



The Young Shakespeareans

THE BEAT GOES ON!

Shakespeare knew that a play where everything stays the same from the beginning to the end is not very interesting. Therefore, just like in a play, each scene has at least three sections:

- a beginning – the set-up;
- a middle – when something important changes;
- an end – the resolution.

Each of these sections have several parts called **beats (a change in event, emotion, purpose, decision, or discovery)**. **Beats** also happen within a character's monologue, and within dialogue between characters. **Whenever a character changes what he/she is doing to get what he/she wants, it is a new beat.**

Figuring out where the beats are in a scene is important, especially for the Director of the play. Figuring out where the beats are in a character's lines is a very important part of what an Actor does.

Let's look at the BEATS in the following choral piece which are marked with a / :

**If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended, /
That you have but slumbered here
While these visions did appear.
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream. /
Gentles, do not reprehend:
If you pardon, we will mend.**

If we actors have offended you,
just think of it this way and it will be all right /
you were asleep
when you saw these visions.
And this silly and pathetic story
was no more real than a dream. /
Ladies and gentlemen, don't get upset with me:
if you forgive us, we'll make everything all right.

The character is doing something slightly different in each beat of the monologue.

1st beat	Apologizing
2nd beat	Explaining, Convincing
3rd beat	Asking Forgiveness

Now you are ready to work out the beats in your character's lines!