

The background of the slide features a faded, high-key photograph of two men in dark suits and white shirts, seen from behind as they look out a window. The window has a light-colored frame, and the view outside is bright and hazy. The overall tone is professional and academic.

# THE DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE

Monologue and Soliloquy in Plautus and  
Shakespeare

- CLIL module by Mariarita Semprini

# HOT SEAT

## Activity 1A (30 minutes)

### Recycling and Revision: Hot Seat

Do you know this game? One of you, sitting turning away from the screen, will try to guess the words on the screen. All these words are related to our topic, that is the theatrical discourse. We will talk about two famous pieces: Plautus' *Amphitryon* and Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. You will try to explain in English each word to your classmate on the chair. Obviously, you can't use synonyms or antinomies.

### WORDS:

listener

protagonist

antagonist

aside

soliloquy

metatheatre

onstage/ offstage

props

tragicomedy

monologue

# OUR TOPIC

## Activity 1B

Now we will focus on two specific terms in theater: soliloquy and monologue. Look at the chart below:

Dramatic Monologue	Soliloquy
Single character	Single character
Narrative rather than dramatic technique	Narrative rather than dramatic technique
Character is different from the poet	Character is different from the poet
A non-speaking listener on stage	No listener on stage (mostly)
Present of listener influences the speaker	An eavesdropper can be present
Character is caught in a moment of crisis	Can be self-addressed or addressed to the audience
Reflects unpredictability of the human mind	“Merely passing through the mind of the character”

# TRIVIA SEARCH

## **Activity 2A**

Now split in three groups; each group will say to the others three things they know about the topic and then will ask three questions to the following group, and so on.

For this activity, you have 20 minutes.

**SOSIA**

*aside* . He has overpowered me with his proofs. I must look out for another name. I don't know from whence he witnessed these things. I'll now entrap him finely; for what I did alone by myself, and when not another person was present in the tent, that, he certainly will never be able this day to tell me. *Aloud*. If you are Sosia, when the armies were fighting most vigorously, what were you doing in the tent? If you tell me that, I'm vanquished.

[...]

**MERCURY**

Well--do I now convince you by my proofs that you are not Sosia?

**SOSIA**

Do you deny that I am?

**MERCURY**

Why should I not deny it, who am he myself?

**SOSIA**

By Jupiter I swear that I am he, and that I do not say false.

**MERCURY**

But by Mercury, I swear that Jupiter does not believe you; for I am sure that he will rather credit me without an oath than you with an oath.

**SOSIA**

Who am I, at all events, if I am not Sosia? I ask you that.

**MERCURY**

When I choose not to be Sosia, then do you be Sosia; now, since I am he, you'll get a thrashing, if you are not off hence, you fellow without a name.

**SOSIA**

*aside* . Upon my faith, for sure, when I examine him and recollect my own figure, just in such manner as I am (I've often looked in a glass), he is exactly like me. He has the broad-brimmed hat and clothing just the same; he is as like me as I am myself. His leg, foot, stature, shorn head, eyes, nose, even his lips, cheeks, chin, beard, neck--the whole of

him. What need is there of words? If his back is marked with scars, than this likeness there is nothing more like. But when I reflect, really, I surely am the same person that I always was. My master I know, I know our I house; I am quite in my wits and senses. I'm not going to I obey this fellow in what he says; I'll knock at the door. *Goes towards the door*.

**MERCURY**

Whither are you betaking yourself?

**SOSIA**

Home.

**MERCURY**

If now you were to ascend the chariot of Jove and fly away from here, then you could hardly be able to escape destruction.

**SOSIA**

Mayn't I be allowed to deliver the message to my mistress that my master ordered me to give?

**MERCURY**

If you want to deliver any message to your own mistress; this mistress of mine I shall not allow you to approach. But if you provoke me, you'll be just now taking hence your loins broken.

