Shakespeare Speaks
Though this be madness yet there is Method in't: Lesson plan

The video to accompany this lesson plan can be found here:
http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/course/shakespeare/unit-1/session-7

Aims: Students will...
- listen for gist and detail in the context of a video about Shakespeare’s life, language and plays.
- understand the meaning, use and form of the phrase there's method in my madness.
- be able to understand and use expressions to say that you think someone is acting crazy.

Task A: Lead in and gist
- Play the scene from the video from 01.49 to 01.54 and ask students to decide if they think Hamlet is mad and why / why not?
- Then play the video from start to end and tell students to answer the gist question: Is Hamlet really mad? Students check answers in pairs and then as a class.

Answer
No, he's just pretending to be mad.

Task B: Detail
- Give students a few minutes to read the questions in task B and then play video again for students to answer the questions.
- Students discuss answers in pairs and then check as a class.

Answers
1) What were Thomas Swann and Robert Harley doing before they arrived at the pub? They were rehearsing Hamlet. A 'rehearsal' is when actors practise a play for later public performance.
2) In Shakespeare’s Hamlet, why is Hamlet pretending to be mad? To discover who killed his father.
3) What does Polonius say about the crazy things Hamlet says? He says that some of the things he says make sense.
4) Who was Hamnet and how is he linked to Hamlet? **Hamnet was Shakespeare's son,** who died at just 11 years old. It is possible that Shakespeare’s sadness about his death influenced the speeches that he wrote for Hamlet.

**Task C: Language: There's method in my madness**
- Give students a few minutes to discuss the answers to Task C in pairs.
- Play the narrator section from 02.38 to 03.25 for students to check answers. Then check answers as a class.

**Answers**
1) **There's method in my madness** can be used today when you do something that looks **crazy** but you have a **good / sensible** reason for doing it!
2) The lady with a messy desk thinks she has **method in her madness?** Because she knows **where everything is.**
3) I know I look silly wearing a coat in this weather, but there's method **to / in** my madness. (Highlight that **to** is more common in American English and **in** in British English.)

**Task D: Vocabulary**
Play the audio on this page and students complete the sentences with the phrases they hear. [http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/course/shakespeare/unit-1/session-7/activity-3](http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/course/shakespeare/unit-1/session-7/activity-3)
- Highlight that these are ways to say 'your actions / behaviour is crazy!'

**Answers**
1) You're going to ask her to marry you? You're **out of your mind!** You've only known her for 4 weeks!
2) That's the third time this week that I've left my lunch at home! I **must be losing it!**
3) You're going running in this weather?? You're **absolutely bonkers!**
4) You're giving away all your money to charity?? You're **off your rocker!**
5) You're going to do a skydive? You're **nuts!**

- Encourage students to repeat the phrases after the audio to practise pronunciation.
- Play a revision games from the handout 'Eight Vocabulary activities' to practise the phrases.

**Task H: Discussion**
- Give students time to make notes on the topic and then put students into small groups to discuss. After listening the group members decide if there really is method in their madness!
- Focus on any good examples of language and any errors to correct.
- **Extra:** Give students a few minutes to think about what brave / unusual things they have done (e.g. skydive / marathon / karaoke). They mingle and share experiences and respond to each person’s story with a 'you're crazy' phrase if they think the action is crazy!
Though this be madness: Worksheet one

Task B: Detail

Answer the questions:

1) What were Thomas Swann and Robert Harley doing before they arrived at the pub?

2) In Shakespeare’s Hamlet, why is Hamlet pretending to be mad?

3) What does Polonius say about the crazy things Hamlet says?

4) Who was Hamnet and how is he linked to Hamlet?

Task C: Language – There’s method in my madness

Complete the gaps in the sentences

1) **There’s method in my madness** can be used today when you do something that looks ______ but you have a ______ reason for doing it!"

2) The lady with a messy desk thinks she has **method in her madness** because she ______ ______ ______ ______.

3) I know I look silly wearing a coat in this weather, but there’s method ______ my madness. I’m preparing for my marathon in the Sahara!
Task D: Phrases to say your behaviour is strange

Listen and complete the sentences

1) You're going to ask her to marry you? You're ______ ______ ______ ______
   You've only known her for 4 weeks!

2) That's the third time this week that I've left my lunch at home –
   I think I ______ ______ ______ ______

3) You're going running in this weather?! ______ ______ ______!

4) You're giving away all your money to charity?! ______ ______ ______ ______!

5) You're going to do a skydive? ______ ______!

Task E: Discussion

What do you (or someone you know) do that seems crazy, but there is actually method in your madness?!

Make notes on:

- what you / they do

- why people think you / they are crazy for doing it

- what your / their sensible reason for doing it is

Use the phrase there's method in my madness in your story and try to use some of the other phrases from this session too.

For example: My friends think I'm bonkers because _____ but there's method in my madness because _____.