**Memeing Shakespeare: Light-Writing Assignment (can be in class or homework)**

**(1 hr 15 min.)**

**Lesson Plan:** Bringing Shakespeare’s Critics into the 21st Century (modernizing reception history / Meme-ing Shakespeare)

**General Goal:** Read a range of commentaries on Shakespeare works by his contemporaries.

**Specific Objectives:**

* Learn how to use *Shakespeare Documented*
* Use resources from *Shakespeare Documented* to examine the reception history of Shakespeare’s works.
* Produce memes that capture specific commentary of Shakespeare's contemporary critics
* By producing these memes, have students recognize these plays as part of social life in London through a variety of mediums (letters, printed works, marginalia, etc.)

**10mins: What is a meme?**

 Have students individually write their answers (3mins)

 Open it up to class discussion and write on the board their responses

 Discuss how meme’s participate in/shape public opinion

 Why is this a popular mode? What do they often critique?

**5mins: Explain the assignment**

1. Memes are used to comment on popular culture. To do so, they draw on widely held social knowledge and opinions, figures, events, etc.
2. Shakespeare and his works were the subject of criticism and commentary during his lifetime. They engaged with their contemporary moment in a variety of ways that stimulated both praise and critique from his audience. The purpose of this lesson is to understand how his plays were received and bring that reception history into the digital age.
3. We will work in groups to construct memes about Shakespeare's works based on documents that survive.
4. In your group, pick a document from the “Contemporary accounts and critical responses” category of *Shakespeare Documented* that makes commentary on his plays. This could be a letter, printed text or even marginalia. From that document construct a meme that captures the spirit of that document. Write a paragraph introducing that meme, explaining the story behind it, as well as the significance of the photo and your word choice.
5. We will then present our memes to the class and see what we can reconstruct about the surviving documents that detail the reception of Shakespeare's plays.

**35mins: Group work with computers.**

(Make sure students pick different documents from the Contemporary Accounts and Critical Responses page of *Shakespeare Documented*: <http://www.shakespearedocumented.org/exhibition/playwright-actor-shareholder/contemporary-accounts-and-critical-responses-plays>)

**20mins: Group presentations**

**5mins: Class Discussion**

What were some themes that emerged? How can memes help us understand reception history?

**Required Resources (Links):** <http://www.shakespearedocumented.org/>

 Any meme generator (see below) and open source pictures

 <https://memegenerator.net/>

 <https://imgflip.com/memegenerator>

 <https://makeameme.org/memegenerator>