

Shakespeare

Live from Stratford podcasts

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Level: Intermediate
Age: Teenagers / adults
Time needed: 30-40 minutes
Language focus: listening for gist, listening for specific details, prepositions



Warmer / alternative vocabulary exercise

Print out the image of Shakespeare and cut it into eight squares.

On the back of each square write the first letter of the words in vocabulary exercise 2. At the beginning of class, stick the picture on the board so that students can see the letters. Your board should look like this:

H	G
D	F
J	R
A	T

Use this to do vocabulary exercise 2 as a warmer. Students call out a letter. You read the definition and they have to find the word. When they find it, you turn over the section of the picture. Little by little the head will be revealed. Students must guess who it is before the last word is given. Then explain that all of these words are common Shakespearean themes.

Go onto Listening exercise 1 after this.

Vocabulary

1. Write the words up on the board and ask students to complete them. This should be easy. Use this to introduce the topic of Shakespearean themes.

Answers: *hatred, love, friendship*

2. Students match the words to the definitions. You may wish to allow dictionaries at this point.

Answers:

a) *hesitation*; b) *fate*; c) *deceit*; d) *greed*; e) *jealousy*; f) *revenge*; g) *ambition*; h) *tragedy*.

3. Ask students to suggest famous books or films that deal with any of these themes. If students know Shakespeare plays that address these themes, even better!

Listening

4. Explain that students are going to hear several people answering the question, "Is Shakespeare relevant today?" Point out that these people were interviewed in Stratford, the birthplace of Shakespeare, and that the interviews were done near the Shakespeare Trust, a museum about Shakespeare (both these terms are mentioned in the listening).

Play the listening once and ask students to put the topics in order as they hear them.

Answers:

1. *A person talks about Shakespeare in our libraries and books.*
2. *A person talks about the culture and history of Stratford-upon-Avon.*
3. *A person talks about a new portrait of Shakespeare.*
4. *A person talks about her children and their interest in Shakespeare.*
5. *A person talks about how difficult Shakespeare is.*
6. *A person talks about his work as a living statue of Shakespeare.*

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5. Play the listening again. Pause between each speaker and give students time to answer the question.

Answers:

- Speaker 1: love, revenge, friendship
- Speaker 2: the history and culture of the area
- Speaker 3: in his time
- Speaker 4: she's not interested
- Speaker 5: Shakespeare's poetry and plays
- Speaker 6: because of the language and the setting and the characters
- Speaker 7: John Shakespeare

Follow up: Shake



Language

6. Explain the activity and do the first example with the students. Point out that each sentence is missing a word. The missing word is always a preposition.

Answers:

1. I think that Shakespeare's relevant today because it talks **about** love, revenge, friendship ...
2. It's very important for the history that's evolved **around** the area.
3. That's gonna be displayed **within** the Shakespeare Trust building.
4. I'm not interested really **in** Shakespeare.
5. We should pay more attention **to** his poetry.
6. **From** that perspective it is still relevant.
7. I portray him every Saturday here **as** a living statue of William Shakespeare.

To follow this up, highlight the fixed phrases with the preposition. For example, *talk about, interested in, pay attention to, from that perspective, etc.*

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Transcript



Introduction

Welcome to onestopenglish's Live from Stratford podcast. We interviewed people in Stratford-upon-Avon, the birthplace of William Shakespeare, and asked them the question, "Is Shakespeare still relevant today?"

Speaker 1 (female)

I think that Shakespeare is relevant today because it talks about love, revenge, friendship and err, our universal truths...and it doesn't matter when we talk about them, they are always part of our lives. Err, that is why Shakespeare is still alive in our libraries and in our collections of books.

Speaker 2 (female)

I think Shakespeare is very important for the culture of Stratford-upon-Avon and for the history that's evolved around the area.

