

Soliloquy Buster

Note: It is vital do all the steps, in sequence, for the best results.

1. Read the soliloquy around in a circle, stopping and changing readers at every punctuation mark.
Question: What do you notice about the pattern of the lines?
2. Rock 'em, Sock 'em Shakespeare: Read the lines aloud while moving in a straight line, changing directions with an abrupt, full-body turn at every punctuation mark.
Questions: How does the piece "move"? Is there a pattern emerging?
3. Stand in two equal lines, facing each other. Alternate speaking the lines, as two groups, switching sides each time you come to a punctuation mark.
Questions: Does the soliloquy work as a dialogue? How does this exercise make you feel about (Mark Antony)'s feelings?
4. Repeat step four, but this time, start out by speaking the lines very softly, gradually increasing the volume until you are almost shouting the last line.
Question: Now, how do you feel?

At this point, pause and review what the group has discovered about the soliloquy by going through steps 1-4.

5. Break into small groups of five. Identify as many figures of speech as possible, paying particular attention to imagery.
Questions: How do they work in the soliloquy? How do they add meaning?
6. Still in small groups, cut the soliloquy to half its original length. Tell them that they can cut half a line or phrase: the key is to cut the piece in half. Circulate around the room, checking in with each group periodically. This could take up to 10 minutes, but don't let them drag the process out.
7. Then decide how to turn your cut soliloquy into a script for all five members of the group. The rules for this performance: everybody participates; everybody has lines. Present each group's soliloquy-scene for the entire class, 2 or 3 at a time.
Questions: Comment on the staging and performance: what was particularly inventive or creative about each performance? Then compare cuttings. Compare what the groups left in or cut out of the soliloquy. Are some lines vital to an understanding of the soliloquy-scene? Are some lines dispensable?