



## The Young Shakespeareans

### TIPS for MEMORIZING YOUR LINES, MONOLOGUES, and SOLILOQUIES

Some characters have few lines, some have many.  
Some have lots of single lines, some have lots of monologues and soliloquies.  
These tips will help you memorize whatever you have to.

A **Line** is a sentence. A **Monologue** is a speech of several lines delivered to or in front of other characters. A **Soliloquy** is a speech where a character speaks their own thoughts aloud as if they were talking to themselves.

**MEMORIZE SCENE BY SCENE.** This is much easier than trying to memorize everything at once. It will also help you notice and understand the way your character changes throughout the play.

#### WHAT TO DO FIRST

1. **Write down each line, monologue, or soliloquy at least 3 times exactly as shown in your script.**  
Do this carefully, continually checking to be sure you are copying each line exactly and properly, including punctuation. Writing the words will help you improve your memory.
2. **Write down each phrase, from the beginning to the end of each sentence (as opposed to each line).**  
Respect the punctuation. This will help you understand where each thought begins and ends.
3. **Scan for Iambic Pentameter and Poetic Devices to help you find your Operative Words.**  
These are what make Shakespeare's writing so extraordinary, and noting them will also help you memorize.
4. **Underline the Operative Words in each line IN PENCIL.**  
During rehearsals, you will discover more and more about your character's feelings and motivations in each scene, so you may decide to change your operative words to best communicate what your character means.

#### NEXT

1. **Find your lines in your "No Fear Shakespeare" book, and write them down in contemporary English.**  
Memorizing your lines is much easier when you understand what your character is thinking, saying, and feeling.
2. **Complete and Review your "Basic Acting 101" Worksheets**  
You will be able to memorize more quickly if you understand:
  - to whom your character is speaking (relationship);
  - what s/he wants (motivation);
  - what is in the way (conflict);
  - what your character is feeling (emotional state).This will help you remember the tone (and posture, and gesture) your character uses to get what s/he wants.
3. **Note the Context**  
Context describes what is happening in the scene around your character and will affect your tone.  
(If your line is "I am so happy!", you would probably say it differently if you got a new pet than if you got a yummy snack.)

Workshop 2 – Handout 2.5a

*"If I Can Do Shakespeare, I Can Do Anything!"*  
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## **THEN**

1. **Mark each “beat” in your script.**

A “beat” is a change or pivot in a topic, thought, or event within a monologue or a scene (for example, if your character wants something, s/he might first try asking nicely, then be more demanding, and then finally yell in frustration.) Remembering where the beats are will help you make a “map” of where and when your character’s tone, posture, or gesture changes.

2. **Write down the emotion for each beat.**

You can even use an emoji face (happy, sad, angry, afraid). Notice how your feelings and tone change from beat to beat.

## **AND OF COURSE**

1. **Read your lines in your script aloud many times.**

Repeat, repeat, and then, repeat!

2. **Stand up and move around as you read your lines out loud.**

Most of the time you are not going to perform sitting down, so get used to saying the lines standing up.

3. **Walk while you memorize your lines.**

Carry your script but try not to look at it (don’t do this while crossing the street!). Eventually, you won’t have to look at your script at all!

4. **Read and practice your lines right before you go to sleep and right when you wake up.**

Our brains are usually most relaxed at this time and can more easily absorb new information.

5. **Listening is just as important as speaking - Know and Understand your Cues!**

Cues are the lines another character speaks right before your character speaks. Knowing them is important because:

- They let you know when you have to speak;
  - They give you something to react (re-act) to, which will make the scene and your character seem more real.
- (HINT: If there is no actual cue line, imagine one in your head that is consistent with the story.)

6. **Practice with a partner.**

Run your lines with someone else looking at the script (“on book”) so they can prompt you when you get stuck.

## **ONCE YOU HAVE MEMORIZED**

1. **Rehearse your lines in the shower;**

2. **Rehearse your lines in front of your pets, friends, and family.**

Repeated practice will help you feel more confident and less nervous. You’ll even start to enjoy yourself!!!

