



*Shakespeare*  
SCHOOLS' CHAMPIONSHIP

**SEASON II**

**GUIDELINES**

## THE CHAMPIONSHIP

The ***Shakespeare Schools Championship*** began as a unique drama competition being staged across Jamaica to commemorate the 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of William Shakespeare's death. Shakespeare, who is widely regarded as the world's pre-eminent dramatist, often features as compulsory reading for students sitting English Literature examinations the world over.

Dr. Tony Sewell, CEO of UK-based charity organisation, Generating Genius has a clear mission to make the Arts and Sciences accessible to young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. A key plank of the charity's mission is to give young people access to Shakespeare's plays.

The Generating Genius Shakespeare Schools Championship is geared towards high school students. The aim of the project is to find original interpretations of Shakespeare's plays.

The second season of the Championship will be launched in April 2016 and will be recorded for broadcast on national television.

## HOW IT WORKS

Generating Genius will provide participating schools with all the academic resources needed in order to help the schools stage a Shakespeare performance in a professional theatre. A small team of industry professionals will be on hand to assist with production values.

### **The process is simple.**

We will guide 12 participating schools through every step of the way so that they have the necessary support and guidance from rehearsals through to the final curtain.

### **5. APPLY ONLINE**

**Application forms are available via our website**

**[www.shakespeareschoolschamps.com](http://www.shakespeareschoolschamps.com)**

**Email completed forms to [ja.shakespearechamps@gmail.com](mailto:ja.shakespearechamps@gmail.com)**

A overview of the Shakespeare Schools Championship (SSC) is as follows:

### **The SSC is open to High schools across Jamaica:**

1. **It would be advantageous** if the school has some experience in staging drama
2. The advised age group is for students is grades 9 and above
3. The 12 schools chosen for the competition will be assigned a Mentor as well as given the following:
  - 2 copies of their chose abridged Shakespeare play
  - A Shakespeare Schools Festival DIRECTOR'S HANDBOOK
  - Mentoring for Drama teacher
  - Mentoring for cast members

### **6. After the application process the next steps are:**

- **ATTEND THE SSC TEACHER WORKSHOP**
- **MENTOR VISIT TO EACH SCHOOL WITH CASTING CONSULTATION**
- **TV PRODUCTION CONSULTATION**

## CHOOSING YOUR PLAY

**There are 21 abridged scripts available for the Shakespeare Schools Championship:**

1. A Midsummer Night's Dream
2. Antony and Cleopatra
3. As You Like It
4. Hamlet
5. Henry V
6. Julius Caesar
7. King Lear
8. Macbeth
9. Measure for Measure
10. Much Ado About Nothing
11. Othello
12. Richard III
13. Romeo and Juliet
14. The Comedy of Errors
15. The Merchant of Venice
16. The Merry Wives of Windsor
17. The Taming of the Shrew
18. The Tempest
19. The Winter's Tale
20. Titus Andronicus
21. Twelfth Night

The championship school will be required to produce the Shakespeare play listed on the school curriculum for 2016/2017 in addition to their winning production.

There are some general guidelines to help you make your decision: It is tempting to choose a play that you know well, but there may be another that suits your students. Your students are your best resource. Asking yourself these questions may move you in a whole new direction.

- **Who are they?**

Is there a student who could convincingly play Shylock or Lear for example, or will you have to work hard to eke out such complex characters?

- **What are their strengths?**

Some of the plays, such as Hamlet or Richard III, rely on a strong lead actor, so consider if there is a student that strikes you as suitable.

- **What are their interests?**

Do you have a group that is particularly interested in History or Politics (Julius Caesar, Henry V, Antony and Cleopatra) or Law (The Merchant of Venice)? For example: can you tie a particular passion into one of the themes of the play, such as using rival football teams as Montagues and Capulets (Romeo and Juliet)?

- **In there a current affairs or historic parallel that is relevant?**

Is there a news story or event that could be relevant to one of the plays? e.g. Portia Simpson Miller's campaign speeches and Julius Caesar. Is there a social or cultural issue that you can explore using one of the plays? e.g. The Taming of the Shrew might be interesting from a feminist perspective.

### **FIRST TIME DIRECTORS**

As a rule of thumb, if you have never directed a Shakespearean play before, it will necessary to consult your appointed mentors at the earliest stage possible.

### **LARGE CASTS**

You can always double up minor characters using different actors. This works especially well in plays that have elements of fantasy such as Macbeth and A Midsummer Night's Dream.

### **SPARKING DEBATE**

Students should engage with the play on a number of levels and open up some conversations in the classroom. Themes such as racism, sexual jealousy and misogyny appear in many of Shakespeare's plays such as Othello, the Merchant of Venice, the Taming of the Shrew and Measure for Measure.

### **THE CHALLENGE**

If you are an experienced director and/or have a cast of very talented students you might like to try some of our more challenging plays. These include Titus Andronicus, Antony and Cleopatra and Measure for Measure.

## **PRIZES**

### **The winning school will receive:**

- An all expenses paid trip to London for up to 12 people (a cast of 10 students **PLUS** 2 teachers)
- The Championship trophy
- Individual medals
- Best actress
- Best actor

### **The runner-up (2nd place) will receive:**

- A cash donation to the Drama Department of the school
- Second place certificates

## **PRODUCTION GUIDELINES**

### **SCRIPTS:**

All judges WILL be familiar with the scripts involved in the championship, having read and researched them in advance of the performances.