**SOSIA**

In preference, I'll be off. *Aside*. Immortal Gods, I do beseech your mercy. **Where did I lose myself? Where have I been transformed? Where have I parted with my figure? Or have I left myself behind there, if perchance I have forgotten it? For really this person has possession of all my figure, such as it formerly was. While living, that is done for me, which no one will ever do for me when dead. I'll go to the harbour, and I'll tell my master these things as they have happened--unless even he as well shall not know me, which may Jupiter grant, so that this day, bald, with shaven crown, I may assume the cap of freedom. (Exit.)**

# IN OTHER WORDS

## **Activity 2B**

After reading the excerpt, staying in the same groups as last time, try to represent the content of the text in the form of a list of events.

For this activity you have 30 minutes.

# FILL THE CHART

## Activity 3A (20 minutes)

In groups, fill the chart looking at the text.

Dramatic Monologue	In the text
Narrative rather than dramatic technique	
Character is different from the poet	
A non-speaking listener on stage	Example: Mercury is on stage
Present of listener influences the speaker	
Character is caught in a moment of crisis	
Reflects unpredictability of the human mind	

*CLAUDIUS AND POLONIUS hide.*  
*HAMLET enters.*

**HAMLET:** The question is: is it better to be alive or dead? Is it nobler to put up with all the nasty things that luck throws your way, or to fight against all those troubles by simply putting an end to them once and for all? Dying, sleeping—that's all dying is—a sleep that ends all the heartache and shocks that life on earth gives us—that's an achievement to wish for. To die, to sleep—to sleep, maybe to dream. Ah, but there's the catch: in death's sleep who knows what kind of dreams might come, after we've put the noise and commotion of life behind us. That's certainly something to worry about. That's the consideration that makes us stretch out our sufferings so long.



# VOCABULARY

- nasty: bad
- to put up with: to be able to deal with
- there is the catch: there is a downside or a difficulty which is not readily evident
- to stretch out: to expand

# FILL THE CHART

## Activity 3B (20 min)

Similarly to what you did with Plautus' text, fill the chart looking at the text.

Soliloquy	
Narrative rather than dramatic technique	
Character is different from the poet	
No listener on stage (mostly)	
An eavesdropper can be present	
Can be self-addressed or addressed to the audience	
“Merely passing through the mind of the character”	

# LEARNING BY ACTING



# WEBQUEST

## Activity 4A

In order to improve your comprehension, I'd like to propose you an activity called WebQuest. I've found some links to articles and videos that you will look at; all that material serves to give you help to make your own theatrical speech, keeping in mind the differences you should underline between monologue and soliloquy.

# Introduction

In this WebQuest you will find texts about the differences between soliloquy and monologue, as well as videos of famous performances of examples of the two techniques from Plautus and Shakespeare. At the end of this project, you will come up with a script of a modernized version of either text, and will act it out in groups.

## Task

Imagine that you are working within the school theater club, and are exploring the differences between soliloquy and monologue. Starting from works by two plays which you've studied – Plautus' *Amphitruo* and Shakespeare's *Hamlet* – you will identify the characteristic of both dramatic techniques by looking at the parts played by Sosia and Hamlet respectively.

# Process

## ➤ Step 1

You and your two partners will check out the websites.

## ➤ Step 2

As a group, you and your two partners will decide who will be responsible for researching Style, who Meaning, who Message.

## ➤ Step 3

Using all the information you've gathered, act out your soliloquy or monologue. Use your words and style, but respect the original features.

## ➤ Step 4

At the end, your group will tape their performance and show it to the class.

## Links

You will use the following websites to become familiar with the passages we will be focusing on.

[www.thefreedictionary.com/William+Shakespeare;](http://www.thefreedictionary.com/William+Shakespeare;)

<http://nfs.sparknotes.com/hamlet/>

[https://www.powerthesaurus.org/William Shakespeare](https://www.powerthesaurus.org/William_Shakespeare)

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0092%3Aact%3D1%3Ascene%3D1>

Here you can find videos of famous performances

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ks-NbCHUns;>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SjuZq-8PUw0;>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xYZHb2xo0OI;>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lsrOXAY1arg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xsXKT5RhJf;>

(Laurence Olivier; Kenneth Branagh; David Tennant; Richard Burton, Monty Python)

# Conclusion

After completing this project, you have learned:

- The differences between soliloquy and monologue
- The technical vocabulary of the dramatic genre
- Teamwork
- To write your own script and put on a theatrical performance



# Evaluation

2nd Teaching Unit, 1st Learning Unit

This is how your work will be evaluated

	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good	Excellent
<b>FOLLOWED INSTRUCTIONS</b>					
- Final video shows understanding of the material					
- Video (and script) are of an appropriate length					
<b>GENERAL ORGANIZATION AND CONTENT</b>					
- Performance is organized and develops coherently and smoothly					
- Originality and ability to engage the audience					
- Content related to studied texts					
- Close reading and understanding of original texts as well as critical articles					
- Group worked well together; tasks were distributed equally among team members					
<b>LANGUAGE AND SYNTAX</b>					
- Understanding of technical terms and their usage					
- Precision and appropriateness of vocabulary					
- Understanding of the basic structure of English sentences (noun, verb, object, etc.) and word order					
- Use of more complex structures					
- Use of transition words (between sentences and between paragraphs)					
<b>PRONUNCIATION</b>					
- Understandable pronunciation; fluent discourse					
Grade and overall comments:					

# SOSIA VERSUS SOSIA



# UNPACKING THE TEXT

## Activity 4B

Now read this excerpt from *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 53 N 1 by Hazel E. Barnes; then do the activities. Please find the excerpt in this folder as a pdf Document named “Barnes article”.

# VOCABULARY

- abrupt: unexpected, sudden
- facets: sides
- to pick up: to take upon
- to claim: to affirm strongly
- patterned: following a definite structure or scheme

# COMPREHENDING THE TEXT

## Activity 5A

After reading the article by Hazel Barnes, work in pairs and answer the following questions (30 min):

1. Why is Mercury not the real antagonist of Sosia in their meeting?
2. What is the problem of changing personality after a long experience away from home?
3. In your opinion, is it possible that Plautus thought about a kind of psychological analysis of Sosia?
4. As far as you know, do Plautus' comedies aim at speaking to the audience about real life?

# TEST YOUR ENGLISH





# GRAMMAR FOCUS

## Activity 5B (45 minutes)

1. Match a line in A with a line in B. Work in pairs

A	B
❖ I would have called you	You would like to go to the movies
❖ I was wondering if	But the slave avoided the fight
❖ Mercury would have beaten Sosia	To always be confident
❖ It would be nice	If I would have done the same thing
❖ If Plautus lived today	If you had been late
❖ I don't know	He would not have written a tragicomedy

2. Rewrite the sentences changing the part in **bold** with a pronoun. Change the verb and other parts of the sentence if necessary.

- **All the people who** experienced an adventure abroad feel what Sosia has felt.
- Mercury met Sosia and was about to beat **Sosia**, but **Sosia** avoided the conflict.
- **There are no people who** would have dared to oppose Zeus.
- **All those** who study English are in trouble with pronouns.
- I don't remember **one single thing** from when I was a baby.
- **No matter who** you are, you should always be kind to others.



3. Match the highlighted words in the text with a synonym or near synonym from the box. All verbs are in the infinitive.

**arranged**

**to take on**

**features**

**intimidation**

**to move**

**to demand**

#### 4. Choose the correct form

##### **I'll go/I might go**

I am not feeling well, but \_\_\_\_\_ to Jane's party anyway.

##### **I could/I can**

I \_\_\_\_\_ sing very well. I've taken lessons for years.

##### **Could/can**

Mrs. Smith, \_\_\_\_\_ you please close the window? It's a bit cold.

##### **Should/shall**

I made a reservation for the restaurant. We \_\_\_\_\_ go tomorrow!

##### **Can't/might not**

I don't know if I'll be home on time. I \_\_\_\_\_ make it to the meeting.

##### **Won't/Mustn't**

She \_\_\_\_\_ buy alcohol because she is only seventeen. It's against the law.



# VIDEOTAPE

Your last activity is to videotape the performance of your group. The aim of this activity is to explain through pictures the differences between monologue and soliloquy that you learned in this module. You can look at the YouTube links in the WebQuest for inspiration, but you will have to write your own script based on the examples from Plautus and Shakespeare.