Introduction: Based on the text that you have chosen to work on, lead a brief discussion with the students about the central issue that the character is facing.

Purposeful Play: The goal of the following warm up is for students to a) learn to work together, collaborate and follow instructions and, b) explore some of the key events, words, themes of the Shakespeare play they are studying.

Ask students to walk around the room, filling up the space. Explain that there will be no talking during the entire exercise.

Ask students to increase their pace, avoiding collisions with others.

Ask students to:

Double the pace again.

Change directions (every time the leader claps his/her hands).

Double the pace again.

Change directions.

Freeze.

Lie down. Sit up. Lie down. Stand up. Walk around the room.

Freeze.

Walk around the room.

Get both feet off the ground.

Walk around the room.

Freeze. You have ten counts to touch all four walls and return to the same position you are now in (no running, no talking). Go.

Walk around the room.
Freeze. You have ten counts to touch four elbows, four knees and return to your place. Go.

Walk around the room.

Freeze, close your eyes. Ask students, with their eyes closed, to physicalize a significant word in the play. After about 15-20 seconds, ask students to return to neutral. Give them another word to physicalize. Then back to neutral. Then another word.

Walk around the room. Freeze. Explain that this time you will give them a word to explore but they will do so with their eyes open. In addition they will speak the word as they physicalize it. Again choose significant words from the play. Give them three words to explore (make sure to define the word if it is one that the students may not understand.)

Walk around the room. Freeze.

Freeze, without talking, work together to create a tomb or a forest or a battlefield or a witch’s coven – a significant setting in the play you are studying.

Walk around the room.

Freeze. You have five counts to silently form a circle. One…two…three…, etc.

**Outcomes:** Students are introduced to key events, themes and vocabulary from the play by getting them up on their feet, moving around and following directions.

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**Imagery Exercise:** Find a speech that contains a lot of imagery from the play you are studying. Divide the speech up into images that can be physicalized by the students.

Divide the class into groups and assign each group one of the images in the speech.

Ask the groups to physicalize the assigned image. Every student in the group must participate.

Line the groups up in the order of the speech. The instructor reads the speech as each group physicalizes their image.

Hold a brief discussion about what the groups saw in the physicalizations.

Give the students a few minutes to add the language to their physicalizations. All students must speak some portion of their group’s text.

Have the groups line up in order of the speech to share their work.
Discuss what they saw and heard. Ask what they learned about their section of the text by inhabiting it? What words or images really struck them? What did they see in other group’s text? What did they learn about the character? What is he/she saying? What is going on with him/her in the passage? What does s/he want? What are the obstacles? What in the text leads you to that conclusion? Looking at the words that the character uses, what conclusions can be drawn about her/his state of mind at this point? What do the students think the character will choose to?

Outcomes: Students gain an understanding of a complex passage and what it reveals about the character’s state of mind. They also learn about collaboration, language, metaphor, imagery and character.

Speech Work: Choose a key speech in the play.

Ask the students to stand and form a circle. Hand out the text and remind students of the given circumstances of the speech.

Read the speech out loud and in unison. Afterward, ask the students what words stood out for them.

Read the speech again, one person at a time, punctuation to punctuation. Ask the students to step forward into the circle when they read their phrase, and step back when they are done. Afterward, ask the students what they discovered about the way in which the character’s thoughts are cut up?

Read the speech again and assign a gesture based on the given circumstances of the play. For the Macbeth speech, we asked participants to put their hand on their chest anytime Macbeth mentions himself. Briefly discuss the discoveries.

Ask the students to read the speech again and this time in addition to the first gesture, assign another gesture that points out an opposing issue/theme/conflict in the speech. For the Macbeth speech, we asked participants to stomp on any reference to Banquo.

Discuss what they have learned about the character and what s/he feels at this moment in the play.

Outcomes: Students gain an understanding of a complex speech by reading through it several times to build comprehension and discover specifics about the thoughts and feelings of the character to better understand his/her journey in the play.