives ought to be [subject] to their husbands in everything." (Ephesians 5:22ff).

Exercise: The major female characters in the play (Adriana, Luciana, The Courtesan, Nell, and The Abbess) all have strong opinions about how husbands and wives relate to one another. Lead a discussion of whether the opinion of any of these characters is similar to that expressed in Ephesians?

Is the play's theme of unity amidst the chaos of the world a reference to the theme of Ephesians?

"...But retain'd his name...": Characters in The Comedy

This exercise is designed to be used BEFORE seeing the play!

Learning Objective

- The students will be familiar with the characters in the play.
- The students will make assumptions about characters based on their names.

Exercise: Write the following list on the board. Approaching it as if we have never heard anything about these characters, discuss what each of the names makes us feel about them. What consonants are featured in their names? What vowels? Ask the students to play with ways of saying the names. The play is set in Turkey. Are these all Turkish-sounding names? Do some sound Italian/Roman? Do some sound English?

The Characters in *The Comedy of Errors*

Solinus, Duke of Ephesus
Ægeon, a merchant of Syracuse
Antipholus of Ephesus
Antipholus of Syracuse
Dromio of Ephesus
Dromio of Syracuse
Balthasar
Angelo
Dr. Pinch
Abbess of Ephesus (Æmilia)
Adriana

Luciana
Courtesan
Nell (AKA Luce)
First Merchant
Second Merchant
Jailer / Executioner

... she became
A joyful mother of two goodly sons;
And, which was strange, the one so like the other,
As could not be distinguish'd but by names.
The Comedy of Errors, 1, 1



Section 3: The Play: Things to Look For

- **Overall Learning Objective:** The students will learn a variety of ways to analyze Shakespearean texts and find specific things to look for in **The Acting Company's** production of *The Comedy of Errors*.

Theme of the Play

Learning Objective:

- The students will look for an underlying theme in *The Comedy of Errors*
- The students will discuss themes in literature

Exercise: As the students read and/or see *The Comedy of Errors*, ask them to look beyond the comedy and find some deeper meaning in the play. What are some of the themes that the students see in the play? Can a piece of art or literature have different meanings to different observers?

A Merchant Society

This exercise is designed to be used BEFORE seeing the play!

Learning Objective:

- The students will look for references to getting and spending in *The Comedy of Errors*

Exercise: In *The Comedy of Errors*, the city of Ephesus is mercantile society. Everything, from jewelry to rope to sea travel, from leather-goods to sex to freedom, even Love itself, can be purchased. Ask the students as they read or see the play to look for incidents of getting and spending among the characters. After seeing the production, discuss these interactions with the class.

Writing in Role: Law and Order in Ephesus

This exercise is designed to be used BEFORE seeing the play!

Learning Objective:

- The students will analyze a speech from *The Comedy of Errors*
- The students will write in the voice of a fictional character

Exercise: Ask the students to read Act 1, Scene 1 of *The Comedy of Errors*. Based on that scene, each student should write as a reporter for the The Ephesus Daily Times describing the possible execution of Ægeon and public response to the Duke's temporary stay of execution. What type of feeling does the reporter get from the old man's shipwreck story? The reporters should use quotes from the scene to describe what they have seen and heard.

Exercise: Text Analysis: "Spherical, like a globe..."

This exercise is designed to be used BEFORE seeing the play!

Learning Objective:

- The students will analyze a scene from *The Comedy of Errors*

- The students will explore the concept of humor

Exercise: One of the most famous scenes in *The Comedy of Errors* comes in Act 3, scene 2, when Dromio of Syracuse describes the woman who has mistaken him for her husband. His master, Antipholus of Syracuse asks for a detailed description of the woman, who Dromio describes as being “Spherical, like a globe...”. Have the students, working in pairs, examine and interpret the following scene. What are some of the puns (like “heir” – Prince of France for “hair”)? What are some of the ethnic stereotypes Shakespeare plays upon? How does Shakespeare extend the metaphor of the globe? Is any of the scene “bawdy” (containing sexual innuendo)?

After seeing the play, discuss with the students how Director Ian Belknap and actors John Skelley and Jonathan Kaplan staged the speech.

Note: An extended and elaborate metaphor is sometimes called a “conceit”

Exercise: What are the elements that make this scene funny? Discuss it with the students. What are the required elements to make something funny? Are there different kinds of humor? How many different kinds of humor does Shakespeare employ in this scene? As students watch television and movies, ask them to look for humor and try to deconstruct why things are funny and what type of humor they are seeing.

Exercise: Dromio describes Nell, a woman, who claims to be his fiancée but who Dromio finds unpleasant. Using the above scene as a model, ask the students to write a humorous scene, in which two characters use an extended metaphor to humorously describe a MAN; likening his appearance to places in the world. Use an atlas to choose countries to pun on their names, make comparisons to their shapes, or some characteristic of the lands or their peoples.

Choral Reading: A Drop of Water

This exercise is designed to be used BEFORE seeing the play!

Learning Objective:

- The students will examine a passage from *The Comedy of Errors*
- The students will perform a passage from the play in the style of a choral reading
- The students will create a choral reading based on a passage from the play

Exercise: Using the cutting of Antipholus’ speech from 1, 2, the students can perform a choral reading of the passage. As you practice it, make whatever changes to the cutting as you and the students see fit. What matters is that it feels organic to the ideas and rhythms of the passage. Stage it with physical movement, if you wish. Add rhythmic or musical accompaniment, if you choose. Or let it be just words. Let the students and the text be your guide.

Solo 1: I to the world am like a drop of water...
 All: That in the ocean seeks...
 Solo 2: Another drop,
 Solo 1 & Solo 2: Who, falling there to find his fellow forth,
 Group 1: Unseen,

Group 2: inquisitive,
All: confounds himself.
Solo 3: So I
Solo 4: to find a mother
Solo 3: and a brother
Solo 4: In quest of them
Solo 3 & Solo 4: unhappy
All: lose myself.

Exercise: Challenge the students to create a choral reading from other parts of the play (or other pieces of literature – verse or prose – that you cover later in the year.

Verse and Prose

This exercise is designed to be used BEFORE seeing the play!

Learning Objective:

- The students will discover the differences between **verse** and **prose** in *The Comedy of Errors*.
- The students will learn the literary terms **iambic Pentameter**, **Accented Verse**, **Blank Verse**, and **Rhyming Couplet**.

