

Kentucky Shakespeare Presents

A Midsummer Night's Dream **Spring Tour**

Study Guide

Grades 6 - 12



Hear it. See it. Do it!



Dear Educator,

Thank you for choosing Kentucky Shakespeare to enrich your students' lives with Art Education! We know that the arts are essential to a child's educational experience and development. It is our object to keep the arts alive and thriving in our schools and communities.

This comprehensive Study Guide includes essential background information on the Bard and his life, his written works, pre/post performance activities, and a list of applicable Academic Standards that are met with this performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. While giving additional arts related experiences, these teacher-led activities are intended to broaden students' understanding of the play as well as how Shakespeare can relate to our own lives.

Please contact us with any questions or need for further assistance. Thank you for supporting the Commonwealth's largest in-school arts provider and the United States' oldest, free Shakespeare festival!

All Our Best to You,

Kyle Ware
Director of Education

Hannah Pruitt
Education Programs Manager

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Academic Standards

TH:RE7.1.6-8, TH:RE8.1.6-8, TH:RE9.1.6-8,
TH:CN10.1.6-8, TH:CN11.1.6-8, TH:CN11.2.6-8,
TH:RE7.1.I-III, TH:RE8.1.I-III, TH:RE9.1.I-III,
CN10.1.I-III, TH:CN11.1.I-III

RL.6.3, RI.6.4, SL.6.1B, RL.6.7, RL.7.3, RL.7.4,
RL.7.5, SL.7.1C, RL.8.3, RL.8.4, RL.9-10.3, SL.9-
10.1C, SL.9-10.1D, RL.9-10.4, RL.9-10.6, RL.9-
10.1, RL.11-12.3, RL.11-12.4, RL.11-12.7

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Spring Tour Synopsis

In this 90-minute production of Shakespeare's *Midsummer*, our professional actors are able to create a rapport with your students in order to keep Shakespeare relevant and accessible. It is a wonderful opportunity for Shakespeare-lovers and those not as well acquainted to experience the Bard's language and see a live performance of his words. This tour emphasizes conflict resolution, interpersonal relationships, and Shakespeare's universal themes.

How can we both make this be the most efficient and successful performance?

- We ask that you create an environment conducive to a positive interaction with your students including an **open space** for our Artist Educators to perform and seating students on bleachers or to where they can easily see the performance.
- For your use, we have provided these activities for both **pre- and post-workshop discussion**. They are a fun and an engaging way to enhance learning and allow students to make the most of their arts experience with us.
- It is of utmost importance not only to your students but to our Artist Educators as well that there are **adult school staff members present in the room** throughout the workshop. Students tend to have less distractions and are more encouraged to engage in the performance with familiar adult presences in the room.

William Shakespeare

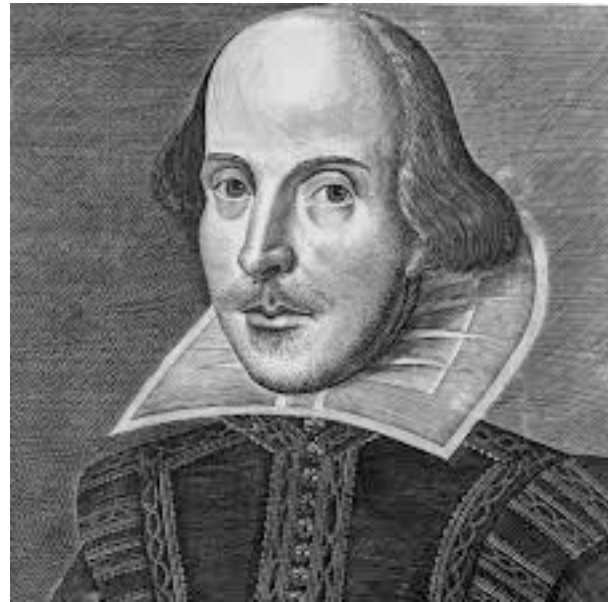
(April 23, 1564 – April 23, 1616)

His Life

- Born and raised in Stratford-upon-Avon
- Attended grammar school in central Stratford where he learned Latin, grammar, and literature
- Married Anne Hathaway at the age of 18 and had three children: Susanna and twins Hamnet and Judith
- Between 1585 and 1592, he began a successful career in London as an actor, writer, and part owner of the playing company the Lord Chamberlain's Men, later known as the King's Men
- Appears to have retired to Stratford around 1613, where he died three years later

