

CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE THEATER



Short
Shakespeare!

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S
DREAM



TEACHER HANDBOOK
2025



INTRODUCTION

We are thrilled to invite you to delve into this classroom resource for *Short Shakespeare! A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

This handbook grew out of a team effort of teachers past and present, as well as Chicago Shakespeare Theater artists, educators, technicians, and scholars. It is designed to guide you through the play's rich text, offering drama-based teaching strategies, activities, and discussion prompts to help students engage with Shakespeare's work. Whether you're teaching this for the first time or the 20th time, we hope this handbook will support you in creating an engaging, memorable learning experience.

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ABOUT CST

A Regional Tony Award recipient, produces a bold and innovative year-round season that includes Shakespeare, original plays, musicals, family programming, and international theatrical events. CST is committed to serving as a cultural center across its three stages—the 700+ seat Yard, 500-seat Jentes Family Courtyard Theater, and the 200-seat Carl and Marilyn Thoma Theater Upstairs as well as in classrooms, neighborhoods, and venues around the world. CST has a deep commitment to education and lifelong learning with robust programming for students, teachers, and lifelong learners, and engagement with communities across the city. Onstage, in classrooms and neighborhoods across the city, and in venues around the world, Chicago Shakespeare is a multifaceted theatre—inviting audiences, artists, and community members to share powerful stories that illuminate the complexities, ambiguities, and wonders of our world.

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Characters, just like people, are rarely named by accident. Maybe someone you know is named after their grandparent. Perhaps they are named after a family friend or someone their parents admired. Or maybe they have a name completely unique to them. Just as parents choose names for their children, Shakespeare named his characters so his audiences would know something about them before they said a single line. Below are some of the characters from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Might anything about their names suggest something about their personalities?

HERMIA is a derivation of Hermes, the Greek god of commerce and a master thief. Hermes is renowned for his ability to sneak out of sticky situations before anyone can notice. Hermes is also the guardian of dreams.

HELENA means light, and is related to the Greek word for the moon.

LYSANDER was the name of a famous Greek warrior. In Greek, "Lysander" means "the man who escapes."

DEMETRIUS is a derivative of Demeter, the goddess of grain and agriculture.

TITANIA means "woman of the Titans." The Titans were the oldest Greek gods, powerful and fierce fighters.

OBERON is derived from an Old Germanic phrase meaning "powerful elf."

THE COURT

THESEUS
Duke of Athens

← betrothed to →

HIPPOLYTA
Queen of the Amazons

PHILOSTRATE
*Master of the Revels
at Theseus's court*

EGEUS
a nobleman

father to

HELENA

—in love with—

DEMETRIUS

—wants to marry—

HERMIA

←in love with→

LYSANDER

THE LOVERS

THE MECHANICALS

PUCK
(aka Robin Goodfellow)

attendant to

OBERON
King of the Fairies

↕ betrothed to ↕

PEASBLOSSOM

COBWEB

MOTH

MUSTARDSEED

attendants to

TITANIA
Queen of the Fairies

↕ cares for ↕

CHANGELING BOY
a mortal

—enchanted to love—

PETER QUINCE
a carpenter (director)

NICK BOTTOM
a weaver (Pyramus)

FRANCIS FLUTE
a bellows-mender (Thisbe)

TOM SNOOT
a tinker (Wall)

SNUG
a joiner (Lion)

—The Players of Pyramus and Thisbe—

performing at the wedding of...

THE FAIRIES

WORLD OF THE PLAY



THE STORY

It's summertime in Athens, and the playful sprite Puck gathers his feisty fairy band for some midsummer mischief. Theseus, Duke of Athens, anticipates his marriage to Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons, who he has just conquered in battle. As Theseus's wedding day approaches, he gets a visit from an angry nobleman, Egeus, and his daughter, Hermia. Egeus is furious with Hermia, who refuses to marry Demetrius, the suitor he favors. Hermia rejects Demetrius as she is in love with Lysander. This creates a familial conflict, but Hermia refuses to back down. Egeus quotes an ancient Athenian law that gives his daughter three choices: she must either marry Demetrius, live as a nun, or be put to death. Desperate and unhappy, Lysander persuades Hermia to flee the city with him.

Hermia's best friend Helena, who is in love with Demetrius, discovers their plan. Desperate to please Demetrius, Helena tells him of Hermia's flight to the woods with Lysander and Demetrius pursues them. He is followed by a lovesick Helena who he is desperate to escape from.

The two couples enter the woods, where the fairy king and queen, Oberon and Titania, are having relationship problems of their own. Jealous of the attention Titania is giving to an adopted changeling child, Oberon commands his fairy attendant, Puck, to fetch a magic flower so he can play a revengeful trick on her. This enchanted herb causes its victim to fall in love with the first creature that they see. Observing Demetrius's cruel treatment of Helena, Oberon tells Puck to enchant Demetrius with the flower's juice so he will fall in love with her. Puck mistakenly enchants Lysander, who promptly falls in love with Helena instead, much to Hermia's dismay.

Also in the woods that night is a troupe of amateur actors rehearsing a play they hope to perform on the Duke's wedding day. Puck transforms one of them into a donkey, with whom Titania falls in love after being given the love juice by Oberon.

With love tangled everywhere, chaos ensues!

at the beginning...

Hermia & Lysander

♥ each other

Demetrius ♥s Hermia

Helena ♥s Demetrius

in the middle...

Demetrius & Lysander
are obsessed with Helena

Helena is confused

Hermia is heartbroken

at the end...

Helena & Demetrius

♥ each other

Lysander & Hermia

♥ each other

ACT-BY-ACT SYNOPSIS

ACT 1

While Duke Theseus and his fiancée Hippolyta anticipate their wedding, Egeus, an enraged nobleman, arrives at court with a problem. Hermia, Egeus' daughter, refuses to wed Demetrius, because she loves Lysander, Demetrius's equal in both status and wealth. Despite Hermia's protests, Theseus invokes an archaic Athenian law: Hermia must either agree to marry Demetrius, become a nun, or be put to death. To escape this harsh punishment, Hermia and Lysander plan to meet that night in the Athenian woods to run away and get married. They tell their secret plan to Hermia's best friend Helena, who relates the plan to Demetrius in hope of winning his affections back. The lovers pursue each other into the forest. Meanwhile, a group of workmen, led by the boastful Nick Bottom, meet to hear the cast list for *Pyramus and Thisbe*, a play they hope to perform at the Duke's wedding celebration. They too plan to meet that night in the forest for their first rehearsal.

ACT 2

The forest, as it turns out, is as chaotic as Athens at the moment. Oberon and Titania, the king and queen of the fairies, are at war over a child whom Titania has adopted, and the entire natural world is in disarray. Hoping to punish Titania for her refusal to relinquish the child to him, Oberon sends his servant Puck in quest of a magic flower which, when squeezed into a sleeping victim's eyes, will make her completely infatuated with the first thing she sees upon waking. While waiting for Puck to return, Oberon witnesses Demetrius's rejection of a heartbroken Helena. Filled with pity for the girl, Oberon orders Puck to find the Athenian gentleman and enchant him too. But Puck mistakes Lysander for Demetrius, and when Helena stumbles upon the sleeping Lysander, it is he, and not Demetrius, who is suddenly smitten. Convinced that her best friend's boyfriend is mocking her, Helena flees, pursued by Lysander. Hermia wakes and, finding Lysander gone, races off in search of him.

ACT 3

Puck happens upon the amateur actors rehearsing *Pyramus and Thisbe* quite close to the place where Titania is sleeping. Inspired, Puck transforms the bombastic Bottom into an ass. The other actors, terrified by their friend's transformation, flee the scene. Left alone, Bottom sings to bolster his spirits, and awakens Titania, who immediately falls in love with him. Puck brings the good news to Oberon, who praises his servant for his excellent work—until he sees Demetrius clearly under no magic spell, and still pursuing Hermia. To remedy the situation, Puck applies the flower's juice to the sleeping Demetrius's eyes. Upon waking, Demetrius sees Helena, tailed by Lysander, and promptly falls in love with her, too! Hermia arrives on the scene and demands an explanation. Helena, still convinced that they are all playing a cruel joke on her, attacks Hermia for her part in the plot. Soon the two friends come to blows, and Lysander and Demetrius dash off to duel one another for Helena's affections. Oberon warns Puck to keep the lovers apart until Oberon can repair the mistake. Puck uses his magic to trick Demetrius and Lysander into chasing after his voice until all four lovers collapse, exhausted. Puck reverses the charm on Lysander's eyes, assuring the audience that all will soon be well.