Facts: Some of what Shakespeare wrote is in verse. Some of the verse is in iambic Pentameter. Pentameter is a line of poetry having five metrical feet (“Penta-” is the prefix meaning five; as in Pentagon). An iamb is a metrical foot having two syllables, the first one unstressed, and the second stressed. So, iambic Pentameter feels like a heartbeat: Not Stressed, **Stressed**; Not Stressed, **Stressed**; Not Stressed, **Stressed**; Not Stressed, **Stressed**; Not Stressed, **Stressed**.

One example from Act 1, scene 1 of the play:

ÆGEON

A **league** from **Epidamnum** **had** we **sail'd**,
Before the **always** **wind-obeying** **deep**
Gave **any** **tragic** **instance** **of** our **harm**:
But **longer** **did** we **not** **retain** much **hope**;
For **what** **obscuréd** **light** the **heav'ns** did **grant**
Did **but** **convey** unto our **fearful** **minds**
A **doubtful** **warrant** **of** immediate **death**;
Which **though** **myself** would **gladly** **have** **embraced**,
Yet **the** **incessant** **weepings** **of** my **wife**,
Weeping **before** for **what** she **saw** must **come**,
And **piteous** **plainings** **of** the **pretty** **babes**,
That **mourn'd** for **fashion**, **ignorant** **what** to **fear**,
Forced **me** to **seek** **delays** for **them** and **me**.
The Comedy of Errors, Act 1, scene 1

Notice the use of the apostrophe in “heav’ns” to make it one syllable and help it fit the verse. Notice the use of the accent mark in “obscuréd” to make it three syllables help it fit the verse. The actor’s rule-of-thumb: the lines WANT to be 10 syllables.

Note: According to former NEA chair and poet Dana Gioia, “Compared to most other languages, English is very strongly stressed. Speech stress in English conveys meaning. The more meaningful a word the stronger speech stress it receives.”

Accentual Verse

Shakespeare wrote some verse lines with four strong beats and no rule about the number of syllables in the line. This poetic form dates back to ancient epics like Beowulf in which lines always had four stressed syllables no matter the length. In this passage from Act III, scene 1, Antipholus wants to go to his own house to eat lunch, here called “dinner”. Speak it aloud and note some syllables are stressed within a single word. The four major accents are bolded in each line.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS

You're **sad**, Signior **Bal**-thazar, pray **God** our **cheer**
May **answer** my good **will** and **your** good welcome **here**.
Better **cheer** may you **have**, but **not** with better **heart**.
But, **soft!** my door is **lock'd**. Go **bid** them let us **in**.

Most of Shakespeare's poetry is in **Blank Verse**, a kind iambic Pentameter that does not rhyme. However, some of the verse is in **Rhyming Couplets**, pairs of lines of iambic Pentameter that rhyme. The last two lines of the passage above are a rhyming couplet. The rhyming couplet was often used at the end of scenes to indicate to the audience, the other actors, and the crew, that the scene is over. In *The Comedy of Errors*, many characters converse in rhyming couplets. All of the heart-to-heart conversations between sisters Adriana and Luciana are in rhyming couplets. Here is an example from 2, 1.

ADRIANA

This servitude makes you to keep **unwed**.

LUCIANA

Not this, but troubles of the marriage-**bed**.

ADRIANA

But, were you wedded, you would bear some **sway**.

LUCIANA

Ere I learn love, I'll practice to **obey**.

Some of the characters in Shakespeare speak in **Prose**. Prose is common language that does not necessarily have an underlying rhythmical sound to it. Usually servants or the lower classes speak prose in Shakespeare's plays. Prose is used when characters speak of low-class topics. Prose is what someone speaks, in Shakespeare, when they are reading aloud and when they are crazy (or, like Hamlet) acting crazy.

Exercise: *The Comedy of Errors* is 87% Verse. Ask the students to look at the script of *The Comedy of Errors*. Point out the groups of lines that are indented on the left margin and are rough on the right margin. These are the lines of verse. Some of them rhyme, and some do not. Groups of verse lines are easy to spot because all the words on the left margin are capitalized. Based on these observations, determine what clues Shakespeare is giving to the actors when he has them speak prose in *Comedy*. Are they of a low-class or crazy, are they reading or talking dirty.

Physicalizing Punctuation

This exercise is designed to be used BEFORE seeing the play!

Learning Objectives:

- The students will do a close reading of a speech from *The Comedy of Errors*
- The students will evaluate the punctuation in the speech
- The students will physicalize the speech's punctuation

Exercise: Give copies of the following speech from *The Comedy of Errors* (found in the Reproducibles section of this Guide) to the students. Point out that the whole excerpt consists of fifteen lines of verse and twelve sentences. Ask them to read it aloud one phrase at a time in turn, starting with one student taking the first phrase, and each student stopping at a punctuation mark. After doing that, discuss what their perceptions of the mood of the speaker is.

Ask one volunteer to stand and read the passage below. As s/he reads, ask him/her to walk slowly. At each punctuation mark, s/he should change direction. When the physicalization is complete (you may wish to have a few students try it), ask the observers what that showed them about the speech. The people who read and walked the speech should also share their insights about how it felt.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS

You have prevailed. I will depart in quiet,
And in despite of mirth mean to be merry.
I know a wench of excellent discourse,
Pretty and witty; wild, and yet too gentle.
There will we dine. This woman that I mean,
My wife (but, I protest, without desert)
Hath oftentimes upbraided me withal.
To her will we to dinner. [To Angelo] Get you home
And fetch the chain. By this, I know, 'tis made.
Bring it, I pray you, to the Porcupine,
For there's the house. That chain will I bestow –
Be it for nothing but to spite my wife –
Upon mine hostess there. Good sir, make haste.
Since mine own doors refuse to entertain me,
I'll knock elsewhere, to see if they'll disdain me.

The Comedy of Errors, Act 3, scene 1

Note: A major punctuation in the MIDDLE of a verse line is called a “Caesura” and often indicates emotional disturbance in the character, as with Antipholus of Ephesus, above.

Word Power: Antipholus is Mad

This exercise is designed to be used BEFORE seeing the play!

Learning Objectives:

- The students will do a close reading of a speech from *The Comedy of Errors*

- The students will evaluate the individual words in the speech
- The students will choose operative words in the speech

Exercise: Provide each student with the passage from the play *The Comedy of Errors*. Ask 12 students to each take one of the lines. Standing in a circle, closed against the rest of the class, ask them to read their lines in order. They should do it a second time, faster. Now, ask them to choose one word from their line that they feel is most important. The third read-through should be just the words deemed most important in each line. A fourth time should be the same only faster.