His Works

- An English poet and playwright widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English language and the world's preeminent dramatist
- Often called England's national poet and the "Bard of Avon" (or simply "The Bard")
- His surviving works consist 38 plays, 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems, and several poems
- Plays have been translated into every major living language and are performed more than those of any other playwright
- Few records of his private life survive and there has been considerable speculation about his religious beliefs and whether the works attributed to him were written by others
- Produced most of his known work between 1590 and 1613
- Early plays were comedies and histories, genres he raised to the peak of style and artistry
- Next, he wrote primarily tragedies until about 1608, including *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*
- Lastly, he wrote tragicomedies also known as romances and collaborated with other playwrights
- In 1623, two of his former theatrical colleagues published the First Folio, a collected edition of his dramatic works that included all but two of the plays now recognized as Shakespeare's
- Reputation did not rise to its present heights until the nineteenth century



William Shakespeare



The Original Globe Theatre circa 1612

Shakespeare's Three Styles of Plays

Tragedy

Shakespearean tragedies were formulaic in style and used traditional conventions. These tenets included:

- A hero(ine) who seeks to avenge a crime committed against a family member or a personal injustice
- A tragic character whose own flaw leads to their downfall
- An end that contains a revelation of self-knowledge by the tragic hero about how his own frailty brought on his and others' downfall

Antony and Cleopatra, Coriolanus, Hamlet, Julius Caesar, King Lear, Macbeth, Othello, Romeo & Juliet, Timon of Athens, Titus Andronicus

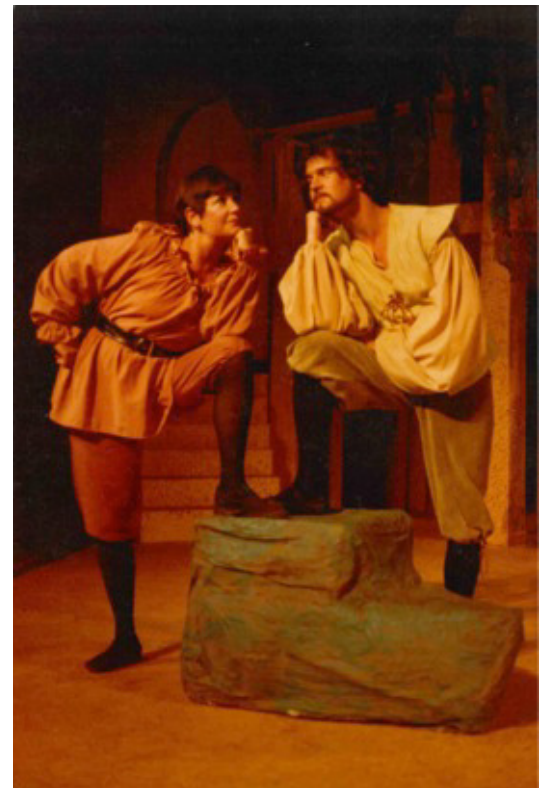


Comedy

"Comedy" in its Elizabethan usage had a very different meaning from modern comedy. A Shakespearean comedy is one that has a happy ending, usually involving marriage, and a lighthearted tone and style. Shakespearean comedies tend to have:

- A struggle of young lovers to overcome a difficulty often presented by elders
- Separation and unification
- Mistaken identities
- A clever servant
- Heightened tensions, often within a family
- Multiple, intertwining plots
- Frequent use of puns

All's Well That Ends Well, As You Like It, The Comedy of Errors, Cymbeline, Love's Labours Lost, Measure for Measure, The Merry Wives of Windsor, The Merchant of Venice, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Much Ado About Nothing, Pericles- Prince of Tyre, Taming of the Shrew, The Tempest, Troilus and Cressida, Twelfth Night, Two Gentleman of Verona, Winter's Tale



History

Shakespeare's "history" plays are based on the lives of English kings and brought massive audiences to the theatre. These plays are based only loosely on historical figures rather than actual events in history. The 10 plays that are categorized as histories cover English history from the twelfth to the sixteenth century particularly 1399-1485. The histories usually include elements of comedy and tragedy.

