



Pedagogical Pathways: *The Duchess of Malfi*

Emotions

Objectives

Before, while, and after reading *The Duchess of Malfi*, these activities can help learners to:

- Gain a deeper understanding of and critically think about different emotions
- Apply the different emotions to characters in the play
- Understand the emotional sides of the characters in the play

Guiding Questions

1. What are the main emotions expressed in *The Duchess of Malfi*, and how are they expressed?
2. How does understanding a character's emotions help us understand his or her actions?

Activities (overview)

- **Pre-Reading (in groups)**
 - Students activate background knowledge by identifying and discussing various emotions from the play.
- **While Reading (in groups):**
 - Students examine emotions in different scenes of the play.
 - Students do a close reading of selected scenes from the play and identify specific language used by the characters to express their emotions.
- **Post-Reading (in groups):**
 - Students apply what they have learned and discussed about emotions and perform selected scenes from the play with different emotions.

Activities

Pre-reading: Emotions

Which emotions can you identify in these stills from various stagings of the play?



Compare your answers with another group. How are they similar? How are they different? Why?

While reading: Reasons for and language of emotions

In a group, read the following scenes and identify the emotions. Who is showing which emotion(s)?

Act 1 Scene 2 (from *Enter Antonio* until end of scene)

Character	Emotion expressed	Reason(s) why the character feels that way

Act 2 Scene 5 (entire scene)

Character	Emotion expressed	Reason(s) why the character feels that way

Act 4 Scene 1 (entire scene)

Character	Emotion expressed	Reason(s) why the character feels that way

Act 5 Scene 5 (entire scene)

Character	Emotion expressed	Reason(s) why the character feels that way

Examine the above mentioned scenes again, and this time, pay particular attention to the language used to express emotions. Which words are used to express anger, joy, fear, hope, etc.? If there are words that are unfamiliar, look them up in the dictionary!

Act 1 Scene 2 (from *Enter Antonio* until end of scene)

Character	Emotion expressed	Language used

Act 2 Scene 5 (entire scene)

Character	Emotion expressed	Language used

Act 4 Scene 1 (entire scene)

Character	Emotion expressed	Language used

Act 5 Scene 5 (entire scene)

Character	Emotion expressed	Language used

Post-reading: Switching emotions

(for instructor)

- Have students split into groups and choose a scene from the play and perform the scene with the intended emotions. After the students perform the scene with the intended emotions, have them perform it with *different* emotions. For example, have characters who were initially cheerful now be acted angrily. After the students perform the scene for the second time, have them discuss the following questions in groups:
 - (a) How did changing the emotions of the characters (but not the words themselves) change the perceived meaning of the scene?
 - (b) How did performing the characters with different emotions help you understand the characters and their standpoint better?
- Discuss your answers to (3) as a class.