Finally, they can do it once, in a line facing the other students. In a discussion following the exercise, both the 12 participants and the other students can talk about the passage and the exercise.

1. Now, out of doubt Antipholus is mad,
2. Else would he never so demean himself.
3. A ring he hath of mine worth forty ducats,
4. And for the same he promised me a chain:
5. Both one and other he denies me now.
6. Besides this present instance of his rage,
7. The reason that I gather he is mad,
Is a mad tale he told to-day at dinner,
8. Of his own doors being shut against his entrance.
9. Belike his wife, acquainted with his fits,
On purpose shut the doors against his way.
10. My way is now to hie home to his house,
And tell his wife
11. that, being lunatic,
He rush'd into my house and took perforce
My ring away.
12. This course I fittest choose;
For forty ducats is too much to lose.

Courtesan , *The Comedy of Errors*, Act 4, scene 3

The concept of specificity of word choice (or “Diction”) is a central one to evaluating writing. You may wish to lead the discussion toward an evaluation of Shakespeare’s diction in this speech (how many different words for “crazy” does the Courtesan know?) and other parts of the play. How is the vocabulary of a Dromio different than that of the Abbess? How specific ways does Dromio of Syracuse use to desperately describe the arresting officer?



Section 4: The Playwright: William Shakespeare

- **Overall Learning Objective:** The students will know the facts of the life and career of William Shakespeare and his continuing impact.

William Shakespeare's Life

Learning Objective:

- The students will learn about Shakespeare's life
- The students will write an essay about writing.
- The students will assess what makes a good story and a good play.
- The students will write a letter based on Shakespeare's Last Will and Testament.

Facts: William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon, on or near April 23, 1564. Church records from Holy Trinity Church indicate that he was baptized there on April 26, 1564. William's parents were John Shakespeare, a glove-maker and leather merchant, and Mary Arden.

On November 28, 1582, Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway. William was 18 at the time, and Anne was 26 – and pregnant. Their first daughter, Susanna, was born on May 26, 1583. The couple later had twins, Hamnet and Judith, born February 2, 1585. For seven years, William Shakespeare pretty much disappeared from all records, turning up in London circa 1592.

When Shakespeare lived in London in the late 1500's, England was a rich and powerful nation under the leadership of Queen Elizabeth I. Moreover, the Theater was thriving! Shakespeare joined a theater company called the Lord Chamberlain's Men (which was later known as the King's Men when King James I took the throne) and was successful as an actor, poet and a playwright. By 1594, he was not only acting and writing for the company but was a managing partner. 1594 is also the first recorded performance of *The Comedy of Errors*, which took place at Grey's Inn in London, one of the "Inns of Court" which were and are professional associations for barristers and judges. So, unlike many of Shakespeare's plays, *Comedy* may have been specifically written to be performed indoors and designed for a specific and highly educated audience.

With Will Kempe, a master comedian, and Richard Burbage, a leading tragic actor of the day, the Lord Chamberlain's Men became a favorite London troupe, patronized by royalty and made popular by the theater-going public. In 1599, they built **The Globe Theater** in the Bankside District across the river from London proper. While Shakespeare could not be accounted wealthy, by London standards, his success allowed him to purchase New House in Stratford and retire there in comfort in 1611.

William Shakespeare wrote his will in 1611, bequeathing his properties to his daughter Susanna (married in 1607 to Dr. John Hall). His son Hamnet had died at the age of 11, on August 11, 1596. To his surviving daughter Judith, he left £300, and to his wife Anne left "my second best bed." This bed is one of the mysteries of Shakespearean scholarship.

William Shakespeare allegedly died on his birthday, April 23, 1616. This is probably more of a romantic myth than reality, but Shakespeare was buried at Holy Trinity in Stratford on April 25, 1616.

Shakespeare wrote 37 plays. In writing his plays, he would often use a plot he already knew or read about, convert it, add to it, and make it his own. Seven years after his death, his friends John Hemings and Henry Condell published a book containing 36 of Shakespeare's plays, called the "**First Folio**." His work covered many subjects and styles, including comedies, tragedies, romances, and historical plays. Shakespeare was a well-loved writer in his lifetime; and now, 400 years later, he is the most produced playwright in the world.

Exercise: Each of us knows many stories. In writing his plays, Shakespeare adapted plots he already knew or had read. Which stories from any sources are the students' favorites? Ask them to choose one story that they have read and write a one-page paper telling why it would make a good play or film. In a discussion after the assignment, ask the class to assess what makes a good story and what makes a good performance piece. What elements from their list are in *The Comedy of Errors*?

Exercise: *The Comedy of Errors* is a play about, among other things, marriage and family. Have your students write (either for homework or as an in-class assignment) a fictional letter, dated April 23, 1616, from one townspeople of Stratford-upon-Avon to another. In the letter, the townspeople reflects on Shakespeare's life and speculates on the "second best bed" mentioned in Will's will.

Biographically-based Text Analysis: Twins

Learning Objective:

- The students will reflect on the autobiographical nature of *The Comedy of Errors*.

Facts: William Shakespeare and his wife were the parents of twins Hamnet and Judith as well as an older daughter, Susanna. Judith's twin brother died in 1596 at 11 years old, a few years after the first performances of *The Comedy of Errors*.

Exercise: Discuss with the students how having twins Judith and Hamnet may have influenced Shakespeare to ponder the innate connection between twins.

Theater in the Time of William Shakespeare

This exercise is designed to be used AFTER seeing the play!

Learning Objectives:

- The students will compare modern theatrical convention with theater in the time of Shakespeare

Exercise: Verbally review the list below with the students. After **The Acting Company's** production of *The Comedy of Errors*, ask the students to compare the conventions of the theater in Shakespeare's day to the performance they have just seen. For example, as in Shakespeare's time, **The Acting Company's** production used little scenery, but very detailed

costumes.

