

What is Primary Shakespeare?

Primary Shakespeare engages young students in the the works of the Bard by putting them at ease with his language before they decide it is “too hard to understand.” It presents the works of Shakespeare in an accessible manner. Students read, listen to and speak the words themselves and discover it’s really not that difficult— it can actually be fun and interesting.



Students performing a selection from *Romeo and Juliet*.

Teaching Artists, specially trained to work with younger students, come into your classroom twice a week for five weeks. The first three weeks are dedicated to exploring the tools of the actor, the last two to presenting a short performance piece as the culmination of the program. It is our contention that to enjoy and appreciate Shakespeare you must experience it first-hand. This is what we bring to your students.

For more information or to bring The Acting Company to your school please contact:

Joseph Parks, Associate Producer by email: jparks@theactingcompany.org by phone: **212-258-3111**

Primary Shakespeare is available during the school day or after school.

Primary Shakespeare’s structure and duration can be adjusted to fit the needs of your school, students and teachers. Please inquire to find out how.

The Acting Company is America’s foremost touring repertory theater, having performed 141 productions for three million people in New York, across America and in ten foreign countries since its founding in 1972 by John Houseman and Margot Harley. Its education programs reach **15,000 students** each year. Winner of the Obie, Audelco, and Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Awards, The Acting Company received a 2003 **TONY Honor for Excellence in Theater.**

The Acting Company 2015-2016 National Tour is made possible by generous support from Actors’ Equity Foundation, The Axe-Houghton Foundation, The Bodman Foundation, The Broadway League, Combined Federal Campaign Arts Federation, The Max and Victoria Dreyfus Foundation, 42nd Street Development Fund, Fribourg Family Foundation, Goldman Sachs, The Hearst Foundation, The Rona Jaffe Foundation, The Dorothea L. Leonhart Foundation, The Leon Levy Foundation, Arthur L. Loeb Foundation, James Starr Moore Foundation, The Morris and Alma Schapiro Fund, Seevak Family Foundation, Shamos Family Foundation, The Shubert Foundation, Shubert Organization, The Harold & Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust, Dorothy Strelsin Foundation and other individual, foundation and corporate supporters.

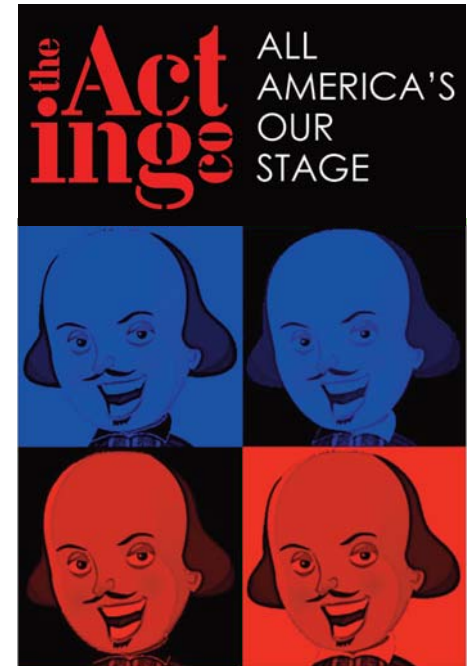
This program is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs



ALL AMERICA'S OUR STAGE

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PRIMARY SHAKESPEARE

The Acting Company’s introduction to Shakespeare for Elementary School students

**2015-16
SCHOOL YEAR**

STRUCTURE

Week 1 begins with a brief introduction to Shakespeare, his language and the first tool of the actor, the voice. Each class throughout the program ends with the students journaling individually on the work of the day plus reflections as a group.

Week 2 reviews the voice and adds the second and third tools of the actor, body and mind. Each day builds on the work done previously and expands into new areas.

Week 3 begins with an exploration of different Shakespearean plots and characters and the creation, by the students and Teaching Artists, of a short performance piece combining the work of the previous classes.

Week 4 is dedicated to rehearsing the performance piece created by the Teaching Artists and students in week 3. Students are given the opportunity to collaborate with each other and the Teaching Artists and to apply direction from them.

Week 5 begins with the presentation of a performance piece for an audience of friends and family. The program ends with a party and day of reflection when all the work is brought into focus and students are given the opportunity to respond to the work in a manner of their choice.

BRING THEATER BENCHMARKS TO YOUR CLASSROOM!

Theater Making: Acting

- Students activate and use their imaginations as well as the analytical and process skills associated with acting.
- Students participate in group activities including creative play, storytelling, pantomime and improvisation.
- Students explore the physical, vocal, characterization and staging components of acting by developing the actor's instrument: the body, voice and mind.
- Students continue to activate and expand their imaginations and explore the analytical, concentration and process skills associated with acting.
- Students participate in a variety of group and solo activities in rehearsal and performance— demonstrating self-discipline and the ability to work collaboratively.

Theater Making: Playwriting/Play Making

- Students imagine, analyze and understand play making processes by listening, retelling and creating stories and dramas.
- Students recognize and understand the dramatic elements of a story prior to putting pen to page.

Theater Making: Directing

- Students experience cooperative learning by taking and applying direction from the teacher.



Students at PS 257 rehearse a scene from *Romeo and Juliet*.

WHAT STUDENTS AND TEACHERS HAVE TO SAY...

"Romeo and Juliet is a great story. It has everything that you want like jokes, love, death and even more. That is the most amazing story I ever saw."

- 3rd Grade Student



Acting Company Teaching Artists with students of PS 257 in Brooklyn

"My students have been exposed to a whole new world by experiencing Shakespeare for the first time. It was amazing to see how they readily grasped the techniques and information taught by the teaching artists."

- Elementary School Teacher, Brooklyn

"Before we worked with real actors I thought Shakespeare was very boring but now, since I learned a little bit about him, I notice Shakespeare is very interesting because of the words he uses and how he writes plays."

- 5th Grade Student