BBC LEARNING ENGLISH
Shakespeare Speaks
Strange bedfellows: Lesson plan

The video to accompany this lesson plan can be found here:
http://www.live.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/course/shakespeare/unit-1/session-6

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 **strange bedfellows.**
- be able to understand and use idioms and phrases to talk about relationships.

Task A: Lead in and gist
- Introduce Caliban and Trinculo and find out if students know which play they are in.
- Put students into pairs with one student facing the screen and one with their back to the screen. Play video on mute from 00.57 to 01.34. Students who can see the screen need to explain everything they can see happening to their partner who cannot to see the screen. Then they swap seats. Play video on mute from 01.47 to 02.04. The other partner now explains everything they can see happening.
- Students discuss in pairs what they think is happening in this scene from the Tempest.
- Students watch the complete video to find out and answer this gist question:
  How many unusual pairings you can find in the animation?
- Play the video from beginning to end.
- Students compare answers in pairs and then check as a class.

Answer
There are lots of unusual partnerships in this episode, for example: the cat sleeps with the chickens, Caliban and Trinculo share a coat, Miley Cyrus and Michael Bublé do a duet!

Task B: Detail
- Hand out worksheet (pages three and four of this document.) Students read the questions.
- Play video again for students to complete the information about the play The Tempest.
- Students discuss answers in pairs and give reasons. Then check answers as a class.

Answers
1. The Tempest is about magic, music and **monsters**.
2. Caliban looks like a cross between a man and **a fish**.
3. Caliban is wearing a gaberdine, which is a big **coat**.

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4. Trinculo gets under Caliban's gaberdine to protect him from **the weather / the storm**
5. Will explains that his line: 'misery acquaints a man with strange bed-fellows' means that when times are **hard** people do things they **don't normally** do.

Task C: Language - Strange bedfellows

- Give students a few minutes to read Task C and discuss the answers in pairs.
- Play the narrator section from 02.36 to 03.30 for students to check their answers.

Answers

1) Are **strange bedfellows** very similar or very different? **Very different, but connected in an activity.**

2) Are **strange bedfellows** normally seen together? **No.**

3) What does the saying 'politics makes strange bedfellows' mean? **Politics can bring together people who have very little in common normally.**

4) Why are Miley Cyrus and Michael Bublé described as **strange bedfellows** in the video? **Because they are very different, but are connected in an activity (singing).**

Task D: Discussion

- Give students a few minutes to prepare what they are going to talk about and then put them into new groups to share their stories and vote for the most unusual pairing!
- Feedback interesting answers and focus on any good language and any errors to correct.

Task E: Relationship phrases

- Tell students they will explore some common sayings about how well people are matched.
- Students work in small groups to decide which phrases describe a good match and which describe a bad match. Check answers and check meaning and pronunciation of the phrases.

Answers

like chalk and cheese = two people who are very different from each other

an odd couple = two people who are in a relationship, but are different and not well-suited

a match made in heaven = a perfect combination of people or things

made for each other = a perfect match

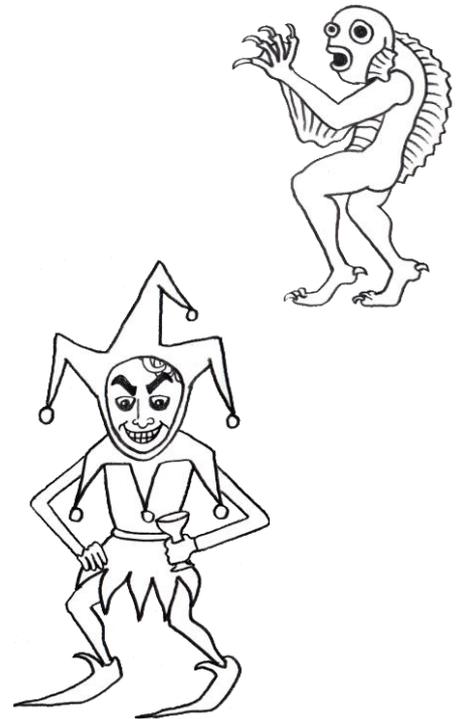**two of a kind =** two people with very similar characters

- Play one of the vocab revision games from the worksheet **Eight Vocabulary Activities**.
- Extra task: students use the phrases they learnt to talk about their own relationships with friends and family members.

Strange bedfellows: Worksheet one

Task B: Detail

Complete the information about The Tempest by William Shakespeare:

1. The Tempest is about magic, music and _____ .

2. Caliban looks like a cross between a man and _____ .

3. Caliban is wearing a gaberdine, which is a big _____ .

4. Trinculo gets under Caliban's gaberdine to protect him from _____ .

5. Will explains that his line: 'misery acquaints a man with strange bed-fellows' means that when times are _____ , people do things they _____ _____ do.

Task C: Language – Strange bedfellows

Answer the questions:

1) Are **strange bedfellows** very similar or very different?

2) Are **strange bedfellows** normally seen together?

3) What does the saying 'politics makes strange bedfellows' mean?

4) Why are Miley Cyrus and Michael Bublé described as **strange bedfellows** in the video?

Strange bedfellows: Worksheet two

Task D: Discussion

Tell your group about a pair of people or things that you think are strange bedfellows. For example:

• A couple that seem like an odd match.

• A weird combination of food that you enjoy eating.

• Two singers who would make strange bedfellows if they sang a duet together.

• An unusual political alliance from the past or the present.

Task E: Relationship phrases

Which phrases describe a good match and which phrases describe a bad match?

a) Marco and Ana make **an odd couple**!

b) You two are **made for each other**!

c) My sister and I are **like chalk and cheese**.

d) Li and Chen really are **two of a kind**!

e) Strawberries and cream are **a match made in heaven**.