

Dear Student:

Please find a list of contemporary playwrights to choose a monologue from below as well as several monologues from Shakespeare's plays and an extensive list of classical monologues to find on your own.

Choose either a contemporary monologue from recommended playwrights or one Shakespearean monologue for your audition.

CONTEMPORARY PLAYWRIGHTS- *Students should research the playwrights to find monologue they connect to as an actor and choose their monologue.*

Susan Lori Parks

Branden Jacobs-Jenkins

Dominique Morisseau

Zora Howard

CLASSICAL MONOLOGUES

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Puck

If we shadows have offended,

Think but this, and all is mended,

That you have but slumber'd here

While these visions did appear.

And this weak and idle theme,

No more yielding but a dream,

Gentles, do not reprehend: if you pardon, we will mend: And, as I am an honest Puck,

If we have unearned luck

Now to 'scape the serpent's tongue,

We will make amends ere long;

Else the Puck a liar call;
So, good night unto you all.
Give me your hands, if we be friends,
And Robin shall restore amends.

The Winter's Tale

PERDITA

Out, alas!
You'd be so lean, that blasts of January
Would blow you through and through.
Now, my fair'st friend,
I would I had some flowers o' the spring that might
Become your time of day; and yours, and yours,
That wear upon your virgin branches yet
Your maidenheads growing: O Proserpina,
For the flowers now, that frighted thou let'st fall
From Dis's waggon! daffodils,
That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty; violets dim,
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes
Or Cytherea's breath; pale primroses
That die unmarried, ere they can behold
Bight Phoebus in his strength--a malady
Most incident to maids; bold oxlips and
The crown imperial; lilies of all kinds,
The flower-de-luce being one! O, these I lack,
To make you garlands of, and my sweet friend,
To strew him o'er and o'er!

CESARIO/VIOLA:

I left no ring with her: what means this lady?
Fortune forbid my outside have not charm'd her!
She made good view of me; indeed, so much,

That sure methought her eyes had lost her tongue,
For she did speak in starts distractedly.

She loves me, sure; the cunning of her passion
Invites me in this churlish messenger.
None of my lord's ring! why, he sent her none.

I am the man: if it be so, as 'tis,
Poor lady, she were better love a dream.

Disguise, I see, thou art a wickedness,
Wherein the pregnant enemy does much.
How easy is it for the proper-false
In women's waxen hearts to set their forms!
Alas, our frailty is the cause, not we!
For such as we are made of, such we be.

How will this fadge? my master loves her dearly;
And I, poor monster, fond as much on him;
And she, mistaken, seems to dote on me.
What will become of this? As I am man,
My state is desperate for my master's love;
As I am woman,—now alas the day!—
What thriftless sighs shall poor Olivia breathe!

O time! thou must untangle this, not I;
It is too hard a knot for me to untie!

DAUGHTER

Why should I love this gentleman? 'Tis odds
He never will affect me. I am base,
My father the mean keeper of his prison,
And he a prince. To marry him is hopeless;
To be his whore is witless. Out upon 't!
What pushes are we wenches driven to
When fifteen once has found us! First, I saw him;
I, seeing, thought he was a goodly man;
He has as much to please a woman in him,
If he please to bestow it so, as ever
These eyes yet looked on. Next, I pitied him,

And so would any young wench, o' my conscience,
That ever dreamed, or vowed her maidenhead
To a young handsome man. Then I loved him,
Extremely loved him, infinitely loved him!
And yet he had a cousin, fair as he too.
But in my heart was Palamon, and there,
Lord, what a coil he keeps! To hear him
Sing in an evening, what a heaven it is!
And yet his songs are sad ones. Fairer spoken
Was never gentleman. When I come in
To bring him water in a morning, first
He bows his noble body, then salutes me thus:
"Fair, gentle maid, good morrow. May thy goodness
Get thee a happy husband." Once he kissed me;
I loved my lips the better ten days after.
Would he would do so ev'ry day! He grieves much—
And me as much to see his misery.
What should I do to make him know I love him?
For I would fain enjoy him. Say I ventured
To set him free? What says the law then?
Thus much for law or kindred! I will do it,
And this night, or tomorrow, he shall love me.

(from Hamlet, spoken by Hamlet)

To be, or not to be, that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
And by opposing end them. To die—to sleep,
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to: 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;
To sleep, perchance to dream—ay, there's the rub:

For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause—there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life.

For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
Th'oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of dispriz'd love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of th'unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscovere'd country, from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience doth make cowards of us all,
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pith and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry
And lose the name of action.

Petruchio: I'll attend her here,
And woo her with some spirit when she comes.
Say that she rail, why then I'll tell her plain
She sings as sweetly as a nightingale:

Say that she frown, I'll say she looks as clear
As morning roses newly wash'd with dew:
Say she be mute and will not speak a word,
Then I'll commend her volubility,
And say she uttereth piercing eloquence.
If she do bid me pack, I'll give her thanks,
As though she bid me stay by her a week:
If she deny to wed, I'll crave the day
When I shall ask the banns, and when be married.
But here she comes, and now, Petruchio, speak.

