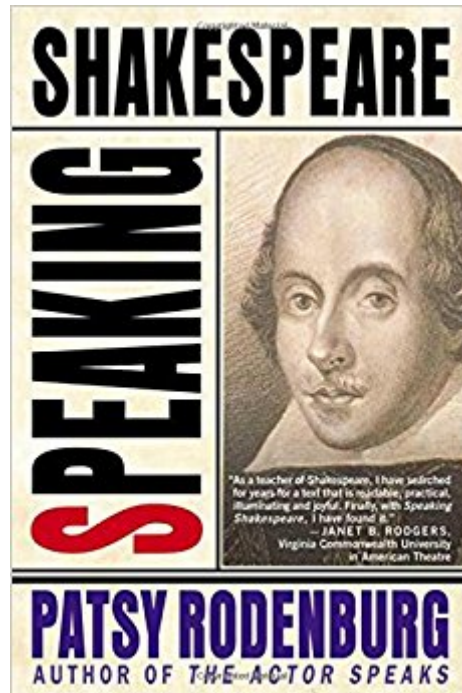




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# Speaking Shakespeare



## Synopsis

In *Speaking Shakespeare*, Patsy Rodenburg tackles one of the most difficult acting jobs: speaking Shakespeare's words both as they were meant to be spoken and in an understandable and dramatic way. Rodenburg calls this "a simple manual to start the journey into the heart of Shakespeare," and that is what she gives us. With the same insight she displayed in *The Actor Speaks*, Rodenburg tackles the playing of all Shakespeare's characters. She uses dramatic resonance, breathing, and placement to show how an actor can bring Hamlet, Rosalind, Puck and other characters to life. This is one book every working actor must have.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Although Shakespeare is the most famous-and lauded-writer in English, most adult readers, theatergoers and students would be hard pressed to admit they fully understand the complexity or complete meaning of his language. Rodenburg, the director of voice at London's National Theater, has written an excellent training guide for actors tackling the Bard, methodically escorting the amateur or professional thespian from understanding individual words to reading lines to performing entire speeches, emphasizing breathing, finding a rhythm, grounding the character in imaginative time and place, and understanding Shakespeare's world view. While Rodenburg's book will be a boon for actors, it deserves a wider audience. By approaching Shakespeare's plays through the lens of the building-blocks of performance, she gives both the common reader and playgoer enormous insight into reading-and hearing-the playwright's words. It's difficult to think of a better

way for the layperson to understand Shakespeare's language than by approaching it from the inside out. Her brief but extraordinarily useful explications of the use of puns, irony and rhyme, as well as her examination of how contrasting verse with prose changes tone and meaning, also give a terrific underpinning in understanding the plays. In Rodenberg's capable hands, Shakespeare's complicated words and ideas become completely clear. Her systematic analysis of 17 speeches from some of the more famous plays is a great primer to how character and plot are intertwined in the work. While not a full analysis of Shakespeare's works, this book will be incredibly worthwhile for actors as well as anyone interested in his plays. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.

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By exploring the mechanics of Shakespeare's writing, these books clearly illustrate how to speak and understand his texts and ultimately break down the language barrier. Both cover the bard's powerful iambic pentameter and its effect on pronunciation, the irregularities that reveal the emotional and psychological state of each character, and how each word works in relation to another concerning prose, verse, blank verse, and rhyming verse. Scheeder, founder and director of the Classical Studio at New York University, and Younts, professor of the techniques of voice and text at the same institution, present a highly useful pronunciation dictionary, supplemented by a glossary that defines character names, places, and unfamiliar words. They use the International Phonetics Alphabet, respell vowels in their key to pronunciation, and intricately mark in scansion each word. When a word can be pronounced two different ways, they indicate both followed by the play, the act, and the scene in which each form is used. Rodenburg, director of voice at London's Royal National Theatre, divides her training guide into four parts, offering practical exercises that aid in comprehending the speeches that define a character's mental state and intentions. Her book uses two guideposts: the givens (including the word, the line, rhyme, and the story) and the imaginative connections necessary to make a piece engaging to both the actor and the audience. Many books exist to help actors approach Shakespeare's works, but they tend toward more general overviews. Both of these books are rich with information and nicely focused. Recommended for academic and larger public libraries. Elizabeth Stifter, Brooklyn, NY Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Patsy Rodenburg goes to the heart of the matter. Some useful "intellectual" exercises, and then on to the business of acting -- i.e. leaving the intellectual in the studio (where it belongs) and "taking action" through the use of Shakespeare's language.

Perfect...arrived quickly!

This book, with Cicely Berry's 'The Actor and the Text', are two of the best books I've ever read about acting, period. As they say - and it's been my experience - if you can do Shakespeare, you can do anything. Essential for any serious actor.

Rodenburg knows what's going on with getting this verbiage clearly out of your mouth. I just wish she had this thing on audiobook!

Increases anyone's understanding of Shakespeare and is a treasure for actors. Makes even the meaningful more so. Helps make any script richer and deeper. An acting class that's first class.

Patsy Rodenburg has an amazingly clear way of explaining the complexity of Shakespeare, I recommend it to beginners and seasoned actors the like.

As advertised

Everything Patsy Rodenburg write is something every actor needs to read and have in their library.

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