ACT 4

Oberon finds Titania sleeping happily with Bottom. He uses an herb to reverse the spell and Titania wakes, stunned to find herself beside an ass. Newly reconciled, the fairy king and queen recount the stories of their night just as day breaks. Theseus and his court come to the woods to hunt and find the four young lovers asleep together. Egeus demands that Lysander be punished for stealing away with his daughter, but Demetrius explains that his love for Hermia has vanished, and now his heart belongs only to Helena. Theseus arranges for the lovers to share his wedding day, and all return to Athens. Meanwhile, Bottom wakes to find himself human again, convinced that the night was merely a dream.

ACT 5

The marriage vows taken, and all stories told, Theseus and Hippolyta prepare for the evening's entertainment. Theseus chooses Bottom and Quince's *Pyramus and Thisbe*, which the workmen turn into a delightful disaster. After the three couples head off to bed, Puck tells us that if we haven't enjoyed the play, we should simply think of it as a midsummer night's dream.

CONVERSATION WITH A SCHOLAR

Dr. Vanessa Corredera, Assistant Professor of English at Andrews University, and Nora Carroll, Director of Lifelong Learning and Education, discuss *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.



Dr. Vanessa Corredera

NORA CARROLL: What was your first time experiencing *A Midsummer Night's Dream*? How has your understanding of the play changed from then to now?

VANESSA CORREDERA: My first exposure to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was out of context—it was through scenes that were pulled into *Dead Poets Society*. And I wasn't really clear what that play was because Shakespeare was not a significant part of my early education. But what piqued my interest was how the film used the magical nature and the beautiful, forest-like spectacle of *Midsummer*. I didn't fully engage with the play until years later, in college and graduate school. Now, it's probably the play I've gotten to see in performance the most—in the US and abroad.

It's been interesting to see so many interpretations of one play, but regardless of the interpretations this play continues to be about several topics. One is identity and its potential changeability or mutability. You have a pair of lovers that are so interchangeable that even I, as a professor, have to check their names every time because I don't want to misspeak in class. Power is another central theme across productions. It starts with a power struggle between a couple that is about to be married, a father/daughter power struggle, and a power struggle between Oberon and Titania. It's about love or the lack thereof.

NC: When you think about the structure of Shakespeare's works, how does this play sit within the canon, and in particular, his comedies?

VC: In the final act, comedies will typically have a "happy ending" that has a sense of unease, where things aren't necessarily resolved. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, it's worth remembering that Demetrius is potentially still under Puck's spell. So other people have had the spell lifted, but he might not.*

**Artists and scholars often have differing opinions on the ending of this play. Some productions depict Demetrius as still being under the spell, while others show him as fully aware of his choice to be with Helena. This difference in interpretation could lead to a fruitful Socratic seminar in your classroom!*

Oberon and Titania have "fixed" the chaos in their relationship, but he still has the baby that he took from her through trickery. And there's no apology. You have Bottom, who has been introduced into a magical world, and for all intents and purposes, experienced love. He's elevated from a lower class to the consort of a fairy queen. And when he's thrust back into the lower class, you have this beautiful poignant moment, where he talks about the impact of this dream and how he was transformed. And there's something, potentially, sad about that, because he has no real access to that once he goes back to the city space.

But that's all to say that the structure of this play has a happy ending with all the lovers paired off. And ostensibly, you're going to celebrate these weddings, but there is unease. And this happens in other comedies as well. In *Much Ado*, there's an interruption at the end, and they must now go and chase Don Jon and his forces. In *Twelfth Night*, you have Malvolio, who says he's going to be revenged on the lot of everyone, and he doesn't want to give Viola's clothes back. In *Midsummer*, you have this structural dynamic that Shakespeare returns to again and again and again. And if you are one of the scholars that identifies *Midsummer* as a contemporary of *Romeo and Juliet*, you can see the tipping point between comedy and tragedy if both of those plays start with lovers that aren't supposed to be together. Only one ends up having a so-called happy ending. And how happy is it really? Those are interesting structural pieces and elements that teachers and creatives can play with and discuss, especially the ending and how dark they're going to make that ending, when they're thinking about this particular play.

NC: So, how do we create spaces in the classroom for students to begin to bring those different interpretations to the text?

VC: Starting with a character study in this play can be really helpful because students may get confused. There are two young female characters with names that begin with an H. Engaging with the text allows students to see what's there in the language or what isn't there.

A lot of the differentiation between these two women is physical. One is described as tall, the other short. One is repeatedly described as 'fair,' the other as 'not fair.' This is interesting but also raises some issues because it uses racialized language. Fair is imagined as white, while the other is described as an Ethiope.

And so, students can think about what the text suggests about the four young lovers, and how different they are or are not from one another. They can do a sort of character study. And then, if time permits, they could do the four lovers, Titania and Oberon, and Titania and Bottom to see how these characters relate to each other.

Students could trace what possibilities there are. Because when things aren't described, there's

a world of possibility. Next, they could engage with different performance clips so that students can see how a unique creative perspective will have a different spin or twist on these characters. It might be that some of the productions, through casting, make it really clear. You'll often see color-conscious or color-evasive casting with these characters so that people can really easily differentiate between them.

"In the final act, comedies will typically have a 'happy ending' that has a sense of unease, where things aren't necessarily resolved."

I saw a production where they leaned into the description of Hermia's being small and she was differently abled. So, there are interesting ways that you can look at performances to think about what story is being told.

I love allowing students to be creative and reimagine a scene. I've done projects where they have to cast and create a version of a Shakespeare play. They have to have a particular angle, and they make a poster for the play. Maybe they want to emphasize gender. Maybe they want to have an ecocritical reading of the play.

I think sometimes students get intimidated by Shakespeare. And it's not just the language, it's that Shakespeare's seen as this kind of be-all-end-all, so how can their vision compete with Shakespeare? But once they see that different people and different directors and artistic directors and creatives have different visions, and especially if you can throw an adaptation in there or two, that frees them up to say, "Oh, I can play with Shakespeare, too." He played with sources, maybe they can play as well.

NC: Is there a particular interpretation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that you've been waiting to see?

VC: That is a wonderful question. I would say that there's not one interpretation, though I will say that one of my favorite interpretations was at Chicago Shakespeare Theater. It was hilarious—I cried, I laughed. I think the ending of this play is really tricky. I'm always interested in what a production's going to do with the ending, and how they're going to negotiate the momentum issue and the class issue of the play within the play. I'd also love to see a production that makes deep meaning out of the Indian votaress and her child. That is such a sticky moment in this play because you have this discussion of India. The wind and the spices and the exoticism – it's this Orientalizing gesture. And that's not just an academic putting academic language to something: it is meant to be exotic. You never see her. This child is referenced, but then what do we make of this child? Sometimes it's as if the child just disappears by the end and some performances don't do anything with that because it's so sticky. And so, I think there'd be an interesting version of this play that really leans into that. What does that mean? I'm not a dramaturg, but I'm happy to pay money to go see that particular production. Because that is what starts the power struggle between Titania and Oberon, and their power struggle is what has caused chaos in the "real world" of the play, right? So, it is a crux within the play. A crux that's easy to forget by the end. But I think that that's an interesting one, and it would be worth exploring a little bit more.

Vanessa Corredera can be reached via her professional website, vanessacorredera.com. Or, if you need access to her publications, email correder@andrews.edu.

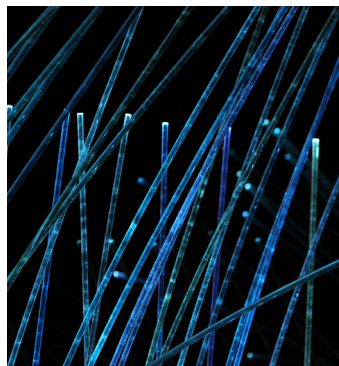
DESIGN ELEMENTS

About the Design Process

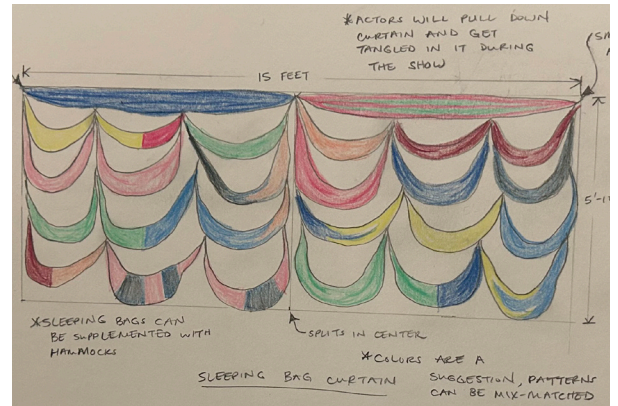
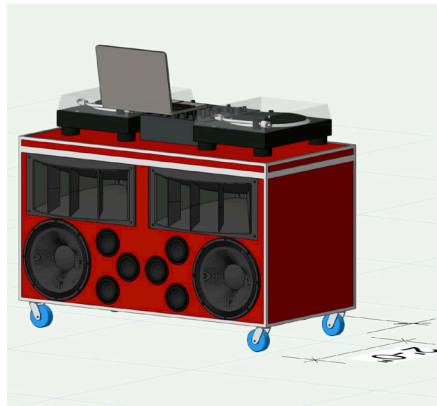
For this production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a collaborative team consisting of a **Scenic Designer**, **Costume Designer**, **Sound Designer**, **Art Director**, and **Director** worked together to create the production's design elements. The initial phase involved brainstorming ideas for the set, costumes, and props. Following this brainstorming session, the team synthesized these ideas into a more cohesive design that aligned across all elements. The designers then refined their concepts to fit within the time constraints and budget for the production.