King John, Richard II, Henry IV Parts I and II, Henry V, Henry VI Parts I, II and III, Richard III, Henry VIII



BASIC THEATRE VOCABULARY

Actor- Individual who pretends to be a character in a play; who represents a character in a play.

Blocking- The pattern of movement the actors follow while on stage.

Characters- The personalities or parts actors become in a play; roles played by actors in a play.

Climax- The point of highest dramatic tension or a major turning point in the action of a play.

Conflict- The opposition of persons, forces, or ideas that gives rise to the dramatic action.

Costumes- The clothing worn by the actors to play the characters.

Dialogue- The words spoken by the actors during a play.

Empathy- The capacity to relate to the feelings of another.

Exposition- The part of a play that introduces the theme, main characters and circumstances.

Falling Action- The action after the climax of the plot.

Interpretation- To explain or tell the meaning of something; to present in understandable terms.

Monologue- A speech made by a single character; often when a character is “thinking out loud.”

Motivation- An incentive or an inducement for further action for a character.

Playwright- The individual who writes a play.

Plot- What happens in a play; the order of events, the story as opposed to the theme; what happens rather than what it means.

Resolution- The solution to the problem after the climax in a play.

Rising Action- The portion of the play from the beginning to the climax, where the action increases in intensity and excitement.

Role- Part/ character/ person written by a playwright.

Setting- Where a play takes place in time, space, or location

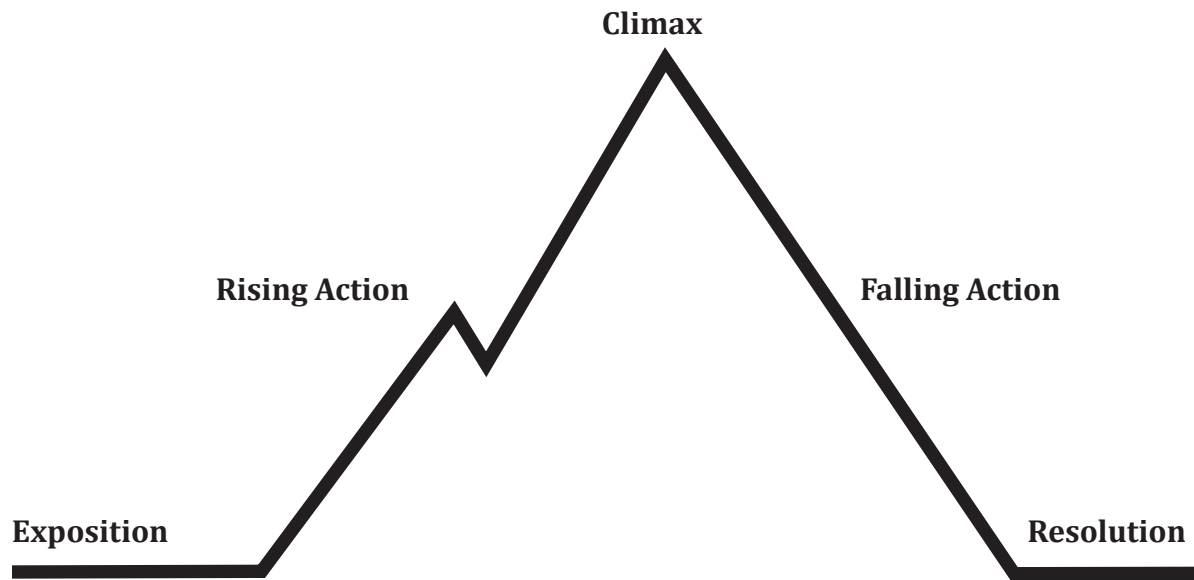
Script- The play in written form.

Stage- The area where the actors perform the play.

Theme- What the play means as opposed to what happens; the main idea or message within the play.

Turning Point- The moment in a play when events can go either way; the moment of decision; the crisis.

