



ISA

SHAKESPEARE
MONOLOGUE
COMPETITION



Open to KS2 – KS5
Final: Wednesday 22 April 2026,
Stantonbury Theatre, MK14 6BN

DEADLINE

Thursday 8 January 2026

Competition open to ISA Members' schools only
Visit the ISA website for more information

isaschools.org.uk | isaarts@isaschools.org.uk

ISA
ARTS

The Shakespeare Monologue Competition invites pupils from ISA members' schools to explore Shakespeare's plays and characters and test their acting abilities by performing a monologue. There is also the opportunity for students to write their own Shakespeare-inspired monologue.

Eligibility

Only schools whose Head is a Member with ISA are eligible to enter ISA competitions. Any pupils competing must be on the main school's admissions register, on the date of the event.

Our Key Stages are based on the UK national curriculum, for more information and to check the correct Key Stage for your students see [here](#). Please ensure you enter pupils according to the UK system, even if your own school's age group system differs.

At ISA, we are committed to making our opportunities accessible, we welcome applications from all pupils, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities. If your pupil(s), those with an EHCP or on the school's SEND register, are working at a level that differs from their age group's key stage, or if your school or student focuses on development and skills rather than year groups, please contact us.

Alternative formats of these guidelines are available on request. Please notify us at the earliest opportunity so we can provide the document accordingly, if required.

Competition Categories

Please note, this competition involves an online qualification round and a final event in person.

Schools can enter a maximum of 8 entries in section A (Learnt Monologue) and 8 entries in section B (Original Monologue), so 16 entries total. We encourage schools to run a competition in house and submit their best monologues. Only one student can perform a monologue.

A. Learnt Monologue

Choose a monologue from any Shakespeare play, learn it by heart and perform it

- Year 3-4 Learnt Monologue
- Year 5-6 Learnt Monologue
- Year 7-9 Learnt Monologue
- Year 10-13 Learnt Monologue

B. Original Monologue

Write and perform an original monologue based on your favourite Shakespeare character

- Year 3-4 Learnt Monologue
- Year 5-6 Learnt Monologue
- Year 7-9 Learnt Monologue
- Year 10-13 Learnt Monologue
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Competition Format

1. Online Qualification Round

The first stage of this competition consists of an online qualification round. Students must perform the same monologue in both rounds.

Late cancellations cause considerable inconvenience to the organisers and prevent other schools from taking part. All entries received will be regarded as a definite commitment to attend the final if successful.

2. The Final

Finalists will be invited to the final at **date and venue TBC**. Schools will be asked to email the following information to isaarts@isaschools.org.uk.

- Full names and numbers of attendees

Judging criteria

- Organisation – being well prepared and knowing your material
- Vocal production – clarity, pitch, pace and articulation
- Performance – acting choices, movement, facial expressions
- How well you communicate the feelings and motivations of the character

How to enter

Entries must be submitted via the online form on the ISA website [here](#) by **Monday 9 February 2026** at the latest.

- Pupils are invited to record a video of their entry and submit it via the online form on the ISA website, following the guidelines below.
- A working URL link must be given for the video (e.g., to YouTube or Vimeo). ISA won't accept any file to download, WeTransfer links, or broken links.
- Please make sure that your videos are accessible to view by anyone with the link. YouTube videos will need to be unlisted, Vimeo videos will need to be unlisted and age rated, Google Drive will need to be set to 'Anyone with the link' and OneDrive needs to be set with 'share link' to 'anyone'.
- The maximum duration for each entry is five minutes.
- While we recognise the potential benefit of AI, we kindly request that participants are using it for inspiration and support and in line with their schools policies on its use, rather than using it to generate their pieces. Please include details about the process of using AI under "any special circumstances" box if applicable, so judges are aware.
- ISA suggests running a competition in-house and submitting your best monologues.

Tips

Dare to be different! With hundreds of applicants, try to stand out by exploring a monologue, or a play, or a character that isn't so well known. Try and find a monologue that really speaks to you, that you enjoy reading, and that you want to learn more about.

Performances

- Voice, gesture and intonation are all really important to make your monologue come alive!
- Make sure you warm yourself up before you perform. Try humming to warm up your vocals, deep breathing to relax yourself, and stretching to loosen your muscles and joints for a lovely physical performance.
- Try 'chunking' up your monologue into bits. Give each chunk a title, linked to the emotion and desire of your character in that section. The chunks will make the speech easier to learn, and by thinking about emotions and desires for each chunk, you will avoid a flat delivery!
- Look at Shakespeare's language. Sometimes he gives clues about which words to stress. He often uses antithesis, where he places one word against a word of opposite meaning. Look for *opposite* words and really 'punch' them to stress how important they are! (e.g., *FAIR is FOUL and FOUL is FAIR*)
- Look at Shakespeare's rhythm. He often uses ten syllable lines in his verse (known as iambic pentameter). e.g. *If music be the food of love play on! Or A horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse*). The rhythm might suggest confidence and passion. When the rhythm differs from the ten syllable pattern, it might suggest your character is uncertain, worried or pausing for thought on the missing beat. Be a detective and find clues to tell you how to deliver your line.
- Research your character and their journey. Are they good or evil? Are they content or miserable? Really throw caution to the wind and *become* your character for three minutes in front of the camera.
- For learnt monologues, see if you can find examples on YouTube of other actors performing your monologue. What do you like about their performance? What would you change about it?

Writing a Monologue

Write your own monologue inspired by Shakespeare. Be creative and use your imagination.

You could write a monologue from the point of view of one of Shakespeare's characters and show how they feel about person or event that they don't get to speak about in the original play. You could imagine what happens next to a character, or what happened to them when they were younger. You could write in the voice of one of the smaller characters in a Shakespeare play, or you could invent an entirely new character and tell us how they feel about what is happening. You might want to write about the world from the perspective of someone in Shakespeare's own life, or someone from the present day who is inspired by Shakespeare, or you could even create a monologue for an alien from the future who has just read one of his plays for the first time...the possibilities are endless!

- Don't make your monologue too long. Most of Shakespeare's monologues are around 10 – 20 lines.
- Think about the character – who are they, what do they want, how do they speak?
- Think about when the character is living – how does this affect their thoughts and language?
- Think about how the character feels, and how they talk to the audience – are they whispering a secret, sharing something sad, trying to convince the audience of something, discussing something exciting, or even shouting in anger?
- Think about how you want your monologue sound – will it rhyme, is there a rhythm, or will you write in prose?
- Keep reading your monologue out loud or ask a friend to read it to you. Hearing your monologue will help you understand how it sounds and how it makes an audience feel.
- Once you have finished your monologue, learn it off by heart and create a performance to send to us.

If you have any questions, please contact isaarts@isaschools.org.uk