Design Elements

Designers and Directors start the process of designing a show together by first talking about their goals—the themes and moods of the show they want to capture. To facilitate our discussion, designers will present inspirational images or create mood boards. These boards may showcase styles, textures, or specific elements that could be included in the final design. Throughout the discussions, the team will focus on several images that reflect the collective vision of the group. Below are some images like the ones the designers shared during the initial discussions for this production.



Next, designers begin to create specific designs for production. They produce sketches, photo collages, paint samples, and models as part of this process.



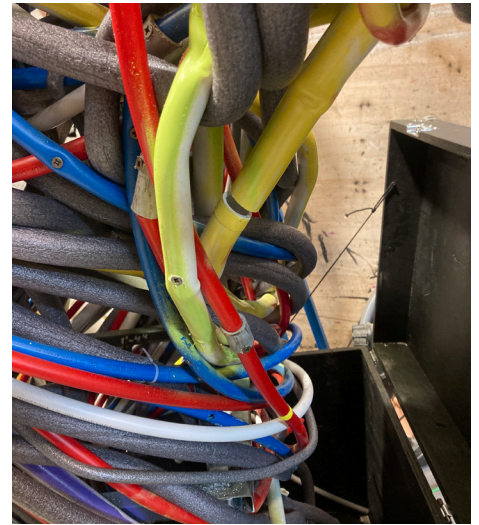
Digital and hand-drawn renderings of set pieces. Left to right: cable wire tree, DJ booth, sleeping bag curtain.



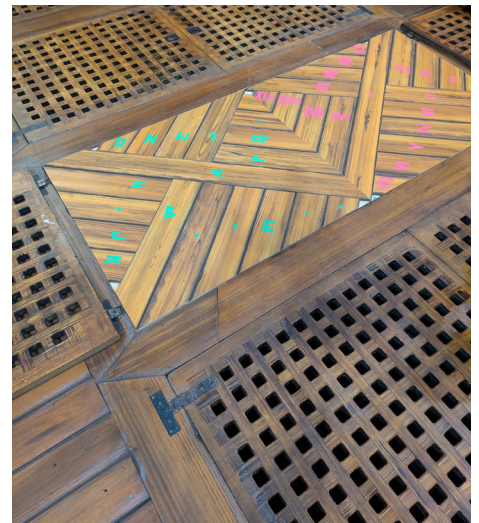
Hand-drawn costume sketches for (from left to right) Helena, Demetrius, Hermia, Lysander.

Design Elements *continued...*

Once the designs are finalized, they are handed over to the teams responsible for building the show. Technical directors collaborate with scenic designers to ensure that set pieces are constructed safely and within budget. Meanwhile, costume shop managers work with costume designers to determine which costumes will be purchased. Throughout the process, the designers and production artists maintain communication, making adjustments and refining ideas to achieve a polished final product right up until opening night.



The production team works to create a tree of repurposed wire using their preliminary rendering as a guide.



Slabs of wood have been cut and precisely measured to create a trap door on the stage.

NOTES FROM EDWARD HALL

Artistic Director of Chicago Shakespeare Theater and Director of *Short Shakespeare! A Midsummer Night's Dream*

READING THE PLAY AS A DIRECTOR

When I read Shakespeare as a director, I always focus on the play at hand by reading it multiple times and speaking the lines aloud. This helps me get a sense of how I might depict the story on stage. I pay close attention to where scenes occur, the time, how characters describe themselves, and how others speak about them. This process allows me to begin building a picture of the key elements in the play, which I refer to as “following the handbook.”

Typically, the details that would have been significant to Shakespeare are included in the text. If the time of day or the weather is necessary to the story, he makes sure to specify it. He introduces new characters and articulates the main subject of each scene. Early on, we usually get a theme. For instance, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Egeus' first line upon greeting Duke Theseus is, “Full of vexation come I with complaint against my child, my daughter Hermia.” With this line, both I and the audience understand that this will be the scene's focus. After re-reading and gathering all my clues from the text, I then brainstorm how to translate those insights into costume, setting, and staging.

THEMES

A Midsummer Night's Dream, estimated to be written in 1595, is about love, friendship, marriage, dreams, and mischief. Shakespeare cleverly interweaves four distinct groups of characters—the court, the lovers, the mechanicals, and the fairies—to explore various aspects of romantic experiences. In this production, we use a modern setting, costumes, sound, and music, hoping that you relate the characters' experiences to your own lives and the people around you today. After all, many of us have encountered different types of relationships, experienced family arguments, or thought about the possibility of ghosts and magic, as well as the realities that emerge from our dreams.

PRODUCTION CONCEPT

For our production, Puck and their cohort of fairies tell the story of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. So, instead of the real world revealing the magical realm, we witness the world of magic emerging within our reality. The entire play is set in a fictional county of Athens, which we imagine to be in Illinois, during the Athens County Music Festival.



So, imagine arriving in Athens County for a three-day music festival. Puck and his crew of fairies are the cool people you might encounter at 3:00 AM when the music is blasting, only to find that they've all vanished in the morning, leaving you questioning whether they were ever really there.

To create the environment of a festival, a lot of percussion is involved in sound—from thunder sheets and wind chimes to wood blocks. The music featured in our production is all contemporary. JQ of The Q Brothers Collective is composing two songs for us, including a reimagined, mash-up hip-hop version of The Everly Brothers' “All I Have to Do Is Dream” which will serve as the theme.

MIDSUMMER WORLDS

In this production, the worlds of the play are expressed through action more than big scenic changes. We have one environment to create the story in, and we use costume, sound, and music to narrate the different communities of characters and underline their differences.

Strict laws govern Athens, and we present Theseus as a symbol of this, using the look of a modern-day ‘Judge’ as a touchpoint. This is important as Egeus corners Theseus into passing judgment on Hermia by enacting an ancient law that Theseus is powerless to overrule.

The magical woods are a place where nature is free and where the rules of a city society don't apply. In Shakespeare's plays, characters discover their true natures when they are put into the wilds of nature. The lovers get lost in the woods, become victims to Oberon's love charm, and certainly, in Demetrius's case, discover true feelings. They go on a wild adventure, and when they wake up in the morning, they feel at first like it could have been a dream. Oberon and Titania argue as violently as the lovers, and we use percussion, live sound, music, and simple staging to help create their magical world.

We have imagined the world of the mechanicals as the working crew at the Athens Music Festival—a carpenter, a security officer, a foreman, etc. We use work clothes and hard hats to symbolize this. The mechanicals have never put on a play before so the costumes and props they use for their performance for Duke Theseus are all made by them or bought from local stores.

IN THE CLASSROOM

PRE-READING WRITING PROMPTS

FOCUSED FREE-WRITE AND COLLABORATIVE POEM

One of the reasons Shakespeare's plays are still enjoyed is the core themes of the stories still relate to our experiences today. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* features many situations that may seem familiar to your students. The prompts below offer students the space to make connections to the events in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and prime them for journeying through the play.

Invite your students to free-write some of their ideas about one of the following situations, keeping in mind that their free-write will be shared with classmates:

- Have you ever felt that you and your parents would never see eye-to-eye on an issue? Do you find it difficult sometimes to defend your side of the argument?
- Who was your best friend growing up? Describe them. What made them so special to you? Write about a time when you felt particularly close to this person. How would you have felt if this person were no longer your friend? Did any external forces ever get in the way of that friendship?
- Have you ever felt betrayed by someone who you were really close to? How did you deal with the betrayal?
- If you had 10 minutes to pack a bag and leave home forever, what (or who) would you take with you? How would those items or person contribute to your survival?

In groups of three, students will read what they wrote. After each reading, listeners will share words or phrases that stood out to them. The reader will then choose one of the words or phrases selected by their peers to donate to a collaborative class poem. Then, as an entire class, students will sit in a circle, and take turns sharing their contributions to the poem.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What predictions can you make about the play based on this activity?
- Were there any repeated ideas or themes in the collaborative class poem?