Dramatic Structure of a Play's Plot

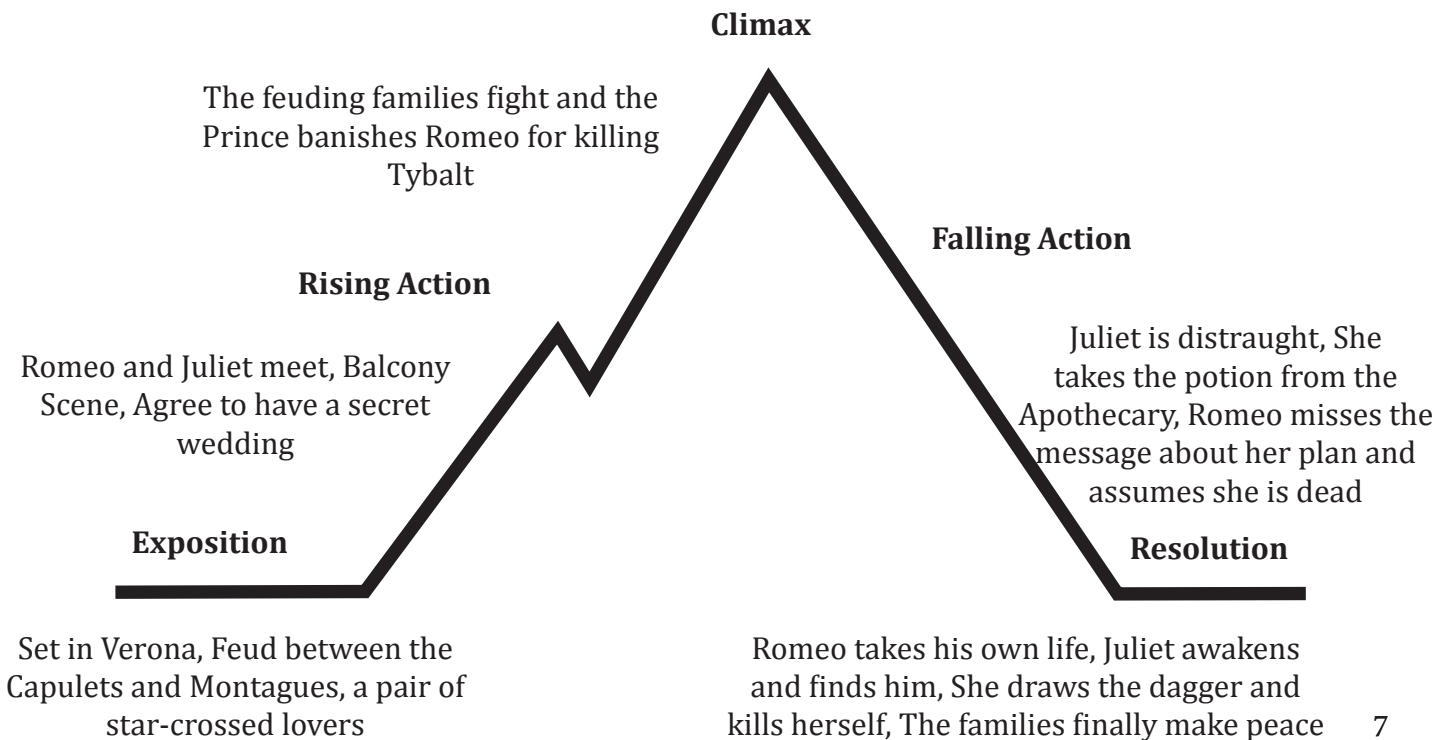


Freytag's Pyramid

Freytag's Pyramid illustrates the five parts of the classic dramatic plot: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. This pattern was suggested by Gustav Freytag in 1863 as means to explain the plot of many works such as Shakespeare's collection.

Please have students use the vocabulary from the previous page to fill out their own Plot Diagram for the plot of *Midsummer*.

An example Answer Key for *Romeo & Juliet* is provided below:



Director's Questions

Shakespeare used very few stage directions, which are clues in the script for the actors and director to follow during productions. An example would be, "*Actor crosses downstage right to table.*" The way that Shakespeare handled stage directions is that he left clues about the characters and scenery in the lines of the play.

Choose a scene from *Midsummer*, read it aloud, and use the Director's Questions below to explore the possibilities of the text. Based on your discoveries from the Director's Questions, make decisions about what the set, scenery, and costumes might look like.

DIRECTOR'S QUESTIONS

1. WHO AM I?

How old am I? Am I rich or poor?
What is my job? Am I in school?
What is my family like? Where am I from (country, state, etc.)?
Am I nice? Funny? Smart? Mean? What is my personality?

