

The Winter's Tale: (c)

Imagery and themes

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☞ refers to links on www.crossref-it.info

- ❖ **Lesson focus:** To explore Shakespeare's use of imagery in *The Winter's Tale*, and how images convey the themes of the play.
 - ❖ **Opening exercise:** Ask students to each find an image in I.ii. (another suitable scene can be used, if preferred)
 - They should draw the image, including suggesting its meaning / significance, in the form of a cartoon
 - Encourage creative thinking in this pictorial representation.
 - Students could hold up their efforts for inspection or brief comment
 - Ensure that students are clear about the significance of imagery in a Shakespeare play. (See ☞ Synopses > Act I scene ii)
 - ❖ **Textual examination:** Allocate sections of the whole play to pairs or small groups
 - There are five acts, of course, and 15 scenes in the play
 - Divide the whiteboard into seven sections (or have seven pieces of large paper) and head them as follows:
 - Disease and cure
 - Sleep and dreams
 - Nature
 - Weather
 - Time
 - The arts
 - Youth and old age.
 - ❖ Students find references relating to those headings from 'their' scene and come out to write them up with board pens as they find examples
 - They should see the headings as broad (ie: if in doubt, include it). (See ☞ Themes and significant ideas in *The Winter's Tale* > especially Ideas of nature, Nature)
 - ❖ **Discussion ideas:** Discuss the imagery found:
 - What ideas and impressions are given of the play and its concerns?
 - Are particular themes found in clusters in specific parts of the play?
 - Why?
 - What opposite pairings can you find?
 - Students could discuss these ideas in groups before reporting back.
 - ❖ **Recreative task:** Find or create a picture (or collage of pictures) which would represent *The Winter's Tale*, as might be used on a book cover or a poster for a stage production.
 - ❖ **Critical task:** *The Winter's Tale* is rich with imagery, often appearing in pairs of opposites:
 - Choose one such pairing
 - Explore its role and significance in the play.
 - ❖ **Extension task:** Write a series of pieces of advice to a prospective director of this play:
 - Explain how you think some of the significant imagery could be utilised in performance
 - This could be written in a question and answer format
- If students are able to see a production of *The Winter's Tale*, they could review this aspect of what they saw and heard. (See ☞ Resources and further reading)