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Reading:

R10 Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

Speaking and Listening:

SL1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

SL2 Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

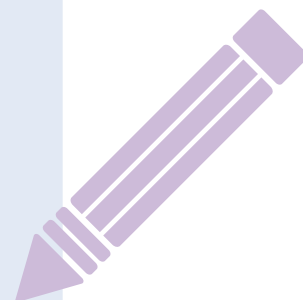
SL6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Writing:

W3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.

W4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience

W10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.



AS YOU READ THE PLAY...

ACT 1

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the characters experience and describe love in a variety of ways. For example, in the first scene, Lysander states,

*Ay me! For aught that I could ever read,
Could ever hear by tale or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth;*

This signifies that everyone who experiences love should expect some bumps along the way. Using the text, identify how the following characters describe or experience love. How is that similar or different from how you experience love? What are the characteristics of love in your own opinion?

- | | |
|------------|----------|
| • Hermia | • Helena |
| • Lysander | • Bottom |
| • Egeus | • Quince |

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Reading:

R2 Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

Writing:

W1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

W10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

ACT 2

A tableau is a visual picture created by actors to portray a significant moment in a scene. In groups of 4-5, create a tableau for each of the moments below. Be sure to use your full body (including facial expressions) to create a dynamic stage picture! (Take a look at the images on the next page for reference).

- The argument between Titania and Oberon
- Demetrius rejecting Helena and seeking out Hermia
- Hermia waking up from her nightmare

Guiding Questions:

- What words, sounds or imagery influenced the creation of your tableau?
- What mood does your tableau suggest?

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Language:

L5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

Reading:

R4 Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

Speaking and Listening:

SL1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

SL2 Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

ACT 3

The lover's quarrel is a very physical scene with lots of emotions. Shakespeare includes a number of embedded stage directions to guide the actor in performing the text. Embedded stage directions are said aloud by the character, "here upon my knee," whereas explicit stage directions are written outside of the character's lines, Exeunt. In groups of 4, read lines 311-344 aloud. Highlight each of the embedded stage directions and discuss how you would act it out.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Reading:

R1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

R4 Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

ACT 4

Reflect on all that unfolded in Act 4. Working in pairs, bullet point a list of no more than fifteen major events from the first four acts in chronological order. Together, recount the plot in exactly fifty words using your bullet point list as a guide to summarize the events.

Guiding Questions:

- Which plots and subplots are completely resolved by the end of Act 4? Which remain to be resolved?
- Which events were included in all or most groups' summaries?

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Reading:

R2 Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

Writing:

W2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

ACT 5

Read the play *Pyramus and Thisbe*, as it is performed before the court in Act 5, scene 1. With a few volunteers, try enacting the scene in two different ways, with the rest of the class serving as directors. First, try to make the play-within-a-play as hilarious as possible. Next, play it as seriously as you can, trying to make your audience feel sympathy for Pyramus and Thisbe. Discuss the different interpretations and which version resonates more with the class.

Guiding Questions:

- What are the elements of a tragedy? Of a comedy?
- What is it about “Pyramus and Thisbe” that makes it seem ridiculous instead of tragic and horrifying?
- How did your two scenes differ? What parts, if any, remained the same?

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Language:

L3 Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

Reading:

R9 Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.



Examples of tableaux



THE STORY

IN A SNAP

In A Snap is a fun summarizing activity where students will play with Shakespeare's language and create clarifying gestures for each line. Students will create gestures to accompany their assigned lines, to clarify the meaning of the line. The final script will be read, with each student jumping in to add their line and gesture at their moment in the script.

Activity Time:

- 15 minutes

Supplies Needed:

- In a Snap Lines (p. 16)
- In A Snap Script (p. 17)
- Lexicon or shakespeareswords.com

Learning Objectives:

- State some of the key lines of the play
- Gain comprehension through physically activating the language
- Work collaboratively to explore varying interpretations of the text

INSTRUCTIONS

Teachers will print out the sheet of lines, with their numbers, and cut them into strips. Then, pass out the strips giving each student one line to work on.

Students will read their lines aloud a few times and may work with other students to discuss what questions they have about the lines. Encourage students to use resources in the Further Reading section (pg. 41) such as "Shakespeare's Words" to clarify any confusing words.

Then, students will decide how they want to physicalize their line to help bring its meaning alive for the class. Choices don't need to be literal, but they should help the class to better understand it as students play with the words' meaning or sounds.

Students will practice saying their lines with gestures. When everyone is comfortable and ready, get the class to stand in a circle. As the story is read, the teacher will point to each student as their number comes up for them to read their line and perform their gesture.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

How did this further your understanding of Shakespeare's language?

What did each gesture clarify for you about the given lines?

What gestures would you have used on each given line to further provide clarity?

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Reading:

R1 Read closely to determine exactly what the text says explicitly and make logical inferences from it.

R4 Interpret words as they are used in the text and analyze how word choices shapes meaning.

Speaking and Listening:

SL1 Prepare for and participate in a range of conversations with others building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly

SL2 Integrate and evaluate text orally.

SL4 Present information so that listeners can follow the line of reasoning.

Language:

L3 Apply knowledge of a language to understand how it functions in different contexts and make choices in regard to style to more fully comprehend when listening.

L4 Determine the meaning of unknown words.

IN A SNAP! LINES

A Midsummer Night's Dream



1: As she is mine, I may dispose of her.

2: There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee.

3: The course of true love never did run smooth.

4: I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight.

5: Let not me play a woman: I have a beard coming.

6: Let me play the lion too.

7: Fairies away! We shall chide downright if I longer stay!

8: Wake when some vile thing is near!

9: Churl, upon thy eyes I throw all the power this charm doth owe.

10: And run through fire I will for thy sake!

11: You canker-blossom, you thief of love!

12: O Spite! O Hell!

13: I'll whip thee with a rod!

14: You bead, you acorn.

15: Thou runaway, thou coward!

16: My mistress with a monster is in love.

17: I'll apply to your eye, gentle lover, remedy.

18: Give me your hands, if we be friends, and Robin shall restore amends.

IN A SNAP! SCRIPT

A Midsummer Night's Dream

There's a problem—and four teens who are NOT amused by it. There's HERMIA: she's in love with LYSANDER—and he, with her. But then there's HERMIA'S DAD, who's dead set on her marrying DEMETRIUS instead. HERMIA's DAD proclaims: **(#1)**. And this is called “comedy”? Hang on...

HERMIA and LYSANDER plan to run away to the forest and get married **(#2)**—but not without Hermia first spilling the beans to HELENA, her BFF. Turns out, HELENA is head over heels for DEMETRIUS, but he's not having it—he wants HERMIA. Well, you know what they say: **(#3)**. Anyway, HELENA's got a plan **(#4)**! And all four run off, one right after the other, into the forest in the thick of night. What could possibly go wrong?

It's now time to meet: the “Rude Mechanicals,” a motley troupe of amateurs who also happen to be in the woods that night to begin rehearsing a play—‘The most lamentable comedy and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisbe.’ One guy isn't really thrilled about the part he's been assigned **(#5)**—but NICK BOTTOM, a weaver, would love to play ALL the parts **(#6)**.

Enter—some real fairies! (The fairies actually do live in these woods...). OBERON and his QUEEN, TITANIA, throw major shade each other's way and then TITANIA storms off **(#7)**. Snap! There's just one way to answer that kind of diss: revenge! OBERON commands PUCK to enchant his wife TITANIA with a magic flower so that she'll fall in love with whomever—or whatever—happens to wake her **(#8)**. OBERON's on a roll, and orders PUCK, while he's out dripping potion in eyes, to apply some to DEMETRIUS. The master plan? That DEMETRIUS will fall head-over-heels in love with HELENA **(#9)**! A nice idea—except that PUCK mistakes LYSANDER for DEMETRIUS. Big oops!

But not to worry—PUCK figures he will just go find DEMETRIUS and apply love juice in his eyes too. Oops again! . . . Now, we've got LYSANDER in love with HELENA **(#10)**. Plus, we've got DEMETRIUS in love with—HELENA. . . Aaaaand, we've got Hermia, furious at her ex-BF, LYSANDER **(#11)**. Finally, there's HELENA, who's outraged at all of them **(#12)**.

Everyone fights **(#13)**! Insults fly **(#14)** (plus **#15**)! Meanwhile, remember the Mechanicals, those guys in the woods practicing a play? PUCK crashes the Mechanicals' rehearsal, and decides to have a little fun. He turns poor BOTTOM into, well, an ass, which is a donkey (but also, as you know, a butt joke...) And guess who wakes up just in time to fall head-over-heels in love with him?! **(#16)**. Poor TITANIA...

Things have gone far enough—it's time to clean up the mess. OBERON sends PUCK back in with yet one more magic flower to undo the spell **(#17)**. Everybody's happy, at long last, and with the person they're meant to be with. The Mechanicals perform at the big wedding, and PUCK ends the play **(#18)**!

