

POWER POSITIONS

Grade: 5-12
Goal(s): To explore how we view power and status.
Materials: A chair.

DESCRIPTION:

A character can have a plenty of status and very little power, or visa versa. For example, a "puppet" king might have the status of a king, but absolutely no power in the running of the kingdom. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Puck has a lot of power in the fairy world, but as a slave to Oberon, no status. The same could be said of Ariel in *The Tempest*.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Divide the actors into two groups. One group will be the actors; one group will be the audience.
2. Place a chair in the center of the stage space.
3. Ask one actor to enter the space and, using the chair, take a position of power.
4. The first actor holds this position of power creating the focus for the audience.
5. The focus will change as the other actors, one at a time, enter the space and make additional choices of power or status.
6. Based on the following questions, audience members should call out what they see as the actors enter the space and arrange themselves:
 - Who has the most power?
 - Who has the least power?
 - Who has the highest status?
 - Who has the lowest status?
 - Who is pulling focus and what does that do to the stage picture?
7. Repeat with the audience becoming the actors and the actors becoming the audience.

SUGGESTED VARIATION(S):

- Create an imaginary character who is sitting in the chair (queen, Martian, soldier, etc.). One at a time, the actors enter and establish a relationship of power or status with the chair.
- **Raising the bar:** Use the activity to explore power and status of the characters from a specific play.