Theater in the Time of William Shakespeare

- The theater building was open air. Plays were also performed in tavern courtyards and wealthy people's homes.
- Performances started at 2:00 to make the most of daylight.
- The stage was usually bare.
- Elizabethan theaters held 1500 - 3000 people
- There was a balcony on stage, called the "inner above" to be used if needed but most of the action took place downstage. Perhaps the two Dromios' encounter at the door used this playing space in Shakespeare's time.
- When Shakespeare moved to London, he met with actor/manager Richard Burbage and became a prompter, then he became an actor, and later he became Burbage's star writer.
- Richard and Cuthbert Burbage opened "The Globe Theatre" in 1599. Before that they used a theatre called "The Theatre".
- Shakespeare produced most of his plays in The Globe and became part owner.
- *The Comedy of Errors* was performed at a party for an audience of lawyers in a tavern courtyard on December 28, 1594. In 1604 there was a performance in King James' palace.
- Characters usually tell us where they are and what time of day it is in their lines.
- Acting was not a well-respected profession at this time.
- Women were not allowed to perform on stage, so boys would perform all female parts, including Adriana, Luciana, the Abbess and The Courtesan in *The Comedy of Errors* (although the latter two may have been played by adult actors who specialized in comedy). Boys were apprenticed to the acting companies between the ages of 6 and 14.
- Actors would have to learn many parts of a play, since up to three different plays would be performed in the same week by a company.
- Actors usually wore their own clothes unless they were portraying someone exotic, royal, or female. The actors in Roman plays, like *The Comedy of Errors* or *Julius Cæsar*, probably wore togas over their own clothes.

Essay: "This is The Fairy Land"

Learning Objective:

- The students will know about the belief in supernatural beings in the Elizabethan world
- The students will research and write about Elizabethan superstitions
- The students will look for references to the supernatural in *The Comedy of Errors*

Exercise: Ask the students individually (or in teams) to research one of the beliefs about the supernatural held in Shakespeare's England. In his 1883 book Folk-lore of Shakespeare, scholar T.F. Thiselton Dyer lists 23 categories of these superstitions (and the entire book is available online at www.sacred-texts.com/sks/flos). Assign students categories and ask them to produce a one- to two page research paper citing Dyer as the source.

As they prepare to see the play, they should listen for references to these superstitions in *The Comedy of Errors* and in other literature.

Humours

Learning Objective:

- The students will know about the belief in Bodily Humours in Elizabethan medicine
- The students will create scenes involving the Humours.
- The students will look for references to the Humours in *The Comedy of Errors*

Facts: In the time of Shakespeare, people believed that, in the human body, the *humours* were natural bodily fluids that corresponded to the four elements (air, earth, fire, and water) and had various qualities: cold, dry, hot, and moist.

Element	Humour	Quality	Nature
Fire	Choler (yellow bile)	hot and dry	Choleric (angry, temperamental)
Air	Blood	hot and moist	Sanguine (jolly, lusty)
Water	Phlegm	cold and moist	Phlegmatic (sluggish, slow)
Earth	Melancholy (black bile)	cold and dry	Melancholic (sad, lovesick)

Many people believed that when the humours were all in balance in a person, he or she is completely healthy. If they got out of balance, illness resulted. Doctors would *bleed* their patients to restore the balance, because blood was considered to have pre-eminence over the other humours.

When a piece of drama involves people with extreme emotions, indicative of imbalances of the Humours, it was considered a “Humourous” piece. Often a modern comedy contains people with heightened emotions and we dub it “humorous.”

Exercise: Divide the class into four groups and assign each one of the four Humours. Ask the students to create short scenes in which one or more of the characters are showing signs of an excess of their assigned bodily humour. As they prepare to see the play, they should listen for references to the Humours in *The Comedy of Errors* and in other literature.

Discussion: No Girls Allowed!!!

Learning Objective:

- The students will know the Elizabethan stage practice of having males play female roles.

Facts: In the theater of Shakespeare’s time, the custom was for men and boys to play all the female roles. The acting was considered an unfit career for women. Actors, playwrights, and managers (like today’s producers) were thought to be a notch above thieves. Young actors played younger women and older actors played comical women’s roles (like Juliet’s Nurse).

Exercise: Discuss with your students this tradition. Many of them will have seen “Shakespeare in Love.” Remind them that the character Viola in the film wants to be an actor but is forbidden by the “Men Only” tradition. In order to be in the theater, she must disguise herself as a young man. Ask the students if they can name any female characters in Shakespeare that disguise themselves as men. Does knowing that Lady Macbeth, Juliet, Titania, Portia (both of them), Kate the Shrew, and all the other female characters were played males change the students’ understanding of the characters? Does knowing that Adriana and Luciana were both played by boys change the way the students view the play’s gender conflicts and its discussion of marriage? Would *The Abbess* and *The Courtesan* have been played by young men or older men? In this production, Nell is played by Jamie Smithson, a man. Does that add to the play’s comedy?



Section 5: The Theater

Overall Learning Objective: The students will have a stronger understanding of the art of the Theatre.

Brainstorm: Creating a Theatrical Production

This exercise is designed to be used BEFORE seeing the play!

Learning Objective:

- The students will identify careers in the theater.
- The students will use The Acting Company website as a resource.
- The students will know the collaborative nature of theater.

Exercise: Ask the students to name some of the people who work to put a theatrical production like *The Comedy of Errors* on stage. Write their answers on the board. As the brainstorm continues, present information about the various professions. When you attend the performance, see if your students can talk to some of the professionals associated with **The Acting Company**.

Producer or Producing Organization

The producers raise the money needed to produce the play - the money allows the Creative Team to build its vision of the play. Producers oversee all aspects of the production and make sure that the play sticks to their artistic standards. They often put together the package of Script, Director, Designers, and Cast. **The Acting Company** is a not-for-profit organization, which means that money to produce the plays comes from fund-raising through grants and donations rather than from investors.

[a "Not-for-Profit" organization uses money raised from donors, foundations, grants to do its work. A "Profit Making" organization gets money from investors. The investors receive a percentage of the profit made by the work.]

The Playwright

A "wright" is a type of artisan who makes things that people can use. A wheelwright makes wheels. A playwright makes plays. Plays are of use to other artists - Actors, Directors, Designers - who use the script to make their own artistic statement. William Shakespeare is the playwright of *The Comedy of Errors*.

The Director

After reading the playwright's script, the director decides on an overall vision for the production. The director meets with the Creative Team to assemble a unified look for the sets, costumes, lighting, and other elements. The director oversees the actors in rehearsal, often with the help of Assistant Directors and Stage Managers. The Director of *The Comedy of Errors* is Ian Belknap.

The Actor

The Cast is the group of men, women, and children who perform the play. Many people call all the performers “actors” (instead of “actors” and “actresses”), since this is the professional term that applies to people of both genders. The members of the cast may be seasoned actors or new to the stage. They may have trained at different theater schools that teach acting in various ways. They draw on their own experiences and understanding of life to create believable characters.

