

Title of Session: 'You' & 'Thou'

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Objective: Help students understand character relationships/dynamics through the use of 'You' and 'Thou'

Facts/lecture: (It is helpful to write this information on a white board or chalk board for the whole group to see and refer back to.)

Opening Questions:

-Is anyone familiar with 'You' and 'Thou'?

-What kind of characters do think use 'You', which would use 'Thou'?

One is formal and one is informal, which is which?

-'Thou' is informal and 'You' is formal

There are multiple forms of 'Thou' can you name them?

Thou - Forms of 'Thou' include: Thee, Thine, Thy, Thyself and Prithee

To social inferiors (Masters to Servants)

To social equals of the lower class

Used typically in private

To express a close connection

-Thou: Marks a special affection, the lover's pronoun, it is also used among close friends, and family members.

Used by parents to children

To show scorn or contempt

The dead and ghost were addressed with 'Thou'

'Thou' used in reference to those who are absent from the scene

- It can single a loss of control, 'Thou' is considered the emotional pronoun.

-There's a potential role for 'Thou' to be used as an insult.

You - Forms of 'You' include: You/Your/Yourself

To social superiors (Servant to Master)

-It was usual for 'You' to be used by inferiors to superiors, such as children to parents, or servants to masters, and 'Thou' would often be used in return.

To social equals of the upper class

-Upper class used 'You' to each other as a rule, even when they were closely related.

Used typically in public, in front of groups of people

Standard for married couples

To express formality (polite)

To show respect

Changing from 'Thou' to 'You' or 'You' to 'Thou' in a conversation, always conveys a contrast in meaning, a change of attitude, or an altered relationship.

At the basic level 'Thou' means closer and 'You' means distance.

Activity:

-Stand on the opposite side of the students. Say the multiple forms of 'You' and 'Thou', having the students move forward on the 'Thou' forms and backward on the 'You' forms.

-Phoebe and Silvius Scene. Split the class in half. One side will represent Phoebe and the other Silvius. Have one student on each side read the part of Phoebe and one read the part of Silvius. As a group, every time either Silvius or Phoebe side say 'You' or 'Thou' move backward or forward as a group, moving one step at a time. This allows the students to physicalize the shifts in language with their bodies.

Silvius

Sweet Phoebe, do not scorn me, do not, Phoebe.
Say that you love me not, but say not so
In bitterness. The common executioner,
Whose heart th'accustomed sight of death makes hard,
Falls not the axe upon the humbled neck
But first begs pardon. Will you sterner be
Than he that dies and lives by bloody drops?

Phoebe

I would not be thy executioner,
I fly thee for I would not injure thee.
Thou tell'st me there is murder in mine eye.
'Tis pretty, sure, and very probable,
That eyes, that are the frail'st and softest things,
Who shut their coward gates on atomies,
Should be called tyrants, butchers, murderers.
Now I do frown on thee with all my heart,
And if mine eyes can wound, now let them kill thee.
Now counterfeit to swoon, why now fall down;
Or if thou canst not, O, for shame, for shame,
Lie not, to say mine eyes are murderers.
Now show the wound mine eye hath made in thee.
Scratch thee but with a pin and there remains
Some scar of it. Lean upon a rush,
The cicatrice and capable impressure
Thy palm some moment keeps. But now mine eyes,
Which I have darted at thee, hurt thee not;
Nor I am sure there is no force in eyes
That can do hurt.

- What did Phoebe's use of thou tell us about this scene?
- What did Silvius's use of you tell us about their relationship?

Problem Solving: (Need red and blue writing utensils.)

Provide a few different scenes from Shakespeare that resemble the uses of 'You' and 'Thou' mentioned above. Have the students use highlighters to highlight the two sets of pronouns (pink for the 'Thou' forms and blue for the 'You' forms).

In general 'Thou' is the warmer/fiery pronoun, and 'You' the cooler.

Performance:

Once the students are done marking their scripts pair them up. Let them work on their scenes having them take one step forward on every 'Thou' and one step backward on every 'You'.

Discussion:

-How did using the movement on 'You' and 'Thou' relate to your relationship with the other character?

-What happened when there was a shift between 'You' and 'Thou'?

-What is the relationship between these characters? (Servant Master, BFF, Upper Class....)

Additional Questions

Conversation One:

- Which pronoun was used the most?
- Was there a shift? What did that shift make us feel?

Conversation Two:

- What pronoun is used most?
- Since this scene was between a servant and a master what did we notice?
- What did the physical movements on the 'You' and 'Thou' show us about their relationship? What did the shift make us feel?

Conversation Three:

- What pronoun was used the most?
- Was there a shift?
- Why might the Ghost be using 'Thou' towards Hamlet?

Conversation Four:

- What pronoun is used the most?
- Why might 'Thou' be used so repeatedly in this exchange?

Conversation Five:

- What pronoun was used the most?
- Why do you think that is?
- What does it tell us about Beatrice and Benedick's relationship at the beginning of the play?

Conversation Six:

- What pronoun is used most?
- Why does Lady Macbeth, use 'Thou' in this scene?

Worksheet: Highlight 'You' and 'Thou'

Instructions: highlight the two sets of pronouns (pink for the 'Thou' forms and blue for the 'You' forms) In general 'Thou' is the warmer/fiery pronoun, and 'You' the cooler.

Conversation One: (Richard III)

Act 4, Scene 2

Enter Buckingham

Buckingham

My lord, I have considered in my mind
The late request that you did sound me in.

King Richard

Well, let that rest. Dorset is fled to Richmond.

Buckingham

I hear the news, my lord.