### **GENERAL ASSESSMENT:**

- **Overcoming** Various technical and creative challenges
- How the script has been interpreted in a **JAMAICAN CONTEXT**
- The script's potential social or artistic impact

### **SET DESIGN**

### **LIGHTING**

### **SOUND DESIGN**

### **COSTUME DESIGN**

### **PROPS**

### **ACTING**

### **ENSEMBLE WORK:**

- Are all elements of the performances contributing to the overall success of the show?
- Do actors appear to listen to other characters and so respond appropriately?
- Is choral speech clear and well harmonized, where necessary?
- Are the actors' performances integrated with the others on stage or do you find more individual performances?
- Is there a balance in the level of performance from the cast or do the lead actors dominate throughout the entire production?
- How effortlessly do the actors appear to integrate their movement in blocking?

### **DIRECTION:**

Again, because of the complexities in directing, elements will be sub-divided as follows:

### **CRAFTSMANSHIP:**

- Does the director comprehend the principles behind blocking, use of space, triangulation and visual focus?

- Does the blocking appear to arise from motivation within characters?
- What degree of success has the director achieved in creating an appropriate mood for the play through lighting, sound, movement and pace?
- How appropriate are the director's choices in costume, set dressing, properties, make up, etc.?
- How well does the director build the play to a climax and use anti-climax to pace the play?
- Do the actors appear to have been challenged to create nuanced performances?

**CREATIVE CHOICES:**

- How well has the director read the play and understood the intentions of the playwright?
- Has the director provided a unique or unusual interpretation of the play?
- How successful has the director been in bringing the entire company to a state of believable performance?
- How naturally do all aspects of the production blend together?
- Are there alternative artistic choices to those the director has selected?
- Does the show start on time? We will allow 5 mins for any problems but shows will not be allowed to continue beyond this window.
- Given the often-limited resources of groups, how effectively do the set designers, costume designers, lighting & sound designers, props people, and others contribute to the atmosphere of the production? Are they students?
- Are there any especially significant production values? (I.e. original music composition, special effects, masks, style, etc.)
- How successfully has the production maintained the audience's willing suspension of disbelief?
- How successfully has each actor discovered the inner truth of his/her character's emotional reality and reactions to the plot's convolutions?
- What was the emotional impact the play had upon me as a whole?

## EXPECTATIONS

Judges will have expertise as theatre professionals and/or drama/theatre educators. Their sensitivity to participants' feelings and their ability to both teach and communicate are paramount to the adjudication process.

**A good adjudication would likely contain the following:**

- Positive reinforcement to the company concerning what was done well.
- Coherent suggestions to help the company improve in areas where it could do better.
- Creative alternatives, where applicable, to choices made by the company.
- Brief dialogue between the adjudicator and participants.
- Sensitivity in all communication with participants and a comprehension of any limitations faced by the company.

**Public Feedback** should not exceed 10 minutes at the end of each performance. This adjudication should approach each of the productions in order of appearance. The public adjudication should consist of a positive general assessment of each production and include the Chief Adjudicator's impressions with particular emphasis on significant points within the production. The commentary can be done from the judges box.

There will be no immediate private feedback to schools after their productions. At a later date, upon request, some written feedback can be provided to regarding performances.

## MARKING CRITERIA

	DETAILS
A. Interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meaningful and cohesive use of Jamaican cultural text (location/body/rhythm/sound/object etc.)</li> <li>• Clear, cohesive and meaningful choice-presentation of Conceptual/Thematic focus</li> <li>• Staging - Use of space and activity</li> </ul>
B. Characterization and Believability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meaningful use of voice and speech</li> <li>• Character profile</li> <li>• Interactivity/relationships</li> </ul>
C. Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meaningful and effective Set Design</li> <li>• Meaningful and effective Costume Design</li> <li>• Meaningful and effective Props</li> </ul>
D. Technical Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequate visibility and Timely execution of lighting</li> <li>• Adequate and timely execution of electronic sound</li> </ul>

## **PENALTIES**

### **TIME OVER-RUN PENALTY**

- Any production which goes over time by more than 5 minutes will be disqualified from the championship.

### **ADDITIONAL ACTORS**

All schools are required to adhere to a maximum of 10 actors for their productions. A cast list must be provided to judges before the performance.

### **EDITING OF SCRIPT**

- There should be absolutely no editing done for purposes of interpretation or to save time.
- A Script Monitor will be following the spoken text in relation to the scribal text for adjustments made in performance.

### **NOTE:**

The producers of this championship will allow the change of the odd word and the addition of the odd phrase that helps with the contextualizing of the production. The Judges have been guided to deduct points from productions that re-write or omit significant amounts of the original txt. Judges will use their discretionary powers.

- Jamaicanised means in context only and not in language. However, Jamaican accent and intonations are encouraged.
- Participants will be allowed to use a limited number of Jamaican words or phrases to make a point during their productions but this must be used sparingly.
- Plays must be 30 minutes long.