Actors usually audition for the parts they play. This means that they had to work on the part and read, sing, or dance for the director and producers before they were given the role. All of the actors had to memorize their lines and attend many rehearsals, including some with costumes and props, before opening night.

The Voice and Dialect Coach

The Shakespearean language in *The Comedy of Errors* is very complex. Often a Voice Coach acts as an advisor to the actors and director on the play. He is an expert on the text, the meanings and nuances of the words, and their pronunciation. He can assist the actors with the verse. He is an expert in the period language of the script and helps the actors approach the text from a unified angle.

The Costume Designer

Costumes in a play must help the actors as they create the characters. The costumes should not restrict the movement of the performers. The costume designer and her staff work within the vision of the director for each character. They choose colors and styles to help the audience better understand the characters. They do historical research to make the time period of the play come to life. In this production of *The Comedy of Errors*, Candice Donnelly chose costumes are somewhat modern styles

The Set Designer, the Sound Designer, and Lighting Designer

The play needs an environment in which to take place. The set can be a literal world, with many objects (“props”) and lots of furniture. It can be a suggestion of reality with minimal actual components. The main components of Neil Patel’s set for *The Comedy of Errors* are large sheets of cloth which move across the stage to help define spaces and locations. The Music and sound effects that Fitz Patton designed for this play make the world of Ephesus more real. Michael Chybowski’s lights add to the environment of the play and enhance the mood that the other designers, the actors, the playwright, and the director have created. For The Acting Company productions, the set must be easy to assemble and disassemble and must be portable. The sound and lighting design must be able to be recreated in each venue.

The Staff and The Crew

The theatre staff - house manager, ushers, box office people, and others - assist the audience in many ways and support each performance. Backstage the Stage Managers and the running crew run the lighting equipment, move the scenery, and make sure the technical aspects of the performance are perfect. In the office, Marketing people work to make sure people know about the performances and the Development staff makes sure the producers have money to put on the play.

Exercise: Ask the students to see how many of the members of the cast, crew and staff they can

find at The Acting Company website: www.theactingcompany.org. Feel free to have them correspond with the Company members through e-mail links.

Costumes Collection

This exercise is designed to be used AFTER seeing the play!

Learning Objective:

- The students will evaluate the use of period styles in **The Acting Company's** production of *The Comedy of Errors*

Exercise: After the performance, discuss the costumes in the show with the students. Did the modern styles enhance *The Comedy of Errors*? Which character had the most interesting costume? Who had the best shoes? Did each group (servants, merchants, women, etc.) have a unique clothing style? How did costumes help the audience differentiate between two characters played by the same actor (like Jamie Smithson)? How did the audience differentiate between the Dromios and the Antipholuses? Could the play have been performed in ancient Roman garb? Would that have changed the play? How might specific period costumes help actors create their characters (like The Abbess)? What did the students think of the colors of the costumes? Did the costumes enhance the performance or distract the audience?

Casting

This exercise is designed to be used BEFORE seeing the play!

Learning Objective:

- The students will create a cast list for a movie of *The Comedy of Errors*

Exercise: Ask the students, "If you were casting a movie of *The Comedy of Errors*, what stars would you get to be in it?" After a brief reminder of the characters and their roles in the story, ask each student to work independently and cast the Antipholus brothers and the Dromeos. Does race matter? Height? Are there any actual sets of sisters that might be appropriate to play Luciana and Adriana? Is Ægeon more a Robert De Niro, Robin Williams, or Samuel L. Jackson?

Types of Theater Buildings

This exercise is designed to be used AFTER seeing the play!

Learning Objective:

- The students will be able to identify different types of theatres.
- The students will weigh the benefits of each type of performance space.
- The students will use The Acting Company website as a resource.
- The students will write a report about a theater.

Discussion: In which types of theaters have the students seen plays, concerts, or other live performances? In what type of theatre was **The Acting Company's** production of *The Comedy of Errors* performed? What might be the benefits of each type of performance space? What might be the drawbacks of each?

Facts:

Three different types of performance space are most common in the theatre:

- **The Proscenium Stage** is the most common. The play is performed within a frame. The frame is called a proscenium arch; the audience looks through this frame as if the performance was a picture.
- **The Thrust Stage** extends into the audience. Spectators sit on three sides.
- **Theatre-in-the-Round** has the audience sitting all around the stage. The action takes place on a platform in the center of the room. Another name for a Theatre-in-the-Round is an Arena Stage because it is similar to a sports arena.

Exercise: At The Acting Company website, www.theactingcompany.org, have the students find the “Itinerary” page. Many of the theaters that the Company is playing this year are linked to this page. The students can learn about different types of theaters in different parts of the country from these links. Students can write a report about one of the theaters where The Acting Company is performing this year. Their report might include a map of the location, distance from the last theater and to the next theater, and statistics about the theater (size, seating capacity, ticket prices).

Theatre Etiquette

This exercise is designed to be used BEFORE seeing the play!

Learning Objective:

- The students will know standard rules of behavior in the theatre.

To make the theatre-going experience more enjoyable for everyone, a code of behavior has been established. When attending theatrical performances, remember these simple rules of conduct.

- ❖ Be on time for the performance.
- ❖ Eat and drink only in the theatre lobby.
- ❖ Turn OFF all cellular phones, electronic games, and other devices. Silencing is NOT the same. NO TEXTING!
- ❖ Talk before and after the performance or during the intermissions only. Remember that the people near you and on stage can hear you.
- ❖ Appropriate responses to the performances, such as laughing and applauding, are appreciated.
- ❖ Act with maturity during romantic, violent, and other challenging scenes.
- ❖ Keep your feet off chairs around you.
- ❖ Read your program before or after, not during, the play.
- ❖ Personal hygiene (e.g., combing hair, applying make-up, etc.) should be attended to in the restrooms.
- ❖ Once you are seated and the play has begun, stay in your seat. If you see empty seats ahead of you, ask the usher during the intermission if you can move to them.
- ❖ Always stay until after the curtain call. After the final curtain, relax and take your time leaving.
- ❖ Open your eyes, ears, and mind to the entire theatrical experience!

Prepare for Q & A Session

This exercise is designed to be used BEFORE seeing the play!