2. WHERE AM I?

County - State - City - Neighborhood - Building - Room
What does the place look like? Do I like it or not?

3. WHAT TIME IS IT?

Century - Year - Month - Week - Day - Time

4. WHAT ARE YOUR RELATIONSHIPS IN THE SCENE?

People in the scene?
People mentioned in the scene?
The place where they are?
The objects around them?

5. WHAT IS WRONG IN THIS SCENE? IS THERE A PROBLEM? A CONFLICT?

6. WHAT DO THE CHARACTERS WANT IN THIS SCENE? WHY CAN'T THEY HAVE IT?

7. WHAT DO THE CHARACTERS NEED TO DO TO GET WHAT I WANT?

A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare

Synopsis

Celebrations are planned to mark the marriage of Theseus, Duke of Athens, and Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons. A young lady, Hermia, loves a young man named Lysander. Her father, however, has demanded that she must marry Demetrius. She refuses. The Duke orders Hermia to obey her father or, according to Athenian Law, face death.

Hermia and Lysander decide to elope that night. They confide their plan to Hermia's best friend, Helena. Helena is still in love with Demetrius, even though he doesn't love her anymore. Hoping to win back his affection, she tells him of the plan. That night, all four lovers steal away to the forest.

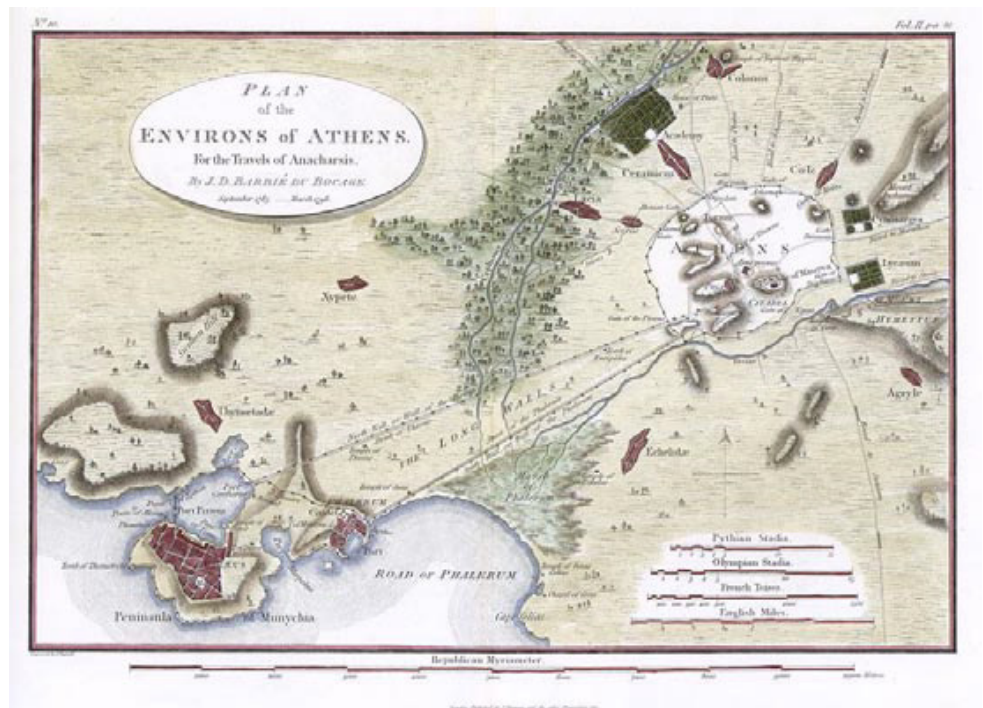
Oberon and Titania, the Fairy King and Queen, have quarreled over Titania's refusal to give up her changeling child to Oberon. He orders Puck, his Fairy servant, to seek out a magic flower whose juice, when squeezed on the eyes of someone asleep, will cause them to fall in love with the first creature they see upon waking.

Nick Bottom and a group of Athenian tradesmen, called Mechanicals, are planning to perform a play,

The Tragedy Of Pyramus and Thisbe, in celebration of the Duke's wedding. They decide to rehearse that night in the same forest as the Athenians and fairies.