THE STORY

PICTURES INTO STORYBOARD

Pictures Into Storyboard is a critical thinking activity where students will examine images about or related to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Students will interpret these images to understand the plot of each scene of the play and experiment with the chronological order of events in the play, drawing conclusions about the plot, scenes and characters.

Activity Time:

- 15-20 minutes

Supplies Needed:

- 5 sets of images of different moments of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Learning Objectives:

- Identify specific moments within a scene
- Interpret images that coincide with the text
- Apply text-based evidence to support claims

INSTRUCTIONS

Instructors choose five images of different moments from various productions or movie adaptations of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Label each image 1-5 in a random order. You may opt to have different sets of images for each of your small groups or the same images for the whole class. Good go-to sites are:

- IMDB: [imdb.com/find/?q=A%20midsummer%20night%27s%20dream&ref_=nv_sr_sm](https://www.imdb.com/find/?q=A%20midsummer%20night%27s%20dream&ref_=nv_sr_sm)
- Teach Shakespeare: teach.shakespearesglobe.com/midsummer-images
- Theater Images: rsc.org.uk/a-midsummer-nights-dream/production-photos



© The Shakespeare Globe Trust. Photo: John Haynes

examples from Teach Shakespeare



© The Shakespeare Globe Trust. Photo: Simon Kane



© The Shakespeare Globe Trust. Photo: Simon Kane

PART 1: In small groups, students will examine each of the five images chosen and write a description of what is happening in the image on the handout (p. 20). For their analysis, prompt students to discuss the following questions and record their responses:

- What is the relationship between the people in the picture?
- Where does the scene take place?
- Besides people, what other things are in the image and what clues do they give you about the scene?

After analyzing each image, students choose the scene in the play that they think corresponds with the image and find a line(s) in the text to support their choice.

PART 2: Students rearrange the order of the images to coincide with the order of events in the play. After seeing the newly arranged images, they may opt to change their order. As a class, discuss each group's order of images. Encourage students to ask questions about why they chose the corresponding scene and any changes they would make.

CONTINUED ►►

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Did any of your classmates write something that helped you to make your own connection to a photo?

How might these scenes be connected? Why does one picture come before another?

How did your group's decision about the order compare with other groups? Would you change your order after hearing the thought process of other groups?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Using the same images, students think about the scenic design in the photos. Students create a storyboard of thumbnail sketches that demonstrate how the scenic design helps to give the characters a sense of place and clues to what the scene is about.

Have students think about some of their favorite movies and tv shows. In groups, assign a scene from the play. Students then find an image from those productions that describe their assigned scene. As a group, walk through the handout to discover what scene the group's image represents.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Writing:

W3 Write narratives and well-structured event sequences.

W7 Conduct short research projects demonstrating understanding of subject matter.

W9 Drawing evidence from literary sources to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Reading:

RL1 Read closely to determine what a text says and cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking.

RL2 Determining central ideas or themes and summarize the key details.

RL3 Analyzing how and why characters and events advance and develop over the course of a text.

RL7 Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

RL10 Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

PICTURES INTO STORYBOARD

A Midsummer Night's Dream

IMAGE 1

IMAGE 2

IMAGE 3

IMAGE 4

IMAGE 5

Image Description

Analysis

Text Line

THE STORY

DRAMATIC PROGRESSION THROUGH SCENE TITLES

One of the best ways to get at the “through-line” or dramatic progression in a play is to give each scene a name or title that captures the heart of the action. Directors often use this technique to help actors (and themselves) during the rehearsal process. Students will understand the plot of individual scenes by summarizing through naming the scene.

Activity Time:

- 15-20 minutes

Supplies Needed:

- *A Midsummer Night's Dream* text
- Lined paper
- Writing utensils

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the sequence of events in a scene
- Summarize the plot of a scene through a name or title

INSTRUCTIONS

This exercise is flexible for solo work or group work.

After reading Act 1, instruct students to identify the main idea or essence of each scene. They should consider character motivations, conflicts, and key moments that define the scene.

Have students create unique and creative titles for each scene.

Encourage them to ensure their titles are specific and capture the essence of the scenes and the characters within the scene.

Facilitate a sharing session where students present their titles to the class.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

How do the titles clarify and summarize the dramatic progression?

What themes become more apparent when writing the titles?

Are there titles from other scenes that also describe your scene?

EXTENSION EXERCISE

Repeat this activity through each act as you read the play.

As a group, start with one scene of the play and share your titles aloud. Compare these titles and discuss how they all summarize the same scene.

Identify 3 lines from your scene that support your title as a summary.

Create a tableau to visually represent your class titles.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Reading:

R1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

R2 Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

R10 Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

Writing:

W10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

THE CHARACTERS

CHARACTER CLUES

The study of character contributes much to our understanding of a play. We learn about an individual character's personality and temperament through understanding (1) what the character says about himself or herself, (2) what others say about the character, (3) what the character does, and (4) what the character says about others. In this activity, students will use the text to become acquainted with different characters of the play and learn how to interpret text clues.

Activity Time:

- 15-20 minutes

Supplies Needed:

- A copy of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Learning Objectives:

- Assess clues in the text to learn about a character
- Cite portions of the text that give specific clues about a character

INSTRUCTIONS

Choose a scene from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that introduces a character for the first time.

Ask students to select a character to focus on and underline or highlight any lines that reveal new information or attributes about that character.

- To prime students for this solo work, you may use the opening of Act 2, Scene 1, where Puck is introduced. Have students read aloud in pairs from "How now, spirit; whither wander you?" to "And here my mistress. Would that he were gone!" Discuss aloud what words/phrases reveal information about these characters.

Encourage students to utilize the graphic organizer to document their character's journey. They should include details such as page numbers, line numbers, and direct quotes from the text.

Facilitate a discussion where students can share their discoveries in small groups or with the entire class.

Remind students to apply this method each time a new character is introduced throughout the play.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What are your first impressions of your character based on their distinctive way of speaking?

What patterns do you notice in their speech?

What are some words in the text that your character uses to describe themselves?

What are some adjectives you can use to describe your character?

EXTENSION EXERCISE

As a group, discuss the reflection questions and decide on three key words that describe your character. Include the lines from the play that give evidence to these adjectives.

Start a suspect board in your classroom the way detectives do to solve a crime! Add the suspect (character's) name, their adjectives, and citations from the text on the board. Continue to add characters as you work your way through the play.



Use red yarn to indicate connections between characters. These connections can be about whether the characters interact, they can be connections related to themes like love or power, or connections.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Reading:

RL1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL3 Analyze how complex characters develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

RL10 Read and comprehend literature

Writing:

W1 Write arguments to support claims with evidence and reasoning.

W4 Produce clear and coherent writing appropriate for a target audience, task and purpose.

W9 Drawing evidence from literary sources to support analysis, reflection, and research

CHARACTER CLUES

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Character Name: _____

What does your character say about themselves?

What do others say about your character?

Evidence from Text:

Evidence from Text:

What does your character do?

What does your character say about others?

Evidence from Text:

Evidence from Text:

3 Words that describe your character:

THE CHARACTERS

HOT SEAT

Hotseat is a fun opportunity to delve deep and explore Demetrius's journey. In this activity, students complete the Hotseat planning guide to prepare them to be in the "Hotseat" in front of their colleagues as that character. Review the rubric as you assign the activity to:

1. Guide the Hotseater so that they can represent the criteria on the sheet, and
2. Keep the audience on target during the Hotseat presentations.

Time:

- 45–60 minutes

Supplies Needed:

- In A Snap Script (p. 17)
- A copy of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
- Lexicon or shakespeareswords.com

Learning Objectives:

- Gain comprehension through physically activating the language
- Work collaboratively to explore varying interpretations of the text
- Critically think about the perspectives of a specific character

INSTRUCTIONS

Have one student volunteer to be the character in the hotseat, and another student volunteer to be the facilitator. Place one chair in the middle of the room facing everyone so that all students have good sight lines. The host and audience will ask questions to the hotseater while they answer as your chosen character.

Roles

Host: The host is responsible for asking questions for the hotseater and fielding questions from the audience.

Audience: The audience is responsible for fact checking, filling out the rubric, and asking questions that are textually relevant.

Hotseater: The hotseater is responsible for proving their innocence, remaining in character, and providing textual evidence.

ADDITIONAL TIPS

It is helpful to model performing Hotseat prior to doing the activity with your classroom text. We suggest inviting a colleague to play a character students are familiar with (Goldilocks, the Big Bad Wolf, etc.), while you act as the facilitator asking the questions.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What did you learn about your character and their journey in the play?

Was it difficult to find textual to support your claims?

What information is inferred about your character and what information is explicitly stated?

