

# The Duchess of Malfi – Close Text Reading

## INTRODUCTION FOR TEACHERS

Most courses/exams require detailed analysis of language and structure, as well as a comparison of text details. Your students should therefore perform a Close Text Reading on a section of text and do a presentation to the class based on it.

Simply print out as many copies as you need of one of the appropriate pages below. There are two versions: the first is for students studying *The Duchess of Malfi* only; the other for students also studying one or more complementary texts.

To ensure a wide selection of passages across your class, before distributing complete where indicated to specify from which pages the text should be taken.

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This study resource is brought to you by Stage on Screen, the UK company staging classic stage plays of set texts for schools, students and theatre lovers everywhere. All productions are filmed and distributed on multi-region DVD, and are available in the UK and all over the world. For details, please see [www.stageonscreen.com](http://www.stageonscreen.com)

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## The Duchess of Malfi – Close Text Reading

Your course/exam requires detailed analysis of language and structure, as well as a comparison of text details. It's therefore necessary for you to look at a section of *The Duchess of Malfi* in detail, and perform what is called Close Text Reading on it.

Take a section of the text (roughly 10-25 lines) from the pages indicated below and do a 10 minute presentation to the class based on a Close Text Reading of that section. (You should rehearse what you're going to say and also time yourself beforehand.)

**Your text must come from somewhere in these pages: .....**

When doing Close Text Reading, you need to:

- a) explore polysemous readings – that is, words or phrases that can have two or more meanings. Explore the relationships between the meaning of the text and the language being used to express it. Bear in mind that Webster's text would have been heard rather than read, and that we have no definitive "final" version of the script, so the interaction between text, performer and audience is an important one;
- b) explore implications of the language;
- c) explore what the section you have chosen tells us about the genre and structure of the play;
- d) analyse the language in a great deal of detail: why Webster has used those specific words.

Finally, if you are presenting using Powerpoint, make sure you bring the presentation on a memory stick.

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### **(Including linking to another set text)**

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### **Your text must come from somewhere in these pages: .....**

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- b) explore implications of the language;
- c) explore what the section you have chosen tells us about the genre and structure of the play;
- d) analyse the language in a great deal of detail: why Webster has used those specific words;
- e) link your text to sections of the other set text you are studying in ways that help to inform each other.

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