Speaker 3 (male)

Yeah, so within, erm, the Shakespeare Trust, erm, they've discovered a new, err, portrait of Shakespeare which was painted in his time, so it's basically the definitive image of him. And yeah, that's gonna be displayed within the Shakespeare Trust building as part of the museum. You know, there's still so much interest in Shakespeare that they're still discovering, erm, different facts, you know, which they hadn't, you know, known before. So, yeah.

Speaker 4 (female)

I think he's...I think he is relevant, and I have young children that, growing up in this area, that I would like them to get more involved. But, in my, my personal opinion is I'm not interested, erm, really, in Shakespeare. But, you know, I'd like future generations of my children to be. [laughs]

Speaker 5 (female)

I think that he is immortal and I think that we really should have to, to pay more attention to his, err, poetry and plays and so on.

Speaker 6 (female)

Erm... well in theory, probably. But most of...because most of his plays have big human themes to them like greed, love, hate and all this kind of stuff, so from that perspective it is still relevant, but I think it's difficult for people these days to approach Shakespeare because of the language and because it does sound old fashioned and because the settings and the characters are old for today's people. So, I...I think it's difficult to really answer that question.

Speaker 7 (male)

Hello! Yeah, well, you're talking to the right person because, err, my name is John Shakespeare and I portray him, every Saturday, here, as a living statue of William Shakespeare. Erm, I thought instead of sculpturing a statue of him, I'd become the statue, so I dress all in grey and then I...I show the visitors that Shakespeare just doesn't sit writing at his desk, he...I bring him to life in a, in a character. When the people come, they only see, sort of, dead statues of him whereas my statue comes to life and the children can shake my hands and they say "Ah! I've really met William Shakespeare's ghost!"

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Vocabulary: Shakespearean themes



1. Fill in the gaps to make three abstract nouns.

h_tr_d

l_v_

fr_ _nds_ _p

2. These three nouns are the themes of many Shakespeare plays. Match the other Shakespearean themes to their definitions.

hesitation

fate

deceit

greed

jealousy

revenge

ambition

tragedy

- a) _____ a pause before doing something, perhaps because you feel you should not do it
- b) _____ a power that some people believe controls everything that happens in their lives
- c) _____ a strong wish to have more money, things or power
- d) _____ a very sad event that causes people to suffer or die
- e) _____ an unhappy feeling because someone has something that you would like
- f) _____ dishonest behaviour that is intended to trick someone
- g) _____ something that you very much want to do, and that is usually difficult to achieve
- h) _____ something that you do to hurt or punish someone because they have hurt you or someone else

3. Can you think of any famous stories of books or films that feature these themes? What are they? Tell a partner.

Listening

4. Listen to people answer the question, "Is Shakespeare still relevant today?" Put the topics in the order you hear them.

- A person talks about a new portrait of Shakespeare.
- A person talks about culture and history of Stratford-upon-Avon.
- A person talks about her children and their interest in Shakespeare.
- A person talks about his work as a living statue of Shakespeare.
- A person talks about how difficult Shakespeare is because of the language and setting of the plays.
- A person talks about Shakespeare in libraries and books.

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5. Listen again and answer the questions.

Speaker 1: Name two of the “universal truths” the woman mentions.

Speaker 2: What two reasons does she give for the importance of Shakespeare?

Speaker 3: When was the portrait of Shakespeare painted?

Speaker 4: What is her personal opinion of Shakespeare?

Speaker 5: What should we pay more attention to, in the woman’s opinion?

Speaker 6: Why is Shakespeare difficult for people today?

Speaker 7: What is the man’s name?



Language

6. Look at the following sentences from the listening. Each of them is missing a preposition. Put the prepositions back where they belong.

1. I think that Shakespeare’s relevant today because it talks love, revenge, friendship...
2. It’s very important for the history that’s evolved the area.
3. That’s gonna be displayed the Shakespeare trust building.
4. I’m not interested really Shakespeare.
5. We should pay more attention his poetry.
6. That perspective it is still relevant.
7. I portray him every Saturday here a living statue of William Shakespeare.

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LISTENING SKILLS WORKSHEET