Puck returns with the magical flower and Oberon uses the juice on Titania and she falls instantly in love with Bottom, whom Puck has bewitched and turned into a donkey. Oberon also tells Puck to use it on Demetrius so that he might fall in love with Helena, but Puck, mistaking the two Athenian men, uses it on Lysander instead. He promptly falls in love with Helena. Trying to rectify his mistake, Puck puts the love juice on Demetrius' eyes and he too falls in love with Helena. Now both youths love Helena and hate Hermia!

Eventually, however, all the enchantments are lifted, the human lovers are happily paired, Titania and Oberon are reconciled, and Bottom is returned to normal. The three couples are married and Bottom's acting troupe performs their play at the marriage celebrations.



Characters from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

The Young Lovers

Helena- A lady who is in love with Demetrius, but he rejects her. She does not give up, and follows him to the magic forest. The best friend of Hermia.

Demetrius- He is an aristocratic young man who once loved Helena but now is in love with Hermia. He rejects Helena, even though she still loves him.

Hermia- A young lady in love with Lysander but her father decides that she must marry Demetrius instead. She and Lysander decide to elope, and go to the magical forest. The best friend of Helena.

Lysander- He is an aristocratic young man who is in love with Hermia.



The Fairies

Oberon- The King of the Fairies. He has quarreled with the Fairy Queen, Titania, and he has plays a cruel trick on her and the unsuspecting young lovers with the love-potion flower used by Puck.

Titania- The Fairy Queen who has quarreled with Oberon. Oberon plays a trick on her, causing her to fall in love with Bottom, who is wearing a donkey's head.

Puck- A mischievous fairy who is Oberon's helper. He takes a lot of pleasure in the confusion he brings to mortals.

Other Notable Characters

Theseus- The Duke of Athens, who marries Hippolyta. He appears to be a good ruler and tries to mediate the dispute between Hermia and her father.

Hippolyta- She is the Amazon queen who marries Theseus.

The Mechanicals

Nick Bottom- A weaver, and one of the actors who put on the play, *Pyramus and Thisbe*. He plays Pyramus. The mischievous Puck uses magic on him to transform his head into an donkey's head.

Francis Flute- A bellows-mender, and one of the actors who performs the play. Flute plays the role of Thisbe.

Peter Quince- A carpenter who is in charge of directing the production of the play. He ends up taking on the role of the Prologue.

Snug- A joiner, and one of the actors who put on the play. He plays Lion.

Tom Snout- A tinker, and one of the actors who put on the play. He plays Wall.

Robin Starveling- A tailor, and one of the actors who put on the play. He plays Moonshine.

Vocabulary

Below are selected words from *Midsummer* that will assist in the comprehension and background knowledge for the production.

Athenian- a person from Athens, Greece which is that country's capital

Changeling- a child secretly exchanged by fairies for another human baby in infancy

Cupid- the god of Love, often shown as a baby boy with a bow and arrows

Dote- be very fond of something; be silly or foolish about something

Lover- a person with a romantic relationship with someone; someone who likes or enjoys something specific

Midsummer- the summer solstice, June 21st, when the sun is at its northernmost point and foolishness is considered to be everywhere

Mortal- a living human being; someone with no magic powers

Potion- a liquid or object with special or magical affects

Spirit- a person's true self; a person's mood; a supernatural being

Tarry- delay leaving

Youth- a name for people for the time in between being a child and being an adult



Themes

One of the brilliant things about Shakespeare is that each of his plays is rich with themes that are central to the human experience. When a director approaches a Shakespearean text, they must choose which themes to emphasize. The following themes are important to this interpretation of *Midsummer*.

Love & Healthy Relationships

This play examines several kinds of love and the relationships people can have with each other - love between a couple, love shared with friends, and even love for your self.

How can these types of love make a person act differently to others or from how they would normally behave? Is changing for someone else in order for them to love you healthy? What are some warning signs from the play that display unhealthy relationships early on? How do they evolve throughout the play?

Self-Respect & Self-Esteem

For the women of *Midsummer*, there are quite a few instances where they go back and forth between moments of standing up for and doubting themselves. Titania, Helena, and Hermia all take the risk to stand up for who or what they want out of life, but it can come at great cost to them - fighting with their husband, risking being denied by someone you love, or even facing death.