Learning Objective:

- The students will create questions for the post-performance Q & A session

Exercise: To make the post-performance Question and Answer session more beneficial to everyone, the students might create a few questions before the performance. Ask the students to think what questions they might want to ask the actors in the play? Here are some starter questions:

Are there questions about the **theater** as an art form? Does it require training? Where did the actors train? Can a person make a living in the theater? What careers are there in the theater? Are any of the students aspiring actors? Are they seeking advice?

Are there questions about **traveling** the country? Have the actors seen a lot of the United States? What is the bus like? How many hours do they spend on the bus? Does everybody get along?

What about life in **New York City**? How long have the actors lived there? And where are they from originally? (Have any of the students ever been in NYC?) What is the best part of living in New York? What is the worst?

What about ***The Comedy of Errors***, the play? How has it been received in places across the country? What is the best part about working on this play? What have been its drawbacks? Is fun working on Shakespeare? What do the actors think the themes of the play are?

NOTE: If there are questions that your students have after the company departs, feel free to contact the Education Department of The Acting Company (via Facebook or e-mail), and we will get an answer for you!



Section 6: What to Do After You See This Play

Please encourage your students to reflect on the play in some of the following ways. We would love to have copies of some of the writings or artwork your students create: **The Acting Company, Box 898, New York, NY 10108 or fax 212-944-5524.** We have also included in the appendix short pre- and post-performance questionnaires, and would be interested in gathering data about the play.

Write

- Write a play or scene in response to the play.
- Improvise a scene with a partner and then write it down.
- Write a soliloquy for one of the characters in *The Comedy of Errors*.
- Write a scene for two of the characters in the play that you think we should have seen but that was not in Shakespeare's play. For example, a private scene between Antipholus of Ephesus and Adriana.
- Write an epilogue. For example, what happens to Antipholus of Syracuse and Luciana after the story ends? How about Antipholus of Ephesus and Adriana? Nell and Dromio of Ephesus?
- Write a review of our production.
- Write an analysis of the poster for this production.
- Write a theatrical adaptation of another piece of literature, perhaps a short story.

Draw

- Draw the world of Ephesus. Angelo's goldsmith shop. The Porcupine where the Courtesan works. Nell's kitchen.
- Draw images from the production.
- Draw silhouettes of characters in the play or other situations.
- Draw a world with families and a world without families.
- Draw a poster for our production.
- Create a collage of images from magazines in response to the play.

Read and Research more

Check out some of the following Web Addresses:

Complete Text of the Play: http://shakespeare.mit.edu/comedy_errors/full.html

SparkNotes on the Play: <http://www.sparknotes.com/shakespeare/errors>

Shakespeare Online Resource Centers:

<http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/>

www.bardweb.net

<http://shakespeare.palomar.edu/>

www.shakespeare-online.com/

www.pbs.org/shakespeare/

www.shakespearesociety.org/

National Council of Teachers of English: <http://www.ncte.org/>

We Want to Hear from YOU and your STUDENTS!

By Mail

The Acting Company
PO Box 898
New York NY 10108
tel 212-944-5517
fax 212-944-5524

By E-Mail

Justin Gallo, Director of Education
JGallo@ TheActingCompany.org
Education@TheActingCompany

On the Internet

TheActingCompany.org
or on
Facebook and Twitter

Internships

Please submit a letter of interest and your resume along with two references to the Intern Coordinator at the address above. You can call or check the website for more information.

Questionnaires and FREE Posters!

You will find a Pre-Performance and a Post-Performance Questionnaires on pages 41 and 42 of this guide. Please have your students fill out the Pre-Performance Survey before you begin working on exercises from this guide. Ask them to fill out the Post-Performance Survey after seeing *The Comedy of Errors*.

Send them to us at the above address and we will send you a POSTER from one of The Acting Company's productions as a "Thank You."



Section 7: The Acting Company

The Acting Company, America's only nationally-touring classical repertory theater, was founded in 1972 by current Producing Director Margot Harley and the late John Houseman with a unique mission:

- + By touring smaller cities, towns and rural communities of America, the Company reaches thousands of people who have few opportunities to experience live professional theater.
- + By presenting superior productions of classic and contemporary plays, the Company builds a discerning national audience for theater, helping preserve and extend our cultural heritage.
- + By providing continuing opportunities for gifted and highly-trained young actors to practice their craft in a rich repertoire for diverse audiences, the Company nurtures the growth and development of generations of theater artists.
- + By commissioning and premiering important new works by America's foremost playwrights, the Company fosters a theater tradition in which story-telling, language and the presence of the actor are primary.
- + By making the language of the theater accessible in performance, special classes and other educational outreach activities, the Company inspires students of all ages and helps them excel in every field of study.

The Acting Company has been fulfilling this singular mission since it was formed out of the first graduating class of the Juilliard School's Drama Division in 1972. Since then, it has traveled over 500,000 miles through 48 states and nine other countries, performing a repertoire of 77 plays for more than 2 million people.

Trace Our Tour

If the students want to follow the tour as it progresses across the United States, they can read the Tour Journal (on our website www.theactingcompany.org) and see pictures of the places we visit. You can check in with us every day, check the itinerary, and see where we are on the map.



Section 8: Cast List and Information

THE ACTING COMPANY
In
THE COMEDY OF ERRORS
By William Shakespeare
Directed by **Ian Belknap**

Set Design **Neil Patel**
Lighting Design **Michael Chybowski**
Costume Design **Candice Donnelly**
Voice and Speech Consultant **Andrew Wade**
Music Composition and Sound Design **Fitz Patton**
Fight Direction and Choreographer **Felix Ivanov**
Text Editing **Ian Belknap** and **Andrew Wade**
Dramaturgy **Carla Steen** and **Allie Wigley**
Propsmaster **Patricia Olive**
Casting **McCorkle Casting, C.S.A.**

Production Stage Manager **Karen Parlato**
Assistant Stage Manager **Meaghan Rosenberger**

Staff Repertory Director **Jesse Jou**

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Aegon.....Ray Chapman
Duke/Nell/Pinch.....Jamie Smithson
Jailer/Balthasar/Officer.....Alejandro Rodriguez
First Merchant/Angelo.....Sid Solomon
Antipholus of Syracuse.....Jonathan C. Kaplan
Dromio of Syracuse.....John Skelley
Dromio of Ephesus.....Stephen Pilkington
Adriana.....Whitney Hudson
Luciana.....Elizabeth Stahlmann
Antipholus of Ephesus.....Jason McDowell-Green
Second Merchant/Sailor.....Benjamin Rosenbaum
Courtesan.....Elizabeth Grullon
Abbess.....Kaliswa Brewster



Section 9: Bibliography

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Appendix: Reproducibles

Exercise: The Plot

Synopsis: The play opens with Ægeon, a merchant of Syracuse, being arrested in Ephesus because of enmity between Ephesus and Syracuse. Ægeon tells Solinus, the Duke of Ephesus, his tale: he was shipwrecked many years ago while sailing with his wife, Æmilia, and two pairs of identical twins—their twin sons, both named Antipholus, and twin servants, both named Dromio. In the course of the storm, his wife, one of their sons, and one their servants, were lost. At eighteen, Ægeon had allowed the remaining Antipholus and Dromio to leave Syracuse for Ephesus to search for their long-lost twins, at which point both of them had disappeared as well. After five years, Ægeon had come to Ephesus to find them.