## **AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, HAVE FUN!!!**



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## MEMORIZATION SAMPLE using a monologue from "Romeo & Juliet"

### Juliet - Act III, Scene 4

*He shall not now make me a joyful bride.  
I wonder at this haste, that I must wed!  
I pray you, tell my lord and father, madam,  
I will not marry yet. And when I do,  
I swear on heaven it shall be Romeo!*

### WHAT TO DO FIRST

1. Write down each line, monologue, or soliloquy at least 3 times exactly as shown in your script.

*He shall not now make me a joyful bride.  
I wonder at this haste, that I must wed!  
I pray you, tell my lord and father, madam,  
I will not marry yet. And when I do,  
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I pray you, tell my lord and father, madam,  
I will not marry yet. And when I do,  
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2. Write down each phrase, from the beginning to the end of each sentence (as opposed to each line).

*He shall not now make me a joyful bride.  
I wonder at this haste, that I must wed!  
I pray you, tell my lord and father, madam, I will not marry yet.  
And when I do, I swear on heaven it shall be Romeo!*

3. Scan for Iambic Pentameter and Poetic Devices to help you find your Operative Words.

<i>He shall / <b>not</b> now / <b>make</b> me / a joy / ful bride.</i>	(alliteration)
<i>I won / der at / this <b>haste</b>, / that I / <b>must</b> wed!</i>	(alliteration)
<i>I pray / you, tell / my lord / and father, / <b>madam</b>,</i>	(assonance)
<i><b>I will</b> / <b>not</b> mar / ry yet. / And <b>when</b> / <b>I do</b>,</i>	(antithesis)
<i>I <b>swear</b> / on <b>heav'n</b> / it shall / be <b>RO</b> / <b>meo</b>!</i>	(assonance)

Workshop 2 - Handout 2.5c

**"If I Can Do Shakespeare, I Can Do Anything!"**

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4. Underline the Operative Words in each line IN PENCIL.

*He shall not now make me a joyful bride.  
I wonder at this haste, that I must wed!  
I pray you, tell my lord and father, madam,  
I will not marry yet. And when I do,  
I swear on heav'n it shall be Romeo!*

(Note: This is just one choice for Operative Words - there may be others that you and your Teaching Artists prefer.)

NEXT

1. Find your lines in your “No Fear Shakespeare” book, and write them down in contemporary English.

*I won't be a joyful bride.  
I wonder why he's rushing this!  
I beg you, mother, tell my father I'm not marrying yet.  
And when I do marry, I swear to heaven it will be Romeo!*

2. Complete and Review your “Basic Acting 101” Worksheets

- to whom your character is speaking (relationship);     *My Mother*
- what s/he wants (motivation);                             *I want to be with Romeo!*
- what is in the way (conflict);                             *My father has chosen someone else for me to marry.*
- what your character is feeling (emotional state).     *Angry, Afraid, Defiant*

3. Note the Context

- *At this time in history, according to the law a girl had to marry whomever her father chose.*
- *Juliet already married Romeo (in Act II, Scene 4); marrying two people at the same time is illegal.*

THEN

1. Mark each “beat” in your script.

Beat 1     *He shall not now make me a joyful bride. /*  
Beat 2     *I wonder at this haste, that I must wed!*  
              *I pray you, tell my lord and father, madam, /*  
Beat 3     *I will not marry yet. And when I do,*  
              *I swear on heaven it shall be Romeo!*

2. Write down the emotion for each beat.

Beat 1     *Angry* 😡     *He shall not now make me a joyful bride. /*  
Beat 2     *Afraid* 😞     *I wonder at this haste, that I must wed!*  
              *I pray you, tell my lord and father, madam, /*  
Beat 3     *Defiant* 😡     *I will not marry yet. And when I do,*  
              *I swear on heaven it shall be Romeo!*

AND OF COURSE

1 thru 6

ONCE YOU HAVE MEMORIZED

1 & 2

And always remind yourself : “IF I CAN DO SHAKESPEARE, I CAN DO ANYTHING!”