Mercutio: O, then I see Queen Mab hath been with you:

She is the fairies' midwife, and she comes
In shape no bigger than an agate stone
On the forefinger of an alderman,
Drawn with a team of little atomies
Over men's noses as they lie asleep:
Her wagon spokes made of long spinners' legs,
The cover of the wings of grasshoppers,
Her traces of the smallest spider web,
Her collars of the moonshine's wat'ry beams,
Her whip, of cricket's bone, the lash of film,
Her wagoner, a small grey-coated gnat,
Not half so big as a round little worm
Pricked from the lazy finger of a maid,
Her chariot is an empty hazel-nut
Made by the joiner squirrel or old grub,
Time out o' mind the fairies' coachmakers.
And in this state she gallops night by night
Through lovers' brains, and then they dream of love,
On courtiers' knees, that dream on curtsies straight,
O'er lawyers' fingers, who straight dream on fees,
O'er ladies' lips, who straight on kisses dream,
Which oft the angry Mab with blisters plagues,
Because their breaths with sweetmeats tainted are:
Sometimes she gallops o'er a courtier's nose,
And then dreams he of smelling out a suit:

And sometimes comes she with a tithe-pig's tail
Tickling a parson's nose as 'a lies asleep,
Then dreams he of another benefice.
Sometimes she driveth o'er a soldier's neck,
And then dreams he of cutting foreign throats,
Of breaches, ambuscadoes, Spanish blades,
Of healths five-fathom deep, and then anon
Drums in his ear, at which he starts and wakes,
And being thus frighted, swears a prayer or two
And sleeps again. This is that very Mab
That plats the manes of horses in the night,
And bakes the elflocks in foul sluttish hairs,
Which once untangled much misfortune bodes.
This is the hag, when maids lie on their backs,
That presses them and learns them first to bear,
Making them women of good carriage.
This is she!

Jacques: All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players.
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.
Then, the whining school-boy, with his satchel
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then, a soldier,
Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,
Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,
In fair round belly, with good capon lin'd,
With eyes severe, and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws, and modern instances,
And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,

With spectacles on nose, and pouch on side,
His youthful hose well sav'd, a world too wide
For his shrunk shank, and his big manly voice,
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,
That ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness and mere oblivion,
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

Female:

- Beatrice, Much Ado (4.1) - *Kill Claudio! You kill me to deny it....*
- Cleopatra, A&C (4.15) – *No more but e'en a woman, and commanded...*
- Cordelia, King Lear (1.1) – *Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave...*
- Cordelia, King Lear (4.7) – *O you kind Gods...*
- Cressida, T&C (3.2) – *Boldness comes to me now, and brings me heart...*
- Desdemona, Othello (4.2) – *Alas, Iago / What shall I do to win my lord again...*
- Emilia, Othello (4.3) – *But I do think it is their husbands' faults...*
- Helena, All's Well (1.3) – *Then I confess, Here on my knee....*
- Helena, All's Well (3.2) – *'Till I have no wife, I have nothing in France'* ...
- Helena, Midsummer (1.1) - *How happy some o'er other some can be...*
- Helena, Midsummer (3.2) – *Lo, she is one of this confederacy!...*
- Hermione, Winter's Tale (3.2) – *Sir, spare your threats...*
- Imogen, Cymbeline (3.4) – *Why, I must die...*
- Imogen, Cymbeline (3.6) – *I see a man's life is a tedious one...*
- Isabella, Measure for Measure (2.2) – *So you must be the first that gives this sentence...*
- Isabella, Measure for Measure (2.4) – *To whom should I complain...*
- Jailer's Daughter, Two Noble Kinsman (2.4) – *Why should I love this gentleman...*
- Jailer's Daughter, Two Noble Kinsman (2.6) – *Let all the dukes and all the devils roar...*
- Joan, Henry VI pt. I (5.4) – *First, let me tell you whom you have condemn'd...*
- Julia, Two Gentleman (1.2) – *Nay, would I were so anger'd with the same...*
- Julia, Two Gentleman (4.4) – *How many women would do such a message...*
- Juliet, R&J (2.2) – *Thou knowest the mast of night is on my face...*
- Juliet, R&J (3.2) – *Shall I speak ill of him that is my husband...*
- Juliet, R&J (3.2) – *Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds...*
- Juliet, R&J (3.2) – *O serpent heart hid with a flowering face...*
- Katherine, Taming of the Shrew (5.2) - *Fie, fie! Unknit that threat'ning unkind brow...*
- Lady Anne, Richard III (1.2) – *What, do you tremble...*
- Lady Macbeth, Macbeth (1.5) – *The raven himself is hoarse...*
- Lady Macbeth, Macbeth (1.7) – *Was the hope drunk...*
- Lady Percy, Henry IV pt. II (2.3) – *O yet, for God's sake, go not to these wars...*

- Margaret, Henri VI pt. III (1.4) – *Brave warriors, Clifford and Northumberland...*
- Paulina, Winter's Tale (3.2) – *What studied torments, tyrant, hast for me...*
- Phoebe, As You Like It (3.5) – *I would not be thy executioner...*
- Phoebe, As You Like It (3.5) – *Think not I love him though I ask for him...*
- Princess, Love's Labour's Lost (2.1) – *Good Lord Boyet, my beauty, though but mean...*
- Queen Margaret, Richard III (1.3) – *What? Were you snarling all before I came...*
- Queen Margaret, Richard III (4.4) – *I call thee then vain flourish of my fortune...*
- Rosalind, As You Like It (3.5) – *And why I pray you? Who might be your mother...*
- Viola, Twelfth Night (2.2) – *I left no ring with her...*

Male:

Non-Binary:

Ariel, The Tempest

Boy, Henry V

Launcelot, Merchant

Puck, Midsummer,