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EN30SL

May 5, 2017

Ms. Smith

Should Shakespeare be taught in schools?

try to present a firm position w/ title

To teach, or not to teach? That is the question that strikes many educators and students regarding Shakespearean plays. In the event that Shakespeare's works were not taught, one might not know that the hook of this paragraph was modelled after Prince Hamlet's famous line in *Hamlet*. By the same token, Shakespearean masterpieces allow students to expand vocabulary, increase brain activity, strengthen the ability to interpret the English language, and students can relate some stories to their personal life. Therefore, it is necessary for Shakespeare to be taught in school. ✓ Strong intro!

Written in a different style of English from what we use today, many, if not all, of Shakespearean plays coerce students into expanding their knowledge and vocabulary. Several scientists, psychologists, and English academics from Liverpool University have done research which shows that Shakespeare can make one smarter. While reading ordinary text, normal brain activity was shown in subjects of the study. Conversely, when subjects read Shakespeare's text, their brain activity jumped due to unfamiliarity and the sustainment of thought regarding a certain word or phrase (Henry). The addition of Shakespearean plays also exposes students to a rather unconventional form of English. Predictability is an overriding element in Modern

English and exposure to Shakespeare's deliberate dialect mistakes sparks creativity while also making today's students more knowledgeable (Dwyer). Brain activity may be increased due to the sustainment of thoughts about a scenario in the play. During the extended thought, it is very possible that the reader is relating the play to their own life.

Many of Shakespeare's plays, written nearly 450 years ago, include modern day situations in which students could find themselves going through at one time or another. For example, one might find themselves falling in love with another who is not up to their parents', guardians', or peers' "standards". Shakespeare portrays this certain situation in *Romeo and Juliet*, when Romeo realized that he cannot love Juliet since she is a Capulet, the enemy of his family (1.5.117-118). This situation can be brought to modern day and compared to readers who are attracted to the same sex. One might feel this way, but also feel as if their love is forbidden due to their relatives' or peers' negative views on homosexuality. Another problem the reader may face is being attracted to someone of a different race, while their family is racist and disregard anyone of a race other than their own. Clearly it is possible for students to overcome the views of others and to follow their heart. Also, one could find themselves getting manipulated into acting against their morals or committing crimes by being belittled.

relevant point!

Shakespeare demonstrated this in *Macbeth* when Lady Macbeth belittled Macbeth to manipulate him into following her commands (1.7.54-56). Many Shakespeare readers could relate to this type of scenario, especially in high school. This relationship between literature and life also lets students interpret not only Early Modern English used in Shakespeare's plays but also Modern English more efficiently.

of 2  
comma before conjunction

Language interpretation is a considerable skill to possess as English is ever-changing. In the 1500's, the language was significantly different. Shakespeare did his part as a pioneer in the evolution of the English language. He invented around ten percent of the words used in his plays, poems and sonnets (Dwyer). The strange words help students improve their vocabulary and their ability to grasp the meaning of unusual words. As older classics are also read after Shakespeare's works, students will find themselves able to understand words that they may not have seen before. In fact, Shakespeare played such a profound role in language enrichment that it is impossible to fully gauge the impact that he had on English (Anderson). This proves that not only did Shakespeare invent words that we are now able to understand, but also much of our current vocabulary evolved through him. The ability to interpret Shakespeare's Early Modern English improves the reader's Modern English skills while also preparing them for more challenging pieces of literature.

As one thinks about the several reasons why Shakespeare should be taught in school, the opposing reasons also come to mind. For instance, it is said that Shakespearean plays promote gender inequality by containing mainly male leads and by giving women unpleasant roles. However, this is not true because at the grade level when Shakespeare is introduced, students should have a clear understanding of gender equality. Along with understanding equality, students should realize that Shakespeare's plays are purely fictional and were written over 400 years ago. Views on equality have changed in modern times and in no way do Shakespearean plays promote being sexist nor do they promote students to treat genders unequally. Another argument one may have is that today's students do not necessarily care about authors who are "irrelevant" to current events. Albeit he wrote his plays over 400 years

ago, Shakespeare is important to current events because he is one of the core reasons why the English language is the way it is. It is important for students to learn the evolution of English and how Shakespeare revolutionized the writing world. ✓

Shakespeare's plays are a critical part of modern education. They allow students to become smarter, interpret the English language better, and they can relate these 400 year old works of art to their personal life. It is necessary for students to learn Shakespeare for their own personal benefits. Also the works of such an impactful writer should have the ability to live on forever. As Shakespeare said in *Sonnet 18*, "So long as men can breathe or eyes can see, / So long lives this, and this gives life to thee." (13-14).

*"no italics"*  
*Can't end w/ a direct quote -  
so make a final statement*

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### Works Cited

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Central Idea: Shakespeare should be taught in school ✓✓

Form: Persuasive essay

Purpose: To prove that there are several benefits to reading Shakespeare ✓

Public Audience: Students taking highschool english and English teachers ✓

Context: In a library or English classroom ✓