


Dr Faustus: (f) Minor characters

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

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- ❖ **Lesson focus:** To explore how the minor characters support and illustrate the major characters and the themes of the play.
- ❖ **Opening exercise:** Each student should think of a story they know well (play, film or novel)
 - If possible, they could be warned in advance to think of, or bring in, their example
 - Each should pick two or three minor characters and suggest what purpose they have in the structure of their story
 - Collect on the board the roles which such characters play.
- ❖ **Textual examination:** Allocate the scenes of the play around the group
 - Take account of the fact that some are much longer than others!
 - For each scene, prepare a set of cards as follows:
 - Put the name of each minor character which appears on a separate card
 - Add to each card the purpose(s) that character seems to have
 - Also write the scene number on the card
 - Collect in the cards and fasten together cards which concern the same character (ie: those who appear in more than one scene).
(☞ Characterisation in *Doctor Faustus* > Characters: individual and representative,
☞ also, > Valdes and Cornelius and the Three Scholars,
☞ also, > Good and Evil Angels and the Old Man,
☞ also, > Pope, Emperor, the Duke and Duchess, and their courts,
- ☞ also, > Wagner,
☞ also, > Comic characters: Robin, Rafe and Vintner)
- ❖ **Discussion ideas:** Spread the cards out and ask students to sort them into groups according to the purposes written on them
 - Discuss findings
(☞ The themes of *Doctor Faustus* > The handling of themes in *Doctor Faustus*)
 - What does this say about the structure of the play?
(☞ Structure of *Doctor Faustus*)
- ❖ **Recreative task:** Attitudes to Faustus
 - Students work in groups of three
 - Two are allocated minor characters (preferably two which do not meet in the play) and the third person is the interviewer
 - Give students about 15 minutes to devise an interview
 - Try to show what the characters think of Faustus and of some of the themes of the play
 - Listen to the results
 - A variation would be to make Wagner the interviewer.
- ❖ **Critical task:** Choose any two minor characters and show how important they are in the dramatic structure of the play.
- ❖ **Extension task:** If you were to produce a thirty-minute animated version of *Dr Faustus* (similar to those which have been done of Shakespeare's plays) which of the minor characters would you keep in, and why?

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