King Richard

Stanley, he is your wife's son; well, look unto it.

Buckingham

My lord, I claim the gift, my due by promise,
For which your honour and your faith is pawned,
Th' earldom of Hereford and the movables
Which you have promis'd I shall possess.

King Richard

Stanley, look to your wife. If she convey
Letters to Richmond, you shall answer it.

Buckingham

What says your highness to my just request?

King Richard

I do remember me, Henry the Sixth
Did prophesy that Richmond should be king,
When Richmond was a little peevish boy.
A king: perhaps.

Buckingham

May it please you to resolve me in my suit?

King Richard

Thou troublest me, I am not in the vein.
Exit King Richard

Number of You(s):

Number of Thou(s):

Conversation Two: (Comedy of Errors)

Act 2, Scene 2

Dromio of Syracuse

I did not see you since you sent me hence
Home to the Centaur with the gold you gave me.

Antipholus of Syracuse

Villain, thou didst deny the gold's receipt,
And told'st me of a mistress and a dinner,
For which I hope thou felt'st I was displeased.

Dromio of Syracuse

I am glad to see you in this merry vein!
What means this jest? I pray you, master, tell me.

Antipholus of Syracuse

Yea, dost thou jeer and flout me in the teeth?
Think'st thou I jest?

Dromio of Syracuse

Hold, sir, for God's sake—now your jest is earnest!
Upon what bargain do you give it me?

Antipholus of Syracuse

Dost thou not know?

Dromio of Syracuse

Nothing, sir.

Antipholus of Syracuse

Shall I tell you why?

Number of You(s):

Number of Thou(s):

Conversation Three: (*Hamlet*) Act 1, Scene 5

HAMLET

Angels and ministers of grace defend us!
Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damned,
Be thy intents wicked or charitable,
Thou com'st in such a questionable shape
That I will speak to thee. I'll call thee Hamlet,
King, father, royal Dane. Oh, answer me!
What may this mean
That thou, dead corpse, again in complete steel
Revisits thus the glimpses of the moon,
Say, why is this? Wherefore? What should we do?
[The] Ghost beckons Hamlet.

HAMLET

Whither wilt thou lead me? Speak. I'll go no further.

GHOST

Mark me.

HAMLET

I will.

GHOST

My hour is almost come
When I to sulf'rous and tormenting flames
Must render up myself.

HAMLET Alas, poor ghost!

GHOST

Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing
To what I shall unfold.

HAMLET

Speak. I am bound to hear.

GHOST

So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

Hamlet

What?

GHOST

I am thy father's spirit,
Doomed for a certain term to walk the night,
And for the day confined to fast in fires,
I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,
Make thy two eyes like stars start from their
spheres, And each particular hair to stand on end
But this eternal blazon must not be
To ears of flesh and blood. List, Hamlet, oh, list:
If thou didst ever thy dear father love—

Number of You(s):

Number of Thou(s):

Conversation Four: (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) Act 1, Scene 1

Lysander

A good persuasion. Therefore, hear me Hermia.
I have a widow aunt, a dowager
Of great revenue, and she hath no child.
From Athens is her house removed seven leagues,
And she respects me as her only son.
There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee,
And to that place, the sharp Athenian law
Cannot pursue us. If thou lovest me, then
Steal forth thy father's house tomorrow night,
And in the wood, a league without the town
(Where I did meet thee once with Helena,
To do observance for a morn of May),
There will I stay for thee.

Hermia

My good Lysander,
I swear to thee by Cupid's strongest bow,
By his best arrow with the golden head,
By the simplicity of Venus' doves,
By that which knitteth souls and prospers love,
And by that fire which burned the Carthage queen
When the false Trojan under sail was seen
By all the vows that ever men have broke
(In number more than ever women spoke),
In that same place thou hast appointed me
Tomorrow truly will I meet with thee.

Number of You(s):

Number of Thou(s):

Conversation Five: (*Much Ado About Nothing*):

Act 1, Scene 1

Benedick

If Signor Leonato be her father, she would not have his head on her shoulders for all Messina, as like him as she is.

Beatrice

I wonder that you will still be talking, Signor Benedick. Nobody marks you.

Benedick

What, my dear Lady Disdain! Are you yet living?

Beatrice

Is it possible disdain should die while she hath such meet food to feed it as Signor Benedick? Courtesy itself must convert to disdain if you come in her presence.

Benedick

Then is courtesy a turncoat. But it is certain I am loved of all ladies, only you excepted. And I would I could find in my heart that I had not a hard heart, for truly I love none.

Beatrice

A dear happiness to women: they would else have been troubled with a pernicious suitor. I thank God and my cold blood I am of your humour for that. I had rather hear my dog bark at a crow than a man swear he loves me.

Number of You(s):

Number of Thou(s):

Conversation Six: (*Macbeth*)

Act 1, Scene 5

Enter Macbeth's wife alone, with a letter.

LADY MACBETH

Lay it to thy heart, and farewell.

(Puts down letter)

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor, and shalt be
What thou art promised. Yet do I fear thy nature:
It is too full o'th' milk of human kindness
To catch the nearest way. Thou wouldst be great,
Art not without ambition, but without
The illness should attend it. What thou wouldst highly,
That wouldst thou holily, wouldst not play false,
And yet wouldst wrongly win. Thou'dst have, great Glamis,
That which cries, "Thus thou must do" if thou have it,
And that which rather thou dost fear to do,
Than wishest should be undone. Hie thee hither,
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear
And chastise with the valor of my tongue
All that impedes thee from the golden round,
Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem
To have thee crowned withal.

Number of You(s):

Number of Thou(s):