



ISBN: 9780062854315

Notes by: Bec Kavanagh

Date of Publication: September 2020

Yorick and Bones

By Jeremy Tankard and Hermione Tankard

Summary

A hilarious and sweet young graphic novel series about the unlikely friendship between an Elizabethan era skeleton and the dog who digs him up, written and illustrated by a dynamic father-daughter team.

Yorick is a hapless skeleton from Shakespeare's time who was just dug up after a few hundred years of sleep. Bones is the adorable stray dog who did the digging. Not realising that he is a skeleton – or that he's now in a different time-period – Yorick promptly starts making his way around town, trying to meet a new friend. Much to his annoyance, Bones has quite literally latched onto him, excited to have a tasty leg bone to chew.

But when Yorick's attempts to make a new friend just scare all the villagers away, it is Bones who remains by his side, and Yorick finally realises that the friend he sought was right in front of him all along.

Oh, and did we mention that Yorick speaks in (very accessible) iambic pentameter that would do the Bard himself proud?

Key Learning Outcomes

ACELA1475, ACELA1476, ACELA1478, ACELA1488
ACELT1596, ACELT1602, ACELY1680, ACELY1688

Key Concepts

Friendship, Fitting in, Death, Resilience, Humour,
Introduction to Shakespeare and Shakespearean
language

Recommended Ages: 8+

These notes may be reproduced free of charge for use and study within schools but they may not be reproduced (either in whole or in part) and offered for commercial sale.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Yorick and Bones is based on a famous line from William Shakespeare's play, *Hamlet*.

- Ask your teacher to read, tell or show you an overview of what happens in the play.

Shakespeare was a famous playwright and poet who wrote during the late 15th century, when spoken English sounded very different.

- Make a list of words in *Yorick and Bones* that are unfamiliar to you.
- What do they mean? Write a glossary in your workbook of Shakespearean language and the modern English equivalent/meaning.
- What are the characters trying to say?
- Choose a page from the book and rewrite it in modern English.
 - Does the meaning change in the rewrite?

Shakespeare's plays always have five acts – these are usually referred to as exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and catastrophe. *Yorick and Bones* is divided into three acts.

- Which of the five acts from Shakespeare's plays do you think the three acts in the story correspond to?
- If every act needs rising action, climax and resolution, how would you map the story to show each of these elements?
- Why do you think the graphic novel only has three acts?
- Do you think the book would be better or worse if it had another two acts?

Shakespeare's plays were written to be performed.

- Break the class into three groups.
- There are only two acting roles in *Yorick and Bones*, so each group will need to research the other roles people play in the theatre (costume and set designers, script-writers, directors, etc.).
- Each group will prepare one of the acts from the book to perform to the class.
 - Each member of the group takes on one of the roles they have researched.
 - You will need to write a script using the dialogue from the book, and design sets and posters inspired by the illustrations. Invite parents and friends to attend the final performance.

More than anything else, *Yorick and Bones* is about friendship.

- Why does it take so long for Yorick to see that Bones is trying to be his friend?
- How does Yorick feel when he thinks that he is alone, and how does he feel when he realises that he has a friend?
- How important are your friends?
- Write about a time that you felt lonely.
 - Who helped to make you feel better?
 - What did they do to help?

In graphic novels like this one, two stories are woven together to create a single meaning. Sometimes the pictures illustrate the words, and sometimes they show us something different from what the words say.

- For example, when everyone that Yorick tries to befriend runs away from him screaming 'skeleton' what does he think is happening?
 - What is actually happening?
 - What affect does this have on the reader?
- Why do you think the composers chose to do this, rather than have the words and the images giving the same information?
- Draw a short comic strip where the dialogue tells a different story to the illustrations.

In *Yorick and Bones*, Jeremy and Hermione Tankard reimagine a classic story for a new audience. This is called an adaptation.

- Do adaptations need to be graphic novels? How else might you chose to retell a story?
- What other adaptations can you think of?
- Think of a fairy-tale you were told as a small child and adapt it into a graphic novel.
 - How would you rewrite the story using mostly dialogue and illustrations?
 - Think about who your audience is and how old they are – how does this change the kind of language you use to tell your story?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jeremy Tankard is the bestselling author-illustrator of the *Grumpy Bird* picture books. He has loved all things Shakespeare ever since his high school drama teacher casted him in a production of *The Tempest*. This book sees these two interests collide in the most unexpected ways. He lives in Vancouver with his wife and two children (one of whom is Hermione!).

Hermione Tankard discovered her love of Shakespeare in the fourth grade when she asked her father (see above) to buy her a copy of *Romeo and Juliet*. Little did she know it would one day lead to a job writing new Shakespearean adventures with her dad. When not helping her dad with this book, she enjoys acting and singing on stage. This is her first book.