Solinus, moved by the old man's tale, postpones Ægeon's sentence; Ægeon has until nightfall to produce a ransom, or he will be put to death. At this point in the action, Antipholus of Syracuse arrives in Ephesus, and the farce commences as everyone—including the twins themselves—confuses the identities of the sets of identical twins. Antipholus of Syracuse ends up invited to dinner at the home of Antipholus of Ephesus and dines with his twin's wife, Adriana. Meanwhile, Angelo, a merchant, gives a gold chain commissioned by Antipholus of Ephesus to Antipholus of Syracuse by mistake, telling him he'll come back later for payment. When Antipholus of Ephesus refuses to pay later on, Angelo has him arrested. All this time, Adriana and her sister, Luciana, are convinced that Antipholus and Dromio (of Ephesus) have gone mad, which leads them to forcibly restrain them and take them to a doctor.

Of course, when Adriana later encounters Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse, she thinks they've escaped from the doctor. The pair from Syracuse are forced to flee into a nearby abbey for refuge. In the meantime, Antipholus and Dromio of Ephesus do escape from the doctor, and arrive to petition the Duke as Ægeon is being led to his death. In the midst of everyone trying to tell their varying accounts of the day, Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse arrive with the abbess—who turns out to be Æmilia, Ægeon's long-lost wife. The twins all sort out their stories in the presence of the Duke. In the end, Ægeon is released from his death sentence and reunited with his wife and sons, Antipholus of Syracuse is set to marry Luciana, and all has been put to right.

Synopsis from the **Shakespeare Resource Center** (www.bardweb.net)

Shakespearean Insults

Column 1 <u>Adjectives</u>	Column 2 <u>Adjectives</u>	Column 3 <u>Nouns</u>
artless	base-court	apple-john
bawdy	bat-fowling	baggage
beslubbering	beef-witted	barnacle
bootless	beetle-headed	bladder
churlish	boil-brained	boar-pig
cockered	clapper-clawed	bugbear
clouted	clay-brained	bum-bailey
craven	common-kissing	canker-blossom
currish	crook-pated	clack-dish
dankish	dismal-dreaming	clotpole
dissembling	dizzy-eyed	coxcomb
droning	doghearted	codpiece
errant	dread-bolted	death-token
fawning	earth-vexing	dewberry
fobbing	elf-skinned	flap-dragon
froward	fat-kidneyed	flax-wench
frothy	fen-sucked	flirt-gill
gleeking	flap-mouthed	foot-licker
goatish	fly-bitten	fustilarian
gorbellied	folly-fallen	giglet
impertinent	fool-born	gudgeon
infectious	full-gorged	haggard
jarring	guts-griping	harpy
loggerheaded	half-faced	hedge-pig
lumpish	hasty-witted	horn-beast
mammering	hedge-born	hugger-mugger
mangled	hell-hated	joithead
mewling	idle-headed	lewdster
paunchy	ill-breeding	lout
pribbling	ill-nurtured	maggot-pie
puking	knotty-pated	malt-worm
puny	milk-livered	mammet
qualling	motley-minded	measle
rank	onion-eyed	minnow
reeky	plume-plucked	miscreant
roguish	pottle-deep	oldwarp
ruttish	pox-marked	mumble-news
saucy	reeling-ripe	nut-hook
spleeny	rough-hewn	pigeon-egg
spongy	rude-growing	pignut
surly	rump-fed	puttock
tottering	shard-borne	pumpion
unmuzzled	sheep-biting	ratsbane
vain	spur-galled	scut
venomed	swag-bellied	skainsmate
villainous	tardy-gaited	strumpet
warped	tickle-brained	varlet
wayward	toad-spotted	vassal
weedy	unchin-snouted	whew-face
yeasty	weather-bitten	wagtail

Another Insult List

You puppet
You cold porridge
You living dead man
You untutored churl
You painted Maypole
You cream-faced loon
You worshiper of idiots
You dwarf, you minimus
You bloody, bawdy villain
You injurious, tedious wasp
You base, fawning spaniel
You infectious pestilence
You botcher's apprentice
You ugly, venomous toad
You base, ignoble wretch
You old, withered crab tree
You lunatic, lean-witted fool
You filching, pilfering snatcher
You tiresome, wrangling pedant
You impudent, tattered prodigal
You whoreson, clap-eared knave
You dull and muddy mettled rascal
You gross lout, you mindless slave
You base, vile thing, you petty scrap
You dull, unfeeling barren ignorance
You rank weed, ready to be rooted out
You irksome, brawling, scolding pestilence
You brawling, blasphemous, uncharitable dog
You ignorant, long-tongued, babbling gossip
You smiling, smooth, detested pestilence
You mangled work of nature, you scurvy knave
You caterpillar of the commonwealth, you politician
You juggler, you canker-blossom, you thief of love
You decrepit wrangling miser, you base ignoble wretch
You remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain

Adapted from a list in Robert Barton, *Style for Actors*

Choral Reading: A Drop of Water

Solo 1: I, to the world, am like a drop of water...

All: That in the ocean seeks...

Solo 2: Another drop,

Solo 1 & Solo 2: Who, falling there to find his fellow forth,

Group 1: Unseen,

Group 2: Inquisitive,

All: Confounds himself.

Solo 3: So I

Solo 4: To find a mother

Solo 3: And a brother

Solo 4: In quest of them

Solo 3 & Solo 4: Unhappy

All: Lose myself.

The Comedy of Errors, Act 1, scene 2

Exercise: Text Analysis: "Spherical, like a globe..."