How would the story be different if these characters did not value their own self-respect? Can you relate to moments in the play where they have low self-esteem?

Conflict Resolution

The characters in *Midsummer* are unable to find conflict resolution (where two people communicate their differences in order to find a way to resolve their issues) throughout the first part of the plot of the story. Instead, they turn to threats, tricks, and name calling which does not make anyone happy for a very long time.

What are some ways that Hermia and her father could have worked to resolve their issues regarding her marriage? How could Oberon have handled his quarrel with Titania rather than having Puck use magic to trick her? What other situations need conflict resolution from this play?

Use the steps below for Conflict Resolution to explain your choices.

Steps to Resolve Conflict:

- 1. Identify the Problem.**
- 2. Focus on the Problem.**
- 3. Attack the Problem, NOT the Person.**
- 4. Listen with an Open Mind.**
- 5. Treat a Person's Feelings with Respect.**
- 6. Take Responsibility for Your Actions.**

Pre-Show and Post-Show Activities for Exploration

Please complete the following activities before & after the performance.

Before the Performance

1. Familiarize your students with *Midsummer* and discuss with your class the parts of this play- characters, themes, plot, etc. What are their expectations of experiencing this performance? Our production will use the same actors playing several parts. How do they believe this will work?
2. There are many modern interpretations of Shakespeare's plays such as *Gnomeo & Juliet*, *The Lion King*, *West Side Story*, and *10 Things I Hate About You*. Why do playwrights and filmmakers update Shakespearean plays for modern audiences?
3. Examine the major themes of *Midsummer*. For each theme, have the students list examples from their own lives and from the modern world around them. Prepare the students to look for these themes in the performance and discuss how they relate or do not relate to their own lives.
4. What types of technical theatre are needed for the performance including sets, props, costumes, sound, and lighting? Find specifics from the script and add some of your own to the list. How do these elements add to the experience? What do you expect from our Spring Tour of this show that has to adapt to many different locations?

After the Performance

5. Discuss the three main character groups in the play (Fairies in the Forest, the Athenians, and the Mechanicals) and give examples of conflicts that each group encounter in the play. Break your class up into groups and have them pick sides to represent or defend the character's actions in the play. Choices of conflict could include Oberon vs. Titania when Titania denies Oberon the changeling child (Fairies), Helena vs. Demetrius and Lysander when they are both under the magic spell and love her (Athenians), Bottom vs. Peter Quince when Bottom wants to play every character but Peter Quince won't allow it (Mechanicals). Have your students define their choices that led to the escalation of the conflict in these scenes, how or if they were able to resolve the conflict, and what they could have done differently.
6. Consider two female roles in this play - Helena, Hermia, Titania, or Hippolyta. Compare and Contrast their relationships with the male characters of the play. What kind of agency did they have as women in this male-dominant society? Were they complex characters? How did they evolve throughout the play?
7. If you were to be in charge of the technical element of sound for this performance, then what pieces of music, sound effects, etc would you choose? What period would the music come from in history? What point in the play would it be used in? What would you want it to make the audience feel or understand? How would this music help the play to tell the story or set the mood?
8. Compare the physical choices the actors made in the play to what their characters were saying in the scenes. Give three examples of how their physical choices- space, pace, levels, etc enhanced the impact of their performance. How did these physical choices successfully translate that they were different characters? Is there a choice that you would've made differently? What would it have been and why?

Shakespeare Links & Resources

Type the word Shakespeare in a search engine and you will find a plethora of information on him, his works and his environment. Show your students that the internet can be a great way to research and gather valuable information - especially when you can't find it at your local library.

www.absoluteshakespeare.com
Comprehensive Resource of Works

www.folger.edu
The Folger Shakespeare Library

www.penguin.com/static/pdf/teachersguides/
The Penguin & Signet Classic's Teacher Guide

www.shakespeare.org.uk
Resources for understanding Shakespeare's works, life, and times



Classroom Challenge:

Write a letter to the Kentucky Shakespeare Professional Actors who performed in the *Midsummer* SPRING TOUR performance. Describe what you liked about the performance and how it helped to see Shakespeare be performed rather than just reading it. Describe what you did, saw, and heard.

What was your favorite part?

Mail to:
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