

*Kentucky Shakespeare Presents*

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

Study Guide

Grades 6th - 12th



***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 Shakespeare and his era, his written works, pre/post performance activities, and a list of applicable Academic Standards that are met with this Spring Tour performance. 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

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## Academic Standards

TH:Re7.1.6-8, TH:Re7.1.HSI, TH:Re7.1.HSII,  
TH:Re7.1.HSIII, TH:Re8.1.6.b, TH:Re8.1.6.c,  
TH:Re8.1.8.c, TH:Re8.1.HSI.c, TH:Re9.1.6-8  
TH:Re9.1.HSI, TH:Re9.1.HSII,  
TH:Re9.1.HSIII.b, TH:Re9.1.HSIII.c

TH:Cn10.1.6, TH:Cn11.2.8.a,  
TH:Cn11.2.HSII.b, TH:Cn11.2.HSIII.b,  
TH:Cn11.1.6.a, TH:Cn11.1.8.a,  
TH:Cn11.1.HSI.a



## What to Expect with Our Spring Tour:

In this 90-minute production of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, our professional actors create an experience that keeps Shakespeare relevant and accessible. It is a wonderful opportunity for Shakespeare-lovers and those not as well acquainted with his work to experience the language and see a live performance of his words. This tour emphasizes conflict resolution, healthy relationships, and responsibility.

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 where students can easily see the performance.
- 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 performance. Students tend to have less distractions and are more encouraged to engage in the performance with familiar adult presences in the room.
- If there are any **accessibility needs** or requests that we can prepare for in advance, then please let us know! You can email [education@kyshakespeare.com](mailto:education@kyshakespeare.com) with those needs.



# William Shakespeare

(April 23, 1564 – April 23, 1616)

## His Life

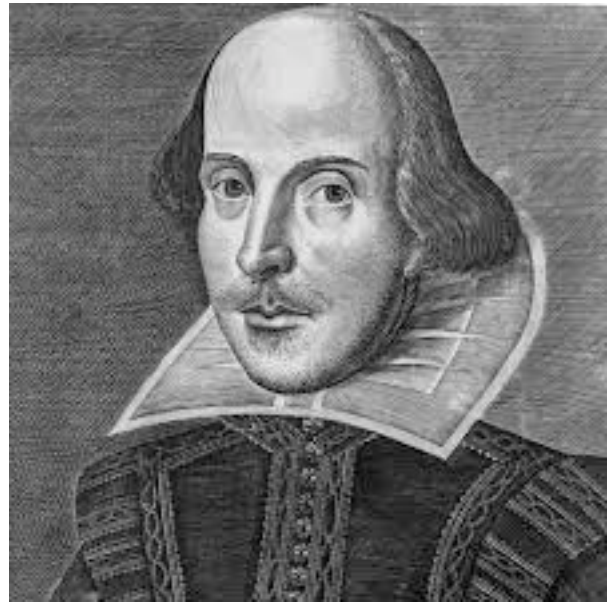
- Born and raised in Stratford-upon-Avon
- Married Anne Hathaway at age 18 and had three children: Susanna and twins Hamnet and Judith
- Between 1585 and 1592, he began a successful career in London as an actor, writer, and part owner of the playing company the Lord Chamberlain's Men, later known as 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
- 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
- His plays have been translated into every major living language and are performed more than those of any other playwright
- Produced most of his known work between 1590 and 1613
- His plays are often categorized into 3 genres: comedy, tragedy, and history
- In 1623, a few 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

## Examples of Words from Shakespeare's World

- Alack — expression of dismay
- Anon — soon
- Ere — before
- Hath — has
- Hence — away
- Naught — nothing
- Thence — away, over there
- Whence — where
- Wherefore — why



# Shakespeare's Three Styles of Plays

## Tragedy

Shakespearean tragedies followed a few tenets:

- 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(ine) about how their own frailty brought on their and others' downfall

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



## 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. They cover English history from the 12th-14th century (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*



## 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, Taming of the Shrew, The Tempest, Troilus and Cressida, Twelfth Night, Two Gentleman of Verona, Two Noble Kinsmen, Winter's Tale*



## 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.

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

**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.

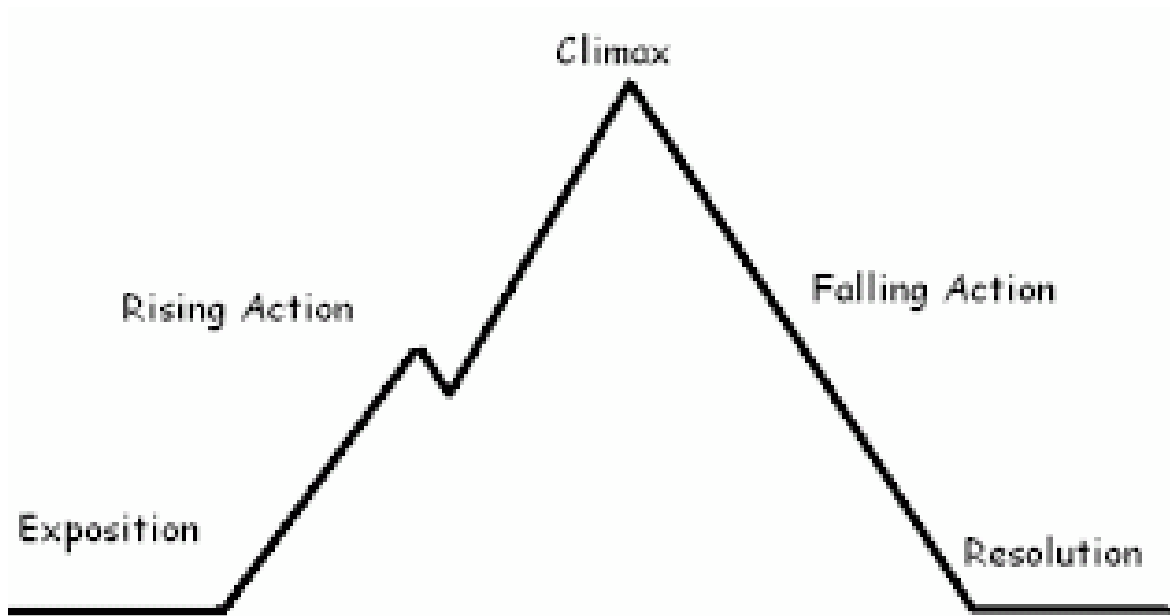
**Stage-** The area where the actors perform the play.

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

**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

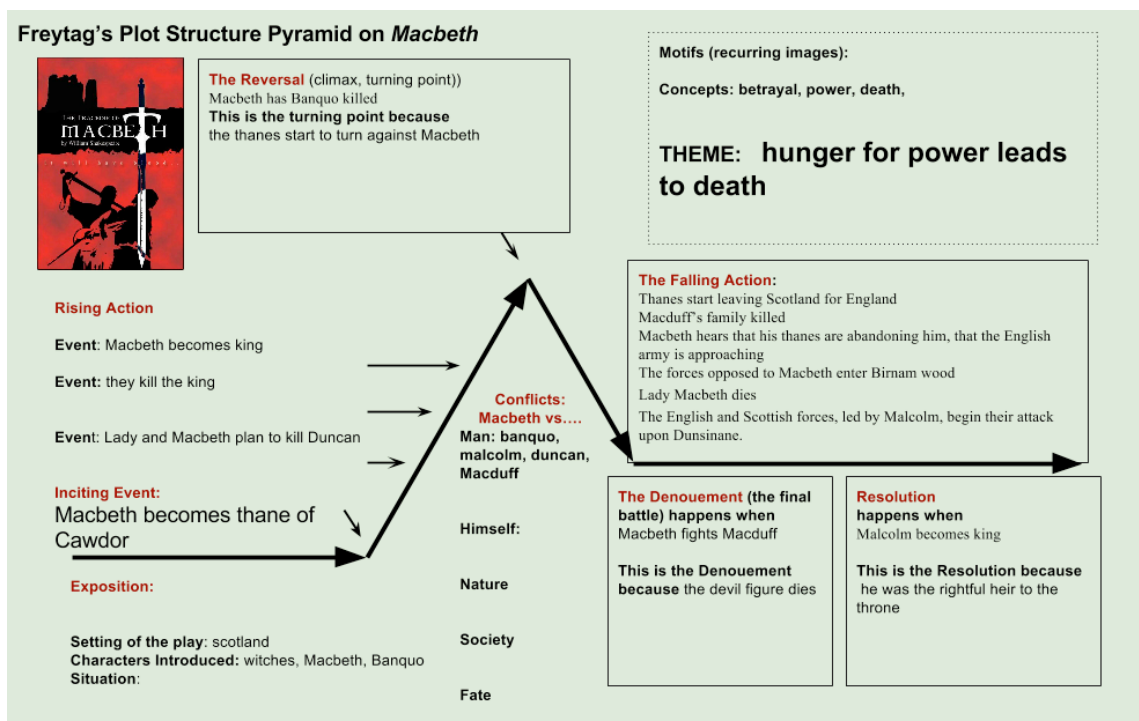


## Freytag's Pyramid

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 of plays.

Please use the theatre vocabulary from the previous page for your students to fill out their own Plot Diagram for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

An example from Macbeth is provided below:



# Artist'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, relationships, and scenery in the lines of the play.

Use the provided scene from *Midsummer* or choose your own, read it aloud, and use the Artist's Questions below to explore the possibilities of the text. Based on your discoveries from the questions, make decisions about what the set, scenery, and costumes might look like as well as what you notice about the characters.

## ARTIST'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? (Conflict)

### 6. WHAT DO I WANT IN THIS SCENE? (Goal) WHY CAN'T I HAVE IT? (Obstacles)

### 7. WHAT DO I NEED TO DO TO GET WHAT I WANT? (Tactics)



***A Midsummer Night's Dream***  
**ACT III, Scene i**

*Enter HELENA*

HELENA  
How happy some o'er other some can be!  
Through Athens I am thought as fair as she.  
But what of that? Demetrius thinks not so;  
He will not know what all but he do know:  
And as he errs, doting on Hermia's eyes,  
So I, admiring of his qualities:  
Things base and vile, folding no quantity,  
Love can transpose to form and dignity:  
Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind;  
And therefore is wing'd Cupid painted blind:  
Nor hath Love's mind of any judgement taste;  
Wings and no eyes figure unheedy haste:  
And therefore is Love said to be a child,  
Because in choice he is so oft beguiled.  
As waggish boys in game themselves forswear,  
So the boy Love is perjured every where:  
For ere Demetrius look'd on Hermia's eyne,  
He hail'd down oaths that he was only mine;  
And when this hail some heat from Hermia felt,  
So he dissolved, and showers of oaths did melt.

*Enter DEMETRIUS*

DEMETRIUS  
I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.  
Where is Lysander and fair Hermia?  
The one I'll slay, the other slayeth me.  
Thou told'st me they were stolen unto this wood;  
And here am I, and wode within this wood,  
Because I cannot meet my Hermia.  
Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more.

HELENA  
You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant.

DEMETRIUS  
Do I entice you? do I speak you fair?  
Or, rather, do I not in plainest truth  
Tell you, I do not, nor I cannot love you?

HELENA  
And even for that do I love you the more.  
I am your spaniel; and, Demetrius,  
The more you beat me, I will fawn on you:

Use me but as your spaniel, spurn me, strike me,  
Neglect me, lose me; only give me leave,  
Unworthy as I am, to follow you.

DEMETRIUS  
Tempt not too much the hatred of my spirit;  
For I am sick when I do look on thee.

HELENA  
And I am sick when I look not on you.

DEMETRIUS  
You do impeach your modesty too much,  
To leave the city and commit yourself  
Into the hands of one that loves you not.

HELENA  
Your virtue is my privilege: for that  
It is not night when I do see your face,  
Therefore I think I am not in the night;  
Nor doth this wood lack worlds of company,  
For you in my respect are all the world:  
Then how can it be said I am alone,  
When all the world is here to look on me?

DEMETRIUS  
I'll run from thee and hide me in the brakes,  
And leave thee to the mercy of wild beasts.

HELENA  
The wildest hath not such a heart as you.

DEMETRIUS  
I will not stay thy questions; let me go:

HELENA  
Fie, Demetrius!  
Your wrongs do set a scandal on my sex:  
We cannot fight for love, as men may do;  
We should be wood and were not made to woo.  
I'll follow thee and make a heaven of hell,  
To die upon the hand I love so well.

*Exit DEMETRIUS followed by HELENA*

## *A Midsummer Night's Dream 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, Egeus, 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 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.

In another part of the forest, 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 Nick 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. Lysander 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.

# Who's Who in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

## The Major Players

### 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. Hermia's father, Egeus, does not approve of him for no valid reason.



### 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 is set to marry 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 is set to marry 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

**Changeling-** a fairy child secretly exchanged by fairies for a 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





# ***A Midsummer Night's Dream***

## **Pre-Performance Anticipation Guide**

Read each statement and decide whether you agree or disagree with it. For each statement, write *Strongly Agree*, *Agree*, *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree*. Make comments in the space below each one. You will have the opportunity to discuss your ideas with the class afterwards.

1. Parents act with the best interest of their child in mind.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. True love never runs smooth.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Children should follow the rules and guidance of their parents.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. People control their own fate.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Love is the most powerful emotion we feel.

## *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Post-Performance Anticipation Guide

After watching the performance, decide whether your opinion has changed for each statement. For each statement, write *Strongly Agree*, *Agree*, *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree* as well as if that has changed. Make comments in the space below each one with evidence - either from your experience of watching the performance or directly from the text to support your opinion. You will have the opportunity to discuss your ideas with the class afterwards.

1. Parents act with the best interest of their child in mind.
2. True love never runs smooth.
3. Children should follow the rules and guidance of their parents.
4. People control their own fate.
5. Love is the most powerful emotion we feel.

# 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*.

## Healthy Relationships

This play examines several kinds of relationships people can have with each other - between a couple, between family members, and between friends.

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

## Conflict Resolution

The characters in this play all approach how to resolve their problems in different ways. They turn to threats, tricks, and name calling which does not make anyone happy for a very long time. Can you name some of the situations where conflict resolution was needed in this play?

Questions: What alternatives could the characters in this play employed to resolve their problems? Are there resources that they had that they did not utilize? What were their motivations that led to poor decisions and outcomes - grief, emotions, miscommunication, denial?

### 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.

## Responsibility

Many of the characters in summary are struggling with their responsibilities - Hermia as a daughter either following her father's wishes or being true to herself, Oberon and Titania letting their responsibilities nature and the earth suffer due to their arguing, and even Bottom wanting to take on too much responsibility when the other Mechanicals are eager and willing to participate in the putting on of their play.

Questions: What does "being responsible" mean? What are the consequences of either being responsible or not? Do you think there is any connection between being responsible and being trusted? Between being responsible and being respected?

## **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?
2. 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. Can you think of any pieces of art that are based on, connected to, or inspired by this play or these historical events? What do they have in common and how to they differ?
3. 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?

*Don't forget to prepare some questions for the Q&A with the Actors! Some suggestions may be:*

- How do you prepare to play multiple characters?
- What sort of training or education do you need to be an actor or to be involved in theater?
- What would you do if you felt that you had no one to turn to about a problem?
- What's your favorite play written by William Shakespeare?
- What kind of roles are your favorite to portray on stage?

### **After the Performance**

4. Discuss the three main character groups in the play (the Fairies, 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, nature suffers for their disagreement (Fairies)
- Helena vs. Demetrius and Lysander - When Demetrius and Lysander are under the magic spell, they reject Hermia and smother Helena with love (Athenians)
- Bottom vs. Peter Quince - When Bottom wants to play every character, 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 would have done differently.

5. Write a letter to one of the characters in the play and give them some helpful advice. Pick a spot in the play where they believe that they could've stopped the chaos before it truly began. What could they do to avoid these events? What resources could help or even save them?

6. Compare the actors' physical choices 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. 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. We also recommend watching the theatrical versions of some of the scenes they will experience in the *Midsummer* Spring Tour for comparison and chance to open up discussion about their comprehension of the choices made.

[www.absoluteshakespeare.com](http://www.absoluteshakespeare.com)  
*Comprehensive Resource of Works*

[www.folger.edu/template.cfm?cid=618](http://www.folger.edu/template.cfm?cid=618)  
*The Folger Shakespeare Library*

[www.penguin.com/static/pdf/teachersguides/](http://www.penguin.com/static/pdf/teachersguides/)  
*The Penguin & Signet Classic's Teacher Guide*



## Classroom Challenge:

Write a letter to the Kentucky Shakespeare Professional Actors who performed in the *Midsummer* 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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616 Myrtle St.  
Louisville, KY 40208

or

Email to: [education@kyshakespeare.com](mailto:education@kyshakespeare.com)