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

No longer from head to foot than from hip to hip: she is spherical, like a globe; I could find out countries in her.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

In what part of her body stands Ireland?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Marry, in her buttocks: I found it out by the bogs.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

Where Scotland?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

I found it by the barrenness; hard in the palm of the hand.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

Where France?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

In her forehead; armed and reverted, making war against her hair.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

Where England?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

I looked for the chalky cliffs, but I could find no whiteness in them; but I guess it stood in her chin, by the salt rheum that ran between France and it.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

Where Spain?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Faith, I saw it not; but I felt it hot in her breath.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

Where America, the Indies?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Oh, sir, upon her nose all o'er embellished with rubies, carbuncles, sapphires, declining their rich aspect to the hot breath of Spain; who sent whole armadas of caracks to be ballast at her nose.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE

Where stood Belgia, the Netherlands?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Oh, sir, I did not look so low.

The Comedy of Errors, Act 3, scene 2

Exercise: Physicalizing Punctuation

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS

You have prevailed. I will depart in quiet,
And in despite of mirth mean to be merry.
I know a wench of excellent discourse,
Pretty and witty; wild, and yet too gentle.
There will we dine. This woman that I mean,
My wife (but, I protest, without desert)
Hath oftentimes upbraided me withal.
To her will we to dinner.

[To Angelo] Get you home
And fetch the chain. By this, I know, 'tis made.
Bring it, I pray you, to the Porcupine,
For there's the house. That chain will I bestow –
Be it for nothing but to spite my wife –
Upon mine hostess there. Good sir, make haste.
Since mine own doors refuse to entertain me,
I'll knock elsewhere, to see if they'll disdain me.

The Comedy of Errors, Act 3, scene 1

Exercise: Word Power: Antipholus is Mad

13. Now, out of doubt Antipholus is mad,
14. Else would he never so demean himself.
15. A ring he hath of mine worth forty ducats,
16. And for the same he promised me a chain:
17. Both one and other he denies me now.
18. Besides this present instance of his rage,
19. The reason that I gather he is mad,
Is a mad tale he told to-day at dinner,
20. Of his own doors being shut against his entrance.
21. Belike his wife, acquainted with his fits,
On purpose shut the doors against his way.
22. My way is now to hie home to his house,
And tell his wife
23. that, being lunatic,
He rush'd into my house and took perforce
My ring away.
24. This course I fittest choose;
For forty ducats is too much to lose.

Courtesan , *The Comedy of Errors*, Act 4, scene 3

Exercise: Verse and Prose

ÆGEON

A **league** from **Epidamnum** **had** we **sail'd**,
Before the **always** **wind-obeying** **deep**
Gave **any** **tragic** **instance** **of** our **harm**:
But **longer** **did** we **not** **retain** much **hope**;
For **what** **obscuréd** **light** the **heav'ns** did **grant**
Did **but** **convey** unto our **fearful** **minds**
A **doubtful** **warrant** **of** **immediate** **death**;
Which **though** **myself** would **gladly** **have** **embraced**,
Yet **the** **incessant** **weepings** **of** my **wife**,
Weeping **before** for **what** she **saw** must **come**,
And **piteous** **plainings** **of** the **pretty** **babes**,
That **mourn'd** for **fashion**, **ignorant** **what** to **fear**,
Forced **me** to **seek** **delays** for **them** and **me**.

The Comedy of Errors, Act 1, scene 1

Notice the use of the apostrophe in “heav’ns” to make it one syllable and help it fit the verse.

Notice the use of the accent mark in “obscuréd” to make it three syllables help it fit the verse.

The actor’s rule-of-thumb: the lines WANT to be 10 syllables.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS

You’re **sad**, Signior **Bal-thazar**, pray **God** our **cheer**
May **answer** my good **will** and **your** good welcome **here**.
Better **cheer** may you **have**, but **not** with better **heart**.
But, **soft!** my door is **lock'd**. Go **bid** them let us **in**.

The Comedy of Errors, Act 3, scene 1

Exercise: Theatre Etiquette

- ❖ Be on time for the performance.
- ❖ Eat and drink only in the theatre lobby.
- ❖ Turn OFF all cellular phones, electronic games and other devices. Silencing is NOT the same. NO TEXTING!
- ❖ Talk before and after the performance or during the intermissions only. Remember that the people near you and on stage can hear you.
- ❖ Appropriate responses to the performances, such as laughing and applauding, are appreciated.
- ❖ Act with maturity during romantic, violent, and other challenging scenes.
- ❖ Keep your feet off chairs around you.
- ❖ Read your program before or after, not during, the play.
- ❖ Personal hygiene (e.g., combing hair, applying make-up, etc.) should be attended to in the restrooms.
- ❖ Once you are seated and the play has begun, stay in your seat. If you see empty seats ahead of you, ask the usher during the intermission if you can move to them.
- ❖ Always stay until after the curtain call. After the final curtain, relax and take your time leaving.
- ❖ Open your eyes, ears, and mind to the entire theatrical experience!

Pre-Performance Questionnaire

Please rate the following statements on a scale from 1 to 7. "1" represents something with which you strongly disagree "7" represents something with which you strongly agree. Circle the number that best matches your feelings.

I feel excited about seeing *The Comedy of Errors*.

Disagree **Agree**
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I want to learn more about Theater.

Disagree **Agree**
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I have been to see plays before.

None **Some** **Many**
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Name some plays you have seen?

Theater is fun!

Disagree **Agree**
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I like Shakespeare's writing.

Disagree **Agree**
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Seeing a play can teach me about life.

Disagree **Agree**
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Theater is more real than television and movies.

Disagree **Agree**
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Comments:

Student Initials:

Post-Performance Questionnaire

After seeing *The Comedy of Errors*, please rate the following statements on a scale from 1 to 7. "1" represents something with which you strongly disagree "7" represents something with which you strongly agree. Circle the number that best matches your feelings.

I enjoyed seeing *The Comedy of Errors*.

Disagree **Agree**
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I want to learn more about Theater.

Disagree **Agree**
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

The Comedy of Errors was better than other plays I have seen before.

Disagree **Agree** **I have never seen a play.**
1 2 3 4 5 6

I want to see more theater.

Disagree **Agree**
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I like Shakespeare's writing.

Disagree **Agree**
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Seeing *The Comedy of Errors* taught me something about life.

Disagree **Agree**
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

If so, what did you learn?

Theater is more real than television and movies.

Disagree **Agree**
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Comments:

Student Initials:
