

Bell Shakespeare Online Resources

MIDSUMMER MADNESS – ONLINE LEARNING PACK

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ABOUT BELL SHAKESPEARE

2015 is a very exciting year for Bell Shakespeare—it's our 25th anniversary!

Founded in 1990 and beginning life in a circus tent, Bell Shakespeare has grown into Australia's national touring theatre company playing to over 80,000 school students every year in theatre complexes and school auditoria all over the country. Add to that another 75,000 online and you'll see that our outreach is unrivalled.

So how are we celebrating our 25th birthday? With a stunning line-up of popular Shakespeare plays.

The year begins with the lyrical romantic comedy *As You Like It* directed by Peter Evans and featuring John Bell in the role of Jaques. This will play in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra.

Hamlet is our big national tour of some thirty venues. It will be directed by Damien Ryan, whose *Henry V* in 2014 was such a resounding triumph. In the title role we have Josh McConville, one of the most dynamic performers of his generation.

The Tempest, one of Shakespeare's last plays, will perform in Sydney. John Bell will direct this magical, mystical fable with a superlative cast of actors, headed by Brian Lipson as Prospero.

Our dedicated youth production in 2015 will be *Romeo And Juliet*, performed by our 2015 Players under the direction of James Evans, whose *Macbeth* in 2014 was such a success with school audiences. As with *Macbeth*, this will be a 90-minute, no-interval adaptation and will perform at Sydney Opera House and Arts Centre Melbourne. It is sure to sell out fast, so we urge you to book early!

The Players will also take to the road with their Actors At Work productions, touring the country with the dark depths of *Macbeth: Undone* and the hilarious heights of *Midsummer Madness*. Both shows are tried and true favourites with students.

We're also excited to launch our new online resource with ABC Splash, *Shakespeare Unbound*. These 12 scenes from six of Shakespeare's most famous plays are paired with commentaries from the director and cast, and will prove invaluable for students and teachers alike, allowing unfettered access to Shakespeare's works performed by Australia's best-known theatre actors.

Alongside these productions we'll once again offer Student Masterclasses, Artist in Residence, the Regional Teacher Scholarship and teacher Professional Learning.

We wish you a happy and fulfilling year of Shakespeare in the year ahead.

John Bell AO and Peter Evans
Artistic Directors

Bell Shakespeare highly values its partnerships with all the organisations that support our Learning programmes including the Department of Education and Training; BHP Billiton; Foxtel; Australia Council for the Arts; Arts New South Wales; Arts South Australia; Bill & Patricia Ritchie Foundation, Collier Charitable Fund; Crown Resorts Foundation; E B Myer Charity Fund; Gandel Philanthropy; Ian Potter Foundation; James N Kirby Foundation; Limb Family Foundation; Packer Family Foundation; Playing Australia; Scully Fund; Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation; Weir Anderson Foundation; Wesfarmers Arts.

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THE ACTORS AT WORK COMPANY

MIDSUMMER MADNESS

CAST

TEAM ARIEL

Alice

Anna

Cameron

Sam

TEAM CALIBAN

Amy

Jake

Lucy

Shiv

CREATIVES

SCRIPT (*Midsummer Madness*)

Matthew Edgerton & Joanna Erskine

PROJECT DIRECTOR

James Evans

DIRECTOR (*Midsummer Madness*)

Janine Watson

MOVEMENT DIRECTOR

Scott Witt

BANNER DESIGN

Nathanael van der Reyden

CREW

COMPANY STAGE MANAGER

Kelly Ukena

STAGE MANAGER

Chantelle Foster

STAGE MANAGER

Mel Dyer

SYNOPSIS

In Athens, King Theseus is soon to marry Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons, with whom he used to be at war. Shortly before the wedding an Athenian lord, Egeus, brings his daughter Hermia to Theseus. Hermia is refusing to marry her father's choice of suitor, Demetrius, because she loves Lysander. Egeus demands that Theseus impose the law that says she must marry the man her father chooses, be executed, or become a nun.

Hermia and Lysander decide to run away together, and Hermia confides their plan to her best friend Helena. Helena is in love with Demetrius, who once professed his love to her, before switching his affections to Hermia. Hoping to win back his attention, she tells him of the elopement. That night, Hermia and Lysander steal away to the forest, with Demetrius and Helena in hot pursuit.

Oberon and Titania, King and Queen of the fairies, have quarrelled. Oberon wants Titania to give him a mortal Indian boy to be his page, but Titania loved his mother 'and for her sake do I raise him up, and for her sake I will not part with him.' Plotting his revenge, Oberon orders Puck to seek out a magic flower whose juice, squeezed on the eyes of someone asleep, will cause them to fall in love with the first living creature they see on waking. Oberon sneaks up on the sleeping Titania and drops the juice of the flower in her eye. He hopes she will wake up when 'some vile thing' is near.

Oberon, overhearing Helena and taking pity on her, also tells Puck to use the juice on Demetrius so that he will fall in love with her, but Puck, mistaking the two young Athenian men in the forest, uses it on Lysander instead. Lysander promptly falls in love with Helena, forgetting all about his love for Hermia. 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!

Meanwhile, Bottom the Weaver and a group of fellow Athenian tradesmen (or 'mechanicals') are planning to perform a play, *The Most Lamentable Comedy and Most Cruel Death of Pyramus and Thisbe*, in celebration of the Duke's wedding. They decide to rehearse in the forest so that no one will know what they are planning.

Puck sees Bottom and the others rehearsing. He decides to have some fun with these 'hempen home-spuns' and casts a spell, giving Bottom the head of a donkey. When his fellow tradesmen see Bottom transformed they run off in fear, leaving him alone in the forest. Just then, Titania wakes up, sees Bottom, and falls rapturously in love with him.

Eventually, Oberon lifts the spell from Titania. By reversing the spell on Lysander, but not Demetrius, the human lovers find the right partner again. 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 wedding celebration.

BACKGROUND TO THE PLAY

A Midsummer Night's Dream was written early in Shakespeare's career, probably between 1594 and 1596. It wasn't his first comedy; Shakespeare had already completed *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and possibly *The Taming of the Shrew*. This also seems to have been a transition time for Shakespeare – he had finished his major *Henry VI – Richard III* history series and had just started writing his first great tragedy, *Romeo and Juliet*.

Unlike most of Shakespeare's other plays, no direct source has been uncovered for the plot lines of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Shakespeare was, however, influenced in his writing by a number of pre-existing texts. Foremost among these is the Roman author Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, a series of fables based around the transformation of humans, most often into animals. The story of Pyramus and Thisbe comes from here.

Theseus and Hippolyta appeared in Plutarch's *The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romanes* (translated by Thomas North in 1579). They were also characters in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. The name Oberon appears in the thirteenth-century French story *Huon of Bordeaux*, translated by John Bouchier, Lord Berners, in the 1530s, but he was merely a goblin, not as important as he is here. By contrast, Titania the Queen of the fairies was a hugely significant figure in English folklore and literature. She has many names (mentioned as Queen Mab in *Romeo and Juliet*), and was often identified with Queen Elizabeth I, particularly in Spenser's poem *The Faerie Queene*. The character of Puck, or Robin Goodfellow, was widely known in English country stories and ballads of Shakespeare's time, mostly in tales about his tricks played on humans. Bottom's transformation into a donkey is influenced by Lucius Apuleius's second-century magical tale, *The Golden Ass*, but King Midas, too was given asses' ears, and this transformation had long been a common way in stories to designate someone a fool.

A Midsummer Night's Dream is popularly imagined to have been written to celebrate a noble wedding, but there is no evidence for this, and it was uncommon for a full-length play to be the entertainment at such an event (a masque was customary). The first public performance of the play was likely at the Theatre, to the north-east of London, just outside the city limits. This was about three or four years before the Lord Chamberlain's Men lost the lease on that venue and rebuilt their playhouse as the Globe on the south bank of the Thames.

Hardly any information from Shakespeare's day has come down to us about how actors went about preparing for a performance. The scenes of Peter Quince and his troupe of enthusiastic amateurs gives a rare insight into how a script might be handled by those putting on a play.

CHARACTERS

THE LOVERS

HELENA

Although tall and attractive, Helena nevertheless feels inferior to her old school friend Hermia, who seems to receive all the male attention. One man in particular is causing Helena a lot of grief: her ex-boyfriend Demetrius is now in love with Hermia, despite Hermia's lack of interest in him. Helena reveals to Demetrius Hermia's plan to escape to the woods with Lysander, hoping that will win her some favour with her beloved. It backfires and Demetrius chases Hermia into the forest, with Helena in tow. Helena dotes on Demetrius so much that she tells him she is his 'spaniel'. Later, thanks to Puck's magical intervention, both Demetrius and Lysander suddenly declare their love for Helena. She thinks they're just making fun of her and even accuses Hermia of being in on the joke. Shakespeare has written Helena as the most developed character of the four lovers, and she even gets to share her thoughts with the audience in soliloquy.

HERMIA

Hermia is Helena's life-long friend and confidant. She is beautiful and well-loved by all. Hermia is in love with Lysander, but her father wants her to marry Demetrius instead. She decides to escape to the woods with Lysander and confides the plan to Helena. In the forest, Hermia has a falling out with Helena as a result of Puck's mischief. She claims that Helena has bewitched Lysander and the two girls fight furiously. Everybody mocks her for being short, in contrast to Helena. Hermia is especially distraught to be scorned by Lysander. Order is eventually restored by Oberon, who orders Puck to reunite Hermia with Lysander.

LYSANDER

Lysander is in love with Hermia, but is denied the right to marry her by her father. He declares that 'the course of true love never did run smooth'. He escapes with Hermia into the woods and, after a magical mix-up by Puck with the love potion, falls madly in love with Helena. Lysander fights Demetrius to win Helena's hand while fighting off Hermia in her confusion. Once the mix-up is remedied, Lysander once again loves Hermia, and marries her in the final act of the play.

DEMETRIUS

Demetrius is Helena's ex-boyfriend, who has now fallen in love with Hermia. He wants to marry Hermia and has the support of her father. When Helena tells him that Hermia and Lysander plan to run away to the forest, Demetrius follows with haste. In the forest, he encounters Helena who fawns over him and reiterates her love for him. Demetrius reacts angrily and tells her to stay away from him, threatening to do her 'mischief in the wood'. Puck's love potion eventually makes him swerve away from Hermia and fall for Helena, which she now regards as a cruel trick. Demetrius remains enchanted with Helena and eventually they marry at the end of the play.

THE RUSTICS, OR MECHANICALS

PETER QUINCE

A carpenter by trade, Quince has taken it upon himself to direct the amateur production of Pyramus and Thisbe in celebration of the Duke's wedding day. He convinces Bottom that he should stick to the leading part of Pyramus. On the day of the performance, Quince delivers the play's prologue and is ridiculed in snide comments by the nobles.

NICK BOTTOM

Nick Bottom is the central character in the subplot of the craftsmen's production of Pyramus and Thisbe. He is a weaver and amateur actor, and is excessively confident of his abilities as a tragedian. He volunteers for every part in the play including the Lion, and Thisbe, the female lead. The climax of his foolishness is when Puck transforms his head into that of a donkey. Bottom is unaware of his comical appearance and although confused, accepts the attentions of the bewitched Titania and her fairy attendants. He is eventually restored to normal and takes part in the performance of Pyramus and Thisbe, to the great amusement of Theseus, Hippolyta and the Athenian lovers.

FRANCIS FLUTE

Flute is a bellows-mender and clearly the youngest player. He is expected to play the woman's part, which in a theatre company at the time would be played by apprentice boys. Flute protests that he shouldn't have to play the woman because he has 'a beard coming'.

THE FAIRIES

TITANIA

Titania is Queen of the Fairies, wife to Oberon and in the magical, forest world of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* she is a powerful force to be reckoned with. At the beginning of the play, she is concerned that her constant arguing with Oberon is causing catastrophic climate change. She is attended by a number of fairies, including Peaseblossom, Moth, Cobweb and Mustardseed. After being enchanted by Oberon's magic flower, she falls in love with Bottom. Oberon later wakes her from the spell and she thinks it was all a 'vision'. She then sees Bottom and says she 'loathes' the face she was in love with. Titania eventually reconciles with Oberon.

OBERON

Oberon is King of the Fairies, master of the mischievous Puck and husband to Titania. He is jealous, quick-tempered and often argues with his queen. He wants to use Titania's adopted son, an Indian boy, as his page, but Titania denies the request. Oberon takes his revenge, making Titania fall in love with Bottom, a lowly mortal tradesman who has been given the head of an ass by Puck. Oberon also meddles in the affairs of the Athenian lovers, using magic to sort out their mixed-up relationships.

PUCK

Puck has a long history in British folklore, and is just as often known as Robin Goodfellow. He is Oberon's attendant and in many ways plays his 'fool' or jester. His mischievous nature and quick wit permeate his speech, creating an atmosphere of magic and fun throughout the play. He plays pranks on the human characters, like transforming Bottom's head into that of an ass. He also mistakenly pours love potion on the eyelids of Lysander instead of Demetrius, making the wrong man fall in love with Helena. At the end of the play he delivers the epilogue, telling the audience that if they have not enjoyed the play, they should simply imagine they have been dreaming. Puck closes by asking for a warm round of applause.

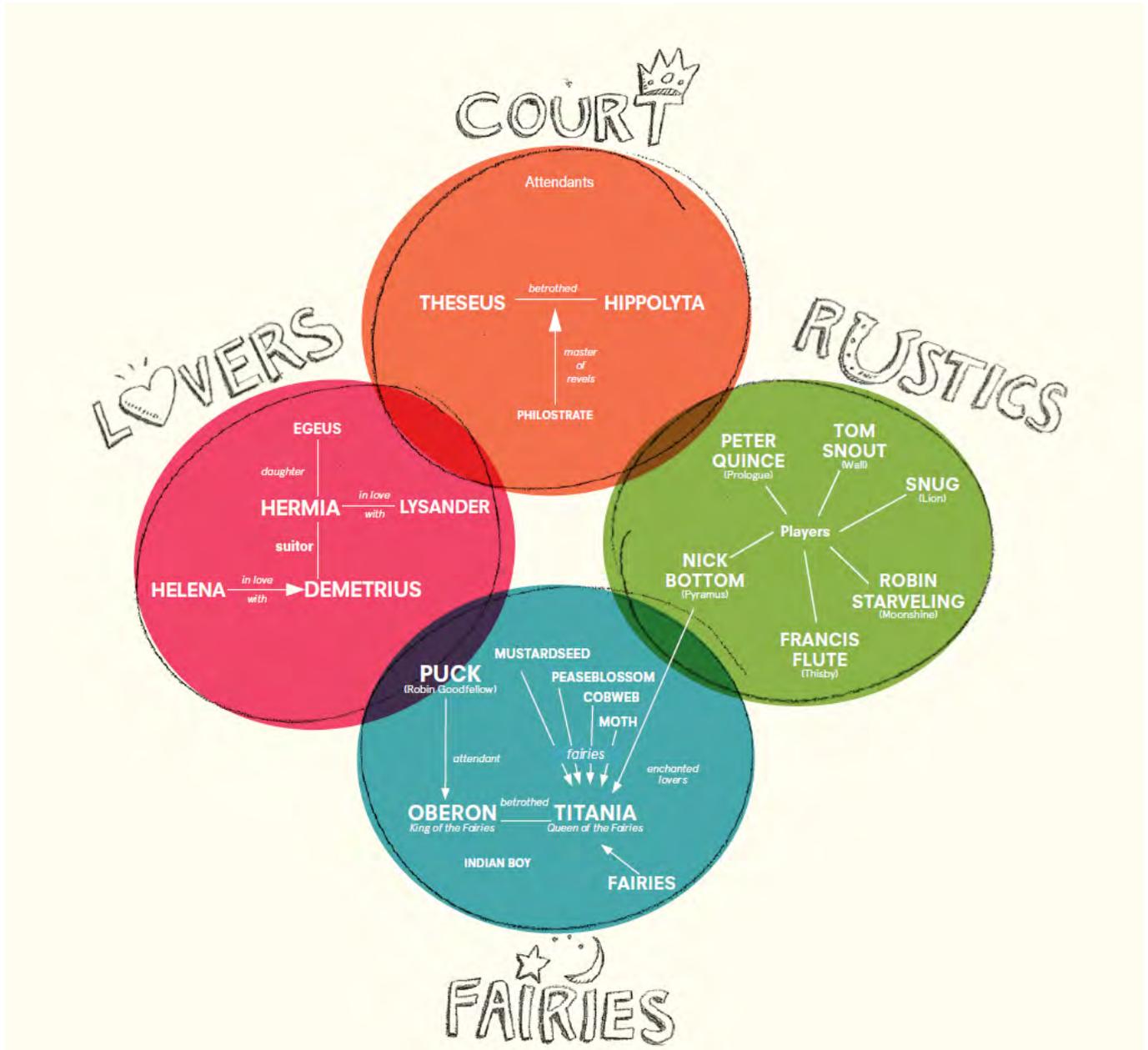
THE COURT

THESEUS

As the Duke of Athens, Theseus is the most powerful of the courtly characters in the play. Although absent from Acts 2 and 3, he provides the impetus for Hermia and Lysander's decision to flee to the forest and for the Mechanicals to pursue their theatrical ambition of staging a play as entertainment for his royal wedding to Hippolyta. As the ruler of Athens he enforces the strict laws of Athenian society in regard to Hermia's behaviour and disobedience towards her father. Theseus sets out to present himself as a lover in the opening of the play by excitedly anticipating his 'nuptial hour' with Hippolyta. However, he also boasts of 'wooing' Hippolyta with his sword, suggesting that a gender struggle might be at the heart of the play, or at the very least an acknowledgement of an established patriarchal rule.

HIPPOLYTA

Theseus' prisoner and his Duchess-to-be, Hippolyta is a character from ancient Greek mythology. However, the Queen of the Amazons in this version of the story certainly lacks the female power that she is known for in other historical depictions. Although her history stems back to the story of Theseus' conquering of the Amazons, Hippolyta at this point represents suppression by male authority, a recurring theme in the play. She is nonetheless outwardly anticipating the wedding herself: 'Four days will quickly steep themselves in night... And then the moon...shall behold the night of our solemnities.' She is also the one who has the wisdom to wonder if the lovers experienced something more than a dream.



THEMATIC CONCERNS OF *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM*

LOVE

*Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind,
Therefore is winged cupid painted blind.*

– Helena (Act 1, Scene 1)

The course of true love never did run smooth

– Lysander (Act 1, Scene 1)

This is the most obvious theme in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, as it is in all Shakespeare's comedies. But love makes no story without conflict. The romantic encounters and subsequent confusions are the cause of the action in the play. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the difficulty or imbalance of love is the asymmetrical love among the four young Athenians: Hermia loves Lysander, Lysander loves Hermia, Helena loves Demetrius, and Demetrius loves Hermia instead of Helena – two men love the same woman, leaving one woman without a man. This human love circle is matched with the tryst in magical fairyland between Oberon and Titania, with Bottom an accidental pawn in Oberon's magical games. This play resolves to a stable outcome, with each pair of lovers correctly reunited and all misgivings forgiven, but the sense of confusion still lingers. Helena still sees Demetrius as 'a jewel, mine own and not mine own' (Act 4, Scene 1). Did the magic flower help Demetrius see the truth? But if so, what about what it did to Titania? The play asks us all to stop and think about how well we understand why we love who we do. Love certainly appears to be a kind of madness, but if there is one certainty about human beings it is that they will do the maddest of things for love.

MAGIC, ILLUSION, DECEPTION, TRICKERY

*Fetch me that flow'r, the herb I showed thee once.
The juice of it on sleeping eyelids laid
Will make or man or woman madly dote
Upon the next live creature that it sees.*

– Oberon (Act 2, Scene 1)

*Methinks I see these things with parted eye,
When everything seems double.*

– Hermia (Act 4, Scene 1)

Does magic distort the truth or reveal it? The fairies' magic brings about many of the most bizarre and hilarious situations in the play, and is central to the fantastic atmosphere of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Shakespeare uses magic both to embody the almost supernatural power of love (symbolised by the love-in-idleness plant) and to create a surreal world. Misused, the magic causes chaos, but it ultimately resolves the play's tensions by restoring love to balance among the quartet of Athenian youths. Additionally, the ease with which Puck uses magic to his own ends, as when he reshapes Bottom's head into that of an ass and recreates the voices of Lysander and Demetrius, stands in contrast to the laborious and graceless attempts by the craftsmen to stage their play. It is obvious, though, that much natural phenomena – storms, butter that won't churn, a stool that gives way when someone sits, love that strays and then returns – can be blamed on magic.

Fairies in Shakespeare's England were above all thought of as tricksters, and Robin Goodfellow as chief among them. Tricks create confusion, and so do doubles, which Shakespeare was obsessed with. And yet confusion is very often the only path to deeper understanding of who we really are. So are the fairies friends or foes?

FEMALE FRIENDSHIP

Set your heart at rest:

*The fairy land buys not the child of me.
His mother was a votaress of my order:
And, in the spiced Indian air, by night,
Full often hath she gossip'd by my side,
And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,
Marking the embarked traders on the flood,
When we have laugh'd to see the sails conceive
And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind;
Which she, with pretty and with swimming gait
Following, her womb then rich with my young squire,
Would imitate, and sail upon the land,
To fetch me trifles, and return again,
As from a voyage, rich with merchandise.
But she, being mortal, of that boy did die;
And for her sake do I rear up her boy,
And for her sake I will not part with him.*

– Titania (Act 2, Scene 1)

*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 it all forgot?
All school-days' friendship, childhood innocence?
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,
Had been incorporate. So we grow together,
Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,
But yet an union in partition;
Two lovely berries moulded on one stem;
So, with two seeming bodies, but one heart;
Two of the first, like coats in heraldry,
Due but to one and crowned with one crest.*

– Helena (Act 3, Scene 2)

Men never speak of friendship in this play, but women are quick to tell how important a female friend is to them. Look closely at the two speeches (from Puck, and then Titania herself) that give the explanation for why Titania and Oberon are quarrelling. It is not because of the reciprocal infidelities of which they accuse each other, but because Titania's loyalty to the memory of her friend trumps that which she feels due to her husband.

Is the play ultimately about women abandoning the love they have for each other, for the sake of men? Once Titania is enchanted she hands the little Indian boy over to Oberon, and Hermia and Helena are uncomfortably quick to believe the worst of each other. Hippolyta, after all, is the Queen of the Amazons, a warrior society formed exclusively of women, and yet here she is marrying a man.

LIMINAL SPACE

*Half sleep, half waking: but as yet, I swear,
I cannot truly say how I came here.*

– Lysander (Act 4, Scene 1)

*Ay me, for pity! what a dream was here!
Lysander, look how I do quake with fear:
Methought a serpent eat my heart away,
And you sat smiling at his cruel pray.*

– Hermia (Act 2, Scene 2)

Liminal literally means 'threshold'. It is the space between, the area of transition from one thing to another. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the Athenians have left the orderly world of the city for an unruly space ungoverned by any familiar laws. This play takes people out of the built, structured world where the rules are obvious, and into a no-man's-land. Court/forest, day/night, waking/sleeping, love/abuse – most of the characters spend the