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Writing:

W1 Make arguments to support claims with evidence and reasoning

W4 Produce clear and coherent writing appropriate for a target audience, task and purpose

W9 Drawing evidence from literary sources to support analysis, reflection, and research

Reading:

RL1 Cite strong and thorough evidence (explicit and inferential) to support analysis of (complex) text

RL3 Analyzing how complex characters advance the scene (plot)

RL6 Author's/Character's point of view

Speaking and Listening:

SL1 Participate in effective small and large group conversations; set norms

SL2 Integrate multiple sources of information (and evaluating the credibility of same)

SL3 Speaker's point of view

Language:

L3 Apply knowledge of language and its rules and function to make sense of what is read or heard

L4 Clarify or determine the meaning of words

L5 Figurative language

HOTSEAT PLANNING GUIDE

Demetrius – Love Triangle

You (playing **Demetrius**) are on the reunion episode of *Love Island* to explain the strange twists and turns that your love life has taken. You publicly said you wanted to marry Hermia but later got into a physical altercation with Lysander to prove your love for Helena. The public wants to know who the real Demetrius is and where his heart is. There will be tough questions about your choices and what you were heard to say. Answer the following questions to get a real feel for who you (**Demetrius**) are.

Demetrius' personal opinions of Helena and Hermia	
Demetrius' objectives or goals for the future	
Demetrius' biggest obstacles, problems	
Demetrius' loyalties	
Demetrius' strengths and weaknesses	
List one or two words that describe you (Demetrius). Use the text!	
At least one quote each that best reveals your (Demetrius') capacity for true love and your fickleness:	True Love (line #?):
	Fickleness (line #?):
What's the one question you hope the host/ audience doesn't ask? What answer would you give?	

THE LANGUAGE

SHAKESPEARE'S POETIC DEVICES

At the height of the Renaissance, when Shakespeare was composing his plays, the English were having a love affair with words and with the seemingly boundless potential of the power of language. Shakespeare's plays are filled with poetic devices, which add emotion, punch, flavor, and intensity to the story and characters. In this activity, students will use their knowledge of poetic devices to unpack Shakespeare's language.

Activity Time:

- 45 minutes

Supplies Needed:

- Text excerpt from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (p. 27)
- Figurative Language Analysis Worksheet (p. 28)

Learning Objectives:

- Identify and analyze figurative language used in the text and how it impacts the meaning and character emotions.

INSTRUCTIONS

The instructor will write short definitions on the board and review them with examples from the text. Before handing out the text, share a summary of the passage.

In pairs, students will read the passage aloud, alternating readers at every punctuation mark.

Students will mark the text as follows:

- **DEFINITIONS**
Circle any unfamiliar words.
Look them up and define them.
- **SIMILE**
Highlight yellow
- **METAPHOR**
Highlight blue
- **ANTITHESIS** —————>
Use an arrow to connect the phrase
- **REPETITION**
Underline the word/phrase once the first time, twice the second time, etc.

After marking the text, students will fill out the analysis worksheet.

When students have completed the analysis worksheet, each pairing will share out one example that they analyzed and why it's significant for the character.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

How does Shakespeare's figurative language convey Helena's heightened emotion at this moment in the play?

What do you notice about Helena's patterns of speech?

What is revealed about Helena and Hermia's friendship?

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Reading:

R4 Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

R5 Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

R6 Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Writing:

W1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

W4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

W9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

***A Midsummer Night's Dream* Act 3, scene 2**

HELENA

Lo, she is one of this confederacy!
Now I perceive they have conjoined all three
To fashion this false sport in spite of me.—
Injurious Hermia, most ungrateful maid,
Have you conspired, have you with these contrived To bait me with this foul derision? **5**

Is all the counsel that we two have shared,
The sisters' vows, the hours that we have spent
When we have chid the hasty-footed time
For parting us—O, is all forgot?
All schooldays' friendship, childhood innocence? **10**

We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,
Have with our needles created both one flower,
Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,
Both warbling of one song, both in one key,
As if our hands, our sides, voices, and minds **15**

Had been incorporate. So we grew together
Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,
But yet an union in partition,
Two lovely berries molded on one stem;
So with two seeming bodies but one heart, **20**

Two of the first, like coats in heraldry,
Due but to one, and crownèd with one crest.
And will you rent our ancient love asunder,
To join with men in scorning your poor friend?

It is not friendly; 'tis not maidenly. **25**
Our sex, as well as I, may chide you for it,
Though I alone do feel the injury.

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

Identify and analyze the figurative language used in Helena's monologue by completing the following sections.

EXAMPLE 1	<p>Line number(s):</p> <p>Figurative Language used:</p> <p>Explanation of meaning:</p>
EXAMPLE 2	<p>Line number(s):</p> <p>Figurative Language used:</p> <p>Explanation of meaning:</p>
EXAMPLE 3	<p>Line number(s):</p> <p>Figurative Language used:</p> <p>Explanation of meaning:</p>
ANALYSIS	<p>Overall theme of Helena's monologue:</p> <p>How does figurative language contribute to the theme?</p>

THE LANGUAGE

PERSUASIVE LANGUAGE

This activity engages students in an exploration of the rhetorical devices **ethos**, **pathos**, and **logos**. Students will not only identify these persuasive elements but also bring the text to life through performance, enhancing their understanding of how these techniques are used to influence audiences.

Activity Time:

- Two, 45-minute periods

Supplies:

- Persuasive Language Guide (p. 30)
- Scene Selections from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (p. 31-33)

Learning Objectives:

- Examine a scene in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and identify the use of ethos, pathos, and logos.
- Perform the selected scene demonstrating an understanding of how rhetorical devices inform the speakers' emotional connection to the text by using appropriate tone, physicality, and emphasis to convey meaning.

DEFINITIONS

Ethos: The credibility or ethical appeal of a character or speaker in the text.

Pathos: The emotional appeal used to persuade the audience or characters within the play.

Logos: The logical reasoning or evidence presented in the text to support arguments.

INSTRUCTIONS

Pose the question, "*When was the last time someone convinced you to do something (chores, buy a product, try a different food, etc?) What ultimately convinced you to say yes?*"

Introduce students to the idea of rhetoric language by watching this video:

[ted.com/talks/camille_langston_how_to_use_rhetoric_to_get_what_you_want](https://www.ted.com/talks/camille_langston_how_to_use_rhetoric_to_get_what_you_want)

Engage students in a brief discussion about how ethos, pathos, and logos are present in everyday conversation and how it relates to Shakespeare. Write definitions on the board and come up with examples as a class.

Tip: Shakespeare's characters are all about action, so they are almost always trying to convince someone of something!

As a class, identify how rhetoric is used in the quote below (feel free to add additional quotes suitable for your students!):

Hamlet: "*O Hamlet. Thou hast cleft my heart in Twain.*" (**Pathos**. Gertrude is attempting to elicit an emotional response from Hamlet)

In small groups, students will be assigned different excerpts from the play. Each group will identify examples of ethos, pathos, and logos in their excerpts and discuss how these elements affect the characters and the audience. The next day students will prepare a short performance of their assigned scene, focusing on delivering the text while emphasizing ethos, pathos, and logos.

See the accompanying table to support students' performance!

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What is one thing you learned about persuasive language that you can incorporate into your own writing or speaking?

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Language:

L5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

Reading:

R1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

Speaking and Listening:

SL4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

SL6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

TIPS FOR EMPHASIZING PERSUASIVE LANGUAGE

Use this chart as a guide for crafting your short performance!

	Vocal Expression	Physicality	Facial Expressions
ETHOS Character/ Credibility	Use a confident and steady voice. Vary your pitch and volume to convey authority, emphasizing words that reflect moral character and integrity.	Use gestures that convey confidence, such as placing hands on hips or using controlled and deliberate hand movements to emphasize key points.	Use expressions that reflect sincerity and trustworthiness, such as a focused gaze and calm demeanor.
PATHOS Emotional Appeal	Utilize varied vocal tones to reflect emotions. Soft and shaky tones can express sadness, while amplifying your volume can express more passion, anger, or frustration. Lean into words and phrases that evoke imagery and symbolism.	Connect movement with your emotional state. For example, open gestures can suggest vulnerability, joy, or love, while closed gestures and folded arms can express defensiveness.	Use a variety of facial expressions to convey emotions—frowning for sadness, wide eyes for shock, or a smile for joy. If called for, make eye contact with the audience to deeply connect.
LOGOS Logical Appeal	Speak clearly and confidently to strengthen your communication and ensure your logical arguments make a lasting impact.	Use hand gestures to clearly show the structure of your ideas. When outlining key points, you can count on your fingers to visually emphasize each idea you are discussing.	Take on a serious or contemplative facial expression to reinforce the rationality of your talking points.

PERSUASIVE LANGUAGE GROUP ACTIVITY: SCENE SELECTION 1

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Act 1, scene 1 | *Theseus, Hippolyta, Egeus, Demetrius, Hermia, Lysander*

THESEUS

What say you, Hermia? Be advised, fair maid.
To you, your father should be as a god,
One that composed your beauties, yea, and one
To whom you are but as a form in wax
By him imprinted, and within his power
To leave the figure or disfigure it.
Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.

HERMIA

So is Lysander.

THESEUS

In himself he is,
But in this kind, wanting your father's voice,
The other must be held the worthier.

HERMIA

I would my father looked but with my eyes.

THESEUS

Rather your eyes must with his judgment look.

HERMIA

I do entreat your Grace to pardon me.
I know not by what power I am made bold,
Nor how it may concern my modesty
In such a presence here to plead my thoughts;
But I beseech your Grace that I may know
The worst that may befall me in this case
If I refuse to wed Demetrius.

THESEUS

Either to die the death or to abjure
Forever the society of men.

PERSUASIVE LANGUAGE GROUP ACTIVITY: SCENE SELECTION 2

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Act 2, scene 2 | *Helena and Demetrius*

HELENA

Stay, though thou kill me, sweet Demetrius.

DEMETRIUS

I charge thee, hence, and do not haunt me thus.

HELENA

O, wilt thou darkling leave me? Do not so.

DEMETRIUS

Stay, on thy peril. I alone will go. [*Demetrius exits.*]

HELENA

O, I am out of breath in this fond chase.
The more my prayer, the lesser is my grace.
Happy is Hermia, wheresoe'er she lies,
For she hath blessèd and attractive eyes.
How came her eyes so bright? Not with salt tears.
If so, my eyes are oftener washed than hers.
No, no, I am as ugly as a bear,
For beasts that meet me run away for fear.
Therefore no marvel though Demetrius
Do as a monster fly my presence thus.
What wicked and dissembling glass of mine
Made me compare with Hermia's sphery eyne?

PERSUASIVE LANGUAGE GROUP ACTIVITY: SCENE SELECTION 3

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Act 3, scene 2 | *Hermia, Demetrius, with Oberon and Puck watching*

HERMIA

Out, dog! Out, cur! Thou driv'st me past the bounds
Of maiden's patience. Hast thou slain him, then?
Henceforth be never numbered among men.
O, once tell true! Tell true, even for my sake!
Durst thou have looked upon him, being awake?
And hast thou killed him sleeping? O brave touch!
Could not a worm, an adder, do so much?
An adder did it, for with doubler tongue
Than thine, thou serpent, never adder stung.

DEMETRIUS

You spend your passion on a misprised mood.
I am not guilty of Lysander's blood,
Nor is he dead, for aught that I can tell.

HERMIA

I pray thee, tell me then that he is well.

DEMETRIUS

An if I could, what should I get therefor?

HERMIA

A privilege never to see me more.
And from thy hated presence part I so.
See me no more, whether he be dead or no.

INTERPRETING THE PLAY

DESIGN A *MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM*

In Edward Hall's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a modern music festival setting creates a fun, magical world for characters and audiences alike. Now, your students can put their creative spin on this classic tale! Their interpretation options are endless—from *Midsummer* under the sea, to medieval times, or even in a video game—so long as the presentations can be supported by the text.

Student groups will be composed of a **Scenic Designer**, **Costume Designer**, and **Director**. Groups will collectively come up with an interpretation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* then present their costume, scenic, and directorial designs.

Activity Time:

- 60-90 minutes for planning
- 15 minutes for each group presentation (or 3-5 minutes/role)

Supplies Needed:

- A copy of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
- A laptop for inspiration research
- Access to PowerPoint, Google slides or poster board for final presentation
- Plain paper or grid paper, and pencils

Learning Objectives:

- Work collaboratively to create a unique interpretation of a classic play
- Produce scenic, costume and/or directorial designs for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
- Use textual evidence to support their choices
- Present their vision to an audience

INSTRUCTIONS

Teachers will explain how Shakespeare's works are often interpreted differently by directors, using Edward Hall's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* present-day music festival as an example.

Using "*A Midsummer Night's Dream* and YOU!" handouts (p. 35-36), students will need to form groups of 3-4 (adjust to your class size) to come up with their own interpretation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

While Directors will be explaining interpretations for the play at large in their presentations and can use text from any moment in the play, Scenic Designers and Costume Designers should focus their presentations to just one setting or two characters from the play. This will keep all presentations within the time limit and allow the designers to really be specific in their designs.

Groups will present their interpretations to the class.

Each group will spend 10 minutes selecting a pivotal scene to focus on. **Tip:** to reduce class time, provide a handful of scenes for students to choose from. Here are a few prompts to help them decide on a scene:

- Is there a challenging moment in the play that you'd like to solve?
- What scene speaks to a moment you've experienced with your friends or family?
- Who has the most compelling scene/language in this play?

Next, students will spend 15 minutes discussing what their interpretation will be. Using the Notecatcher (p. 36), encourage students to think about different time periods, settings, genres, gender swapping, shifting of age or other changes that could inform their interpretation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Writing:

W7 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

W9 Drawing evidence from literary sources to support analysis, reflection, and research

Theatre:

Cr2.b. Demonstrate collaborative and interdisciplinary skills in a drama/theatre process.

Cr3.c. Integrate design elements that create an emotional impact or convey meaning.

Speaking and Listening:

SL4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

SL5 Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

Reading:

R6 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Language:

L3 Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

L4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM AND YOU!

Theaters rely on more than just a director: a team of designers work closely with the director to bring a unified vision to life. In this exercise, you will be present your interpretation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

With your creative role in mind, decide on your shared vision and how that will be portrayed throughout the scene. Use text to support your decisions and include it in your presentation. Presentations should be under 15 minutes (3-5 minutes/role). Each team member will contribute to the presentation in their assigned role.

ROLES:

- **Scenic Designers** design what the set looks like for a production or scene.
- **Costume Designers** design the costumes, makeup, and wigs the actors wear.
- **Directors** lead the teams in creating an overall vision/theme for the scene. This will guide the presentation and encapsulate why the team chose that direction for their scene.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Take 20-30 minutes to discuss your concept as a group. Use the accompanying map (p. 37) to guide your group discussion. Discuss and fill in each prompt as much as possible so that you have all the information you need to contribute to the presentation. When you have completed your concept map, break out into your individual roles to build your presentation.

Directors, your presentation should share what has inspired your team so far and get the company excited about helping to create your vision. It can also include specific key moments you're excited about, and an overview of how individual character storylines fit into the big picture.

Include text and images that you have shared with your design team that led your team to the final version.

Describe the scene, location, time period and any other relevant details that tell the characters where this story takes place.

Choose a specific line in the play that helped guide the interpretation and describe how you see that line come to life with the choices of your team.

Scenic Designers, your presentation should help the company understand the physical world they will be playing in, what elements they have to work with, and what limitations they will need to keep in mind.

Be specific about the physical space actors will be in, any furniture that will be a part of the set, and whether it's movable/standable. Share research on the time period you've chosen, and how the set coincides.

If you're creating a world that is not set in reality (i.e. dream world), be sure to use specific details to explain the world to its fullest. Why did you decide to create a new world? Why did you choose the objects you did? What do these objects/colors mean for the characters, and how do they function?

Choose a specific line in the play that supports your choice for a set piece and describe how you see that character interacting with the scene during that line.

Costume Designers, your presentation should help the actors understand how their individual character will fit into the world. The fashion a character displays helps define their personality, social status, etc., and how they are related to others on stage. The physical elements of the costume can help an actor understand their character's physical movement abilities and help the audience understand the relationship between characters.

If your team is setting your production in a specific time and place, research is key. Share how the costume choices align with the time period and how your character would have obtained that clothing.

If you choose to make up your own world set in dreams or the future, explain why you made the decisions you did regarding colors, the function of layers, or your design.

Choose a specific line in the play that supports your choice.

For the final presentation, imagine you are presenting your vision to the actors for a new production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Chicago Shakespeare Theater. While the actors will know the story, they will be completely new to the world your team has created. You will need to communicate big ideas about the mood and goals of the show, key details about how individual characters or locations fit into the big picture, and use the text to support your vision. The goal is to help the actors understand what physical elements they will be working with once they start rehearsing with the set and costumes.

Notecatcher for:
A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM AND YOU!

Genre (ex. horror, romantic, comedy, etc.)

Time & Place (ex. playground in Chicago to highlight modern youth)

Adjectives to describe the feel of the scene

Physical needs for set (ex. Bench for 3 people)

Additional Details

Challenges with this interpretation

Physical Needs for costume/hair/makeup
(ex. Smeared makeup to show Helena has been crying)

Vivid description of the mood (ex. "This scene has the joyful vibes of your first sleepover.")

Scene Name:

ADDITIONAL PRODUCTION-RELATED ACTIVITIES

These activities can be used in addition to the previous group project, or as stand-alone activities.

CREATE A VISUAL COLLAGE

Students will craft a visual collage of images that inspire their ideas as a director, scenic designer, costume designer, or sound designer. The collage should communicate practical details such as the color palette, architectural elements, and other relevant aspects related to the entire scene and set. This may include images that showcase the color palette for their interpretation, research on furniture styles, or textures they have chosen.

CREATE A DIGITAL RENDERING OR 3D MODEL

Use a program like SketchUp to design an intricate digital rendering or a detailed 3D model of your set. This versatile software will allow students to visualize their ideas with precision, experiment with different layouts, colors, and textures to bring their creative vision to life. SketchUp for education is free with a Google Workspace or Microsoft Education account: sketchup.com/en/plans-and-pricing#primary-ed-title

DRAFT ARCHITECTURAL BLUEPRINTS

Students will draft the architectural blueprints of what they envision for their envisioned set design. These drawings should include three different views: what the set will look like from above (ground plan), from the front (front elevation), and from the side (side elevation).

CHARACTER RENDERINGS

Students will create a series of simple sketches to depict the look of a character over the course of a scene. These sketches are called renderings. The goal is to show each change that a character goes through (i.e. Bottom's change from human to donkey). Students should consider how the need for a quick-change might impact the design of the costume.

DIGITAL RENDERINGS

Use a program like nastix-design.com to create digital renderings of several specific looks.

PLAN/REHEARSE YOUR PRODUCTION

After the group presentations, the class votes on their favorite interpretation. The winner becomes the theme for a class production of that scene. Each student is assigned roles such as actors, designers, marketing team, etc. and brainstorms additional roles needed to put on a production. Invite your school administrators and/or other classes/grades to see your production.

STEAM

REPURPOSING FOR OUR ARTISTIC PLANET

Shakespeare's plays have been reimagined many, many times. While his original works still stand, directors and actors have taken these classics to tell completely different stories or interpret new meanings. The same can be done for the materials used to bring the story to life. At Chicago Shakespeare Theater, the production team designed and created a tree for the scenes in the forest (see next page). The team asked CST staff to donate wires that were no longer needed. Using a variety of these wires, the team crafted the tree that is a vital part of the set. This innovative use of materials not only resulted in something extraordinary but also contributed to reducing environmental waste. In this activity, students will create an art gallery showcasing repurposed materials transformed into costumes and set design pieces for staging *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Activity Time:

- Active classroom time: 1 hour
- Independent time: 1+ hours

Supplies Needed:

- Piece of paper that can be re-used
- Previously used or no longer needed items
- Crafting supplies such as scissors, glue, markers, etc.

Learning Objectives:

- Students will learn about repurposing common materials to create art
- Discuss costumes and set design through the lens of conservation
- Design a process for repurposing items at their school or a theater

DEFINITIONS

Repurposing: finding new uses for a previously used item

Conservation: waste prevention

INSTRUCTIONS

Start with a brainstorming session on what it means to repurpose an object. Each student starts with a piece of paper they no longer need, rather than a new sheet. How many things can your piece of paper be? A telescope? A house? A hat? The possibilities are endless! Because theaters have multiple shows that run in a season, it's important to think about ways props can be re-used for multiple shows to reduce waste.

To gather items for repurpose, you may opt to:

- Hold a donation drive at your school. Ask for non-perishable donations
- Ask students to use materials they're ready to part with from their homes, or
- Allow students to scavenger hunt around the school for materials.

Note that the collection process can take place over the course of a week. Distribute the handout on p. 40 so students will clearly understand what's reusable.

Once the materials are in hand, students will use these materials to design a costume (prototype or full size), prop, or part of the set as if they were staging *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

In addition to their design, students create a process for their school or a theater to continue repurposing. If your school already has a repurposing/recycling program, have students create a proposal for how it can be improved.

Hold a gallery walk at your school to display students' creations. Students submit a one-paragraph description card including:

- A description of their art piece and the intended purpose
- What repurposed items were used to create the piece
- How they see this item be repurposed in the future
- Their method for upholding repurposing in your school or a theater

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What is something you buy regularly that can be replaced with a repurposed item?

Does art change when we use repurposed items rather than new items? How?

How can your school or theater benefit from your repurposing method?

COMMON CORE STANDARDS ►►

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Writing:

W2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

W4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience

THEATRE

Creating:

Cr2.b. Demonstrate collaborative & interdisciplinary skills in drama/theatre process.

Cr3.c. Integrate design elements that create an emotional impact or convey meaning.

Connecting:

Cn11.1.a. Create works that express/ connect historical context to a community, social, or global concern.

NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS

Earth and Human Activity:

MS-ESS3-3 Apply scientific principles to design a method for monitoring and minimizing a human impact on the environment.

HS-ESS3-4 Evaluate or refine a technological solution that reduces impacts of human activities on natural systems.



REUSABLE MATERIALS CHECKLIST

Use the list below as a guide for finding materials. Check off of the items you have found, along with the number of those items. Note the list below is just a starting point, feel free to add more materials that you locate.

PAPER & CARDBOARD	CONDITION	QUANTITY
Cardboard boxes		
Cardboard tube		
Cereal Boxes		
Magazines		
Newspapers		
Paper bags		
Packing paper		
Newspaper		
Other:		
PLASTIC		
Bubble wrap		
Old CD's, DVD's		
Plastic bags		
Plastic bottle		
Plastic caps & lids		
Plastic container (yogurt, butter, etc.)		
Plastic utensils		
Straws		
Other:		
FABRIC		
Fabric scraps		
Lace or ribbon		
Old clothing		
Old socks		
Old t-shirts		
Old towels		
Other:		
ELECTRONICS		
Broken or old headphones		
Old keyboard		
Old watches or clocks		
Old wires		
Other:		
GLASS		
Glass Beads		
Glass cups and plates		
Glass Jars		
Wine bottles		
Other:		
ALUMINUM		
Aluminum can		
Aluminum foil		
Aluminum lids		
Aluminum mesh or screens		
Other:		

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

FURTHER READING & EDUCATION

Folger Library Educational Resources

folger.edu/explore/shakespeares-works/a-midsummer-nights-dream/

The Internet Shakespeare Editions

internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/m/index.html

This website has transcriptions and high-quality facsimiles of Shakespeare's folios and quartos, categorized by play with links to any articles written about the play that can be found on the website.

Open Source Shakespeare Concordance

opensourceshakespeare.com/concordance/

Use this concordance to view all the uses of a word or word form in all of Shakespeare's works or in one play.

Shakespeare's Words Glossary and Language Companion

shakespeareswords.com

Created by David and Ben Crystal, this site is a free online companion to the bestselling glossary and language companion, Shakespeare's Words.

Why should you read *A Midsummer Night's Dream*?—Iseult Gillespie—TED-Ed

youtube.com/watch?v=xCl6o-kbqrs

A Midsummer Night's Dream—Audiobook

youtube.com/watch?v=VT66DESUXf4

SPANISH TRANSLATION

A Midsummer Night's Dream Spanish Translation

suneo.mx/literatura/subidas/William%20Shakespeare%20El%20Sue%C3%B1o%20de%20una%20Noche%20de%20Verano.pdf

Sueño de una Noche de Verano—Audiobook

youtube.com/watch?v=qz4rz8vXy4c&t=2887s

Sueño de una Noche de Verano Production—RESAD Madrid (2015)

youtube.com/watch?v=6egV4zUsk2g

Sueño de una Noche de Verano Production—Maynake Teatro (2022)

youtube.com/watch?v=OMzpXtmwIAA

PRODUCTIONS

A Midsummer Night's Dream Production—IPFW Department of Theatre (2016)

youtube.com/watch?v=7SCA5hlwkbq

A Midsummer Night's Dream Production—Palm Beach Shakespeare Festival (2020)

youtube.com/watch?v=mp1BCSXj9g0

A Midsummer Night's Dream Production—University of Iowa (2018)

youtube.com/watch?v=sPNtuxDi_CI

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM IN FILM

William Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream (1999)

Available to stream on Amazon Prime, Youtube, and Apple TV

Trailer: amazon.com/gp/video/detail/B009EEQDBS/

A Midsummer Night's Dream (2016)

Available to stream on Amazon Prime and Roku

Trailer: amazon.com/gp/video/detail/B0CG7BFF9T/

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM IN MUSIC

A Midsummer Night's Dream: Music & Speeches—Royal Shakespeare Company

open.spotify.com/album/5FZvhTtcWoEg0fdTPqwFDQ

Midsummer Lullaby—Royal Shakespeare Company

rsc.org.uk/midsummer-festival/midsummer-lullaby

The Music of the Fairies—Shakespeare Birthplace Trust

shakespeare.org.uk/explore-shakespeare/blogs/music-fairies/

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