

Before the Battle

A soliloquy is a speech that is given by an actor/character that shows her/his thoughts to an audience. It's a bit like saying your thoughts out loud. Nobody really does this in real life, but it's a device that's used in theatre to let the audience know what's going on in the character's head. The most famous soliloquy in theatre is Hamlet's from Shakespeare's play, Hamlet. It starts like this:

To be, or not to be: that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles...

In this soliloquy, Hamlet is wondering to himself whether it's worth living, when life is so painful and difficult. He is saying: I don't know whether it's better to live or to die? Is it better to put up with bad things or to fight against them?

He's trying to convince himself to do something and he's working out his thoughts out loud to the audience.

Imagine that you are a pirate on the night before a big battle. You might be killed in the morning but you know that you've got to be brave in front of the rest of your crewmates. What thoughts are going through your head? What are your fears? What have you seen and done in other battles at sea that might make you fearful or brave?

Work with a partner to create a soliloquy for one of you to perform to the rest of the class or to a group of children. You don't need to write the soliloquy down but it might be useful for you to make some notes about what you will say so that you don't forget!

Once you've decided between you what you will say in your soliloquy, you will need to rehearse it four or five times so that you remember what you're going to say. Remember that a soliloquy is your character speaking their thoughts to an audience – it shows the audience what they're really thinking, deep down. A soliloquy doesn't have to rhyme.

If you wish, you can use this table to make notes for your soliloquy.

Before the Battle

What are your fears?

What have you seen in other battles?

What have you done in other battles or what has happened to you?

What do you think you will do in the battle tomorrow?

How will you make yourself brave enough to fight?

Will you tell anyone how you feel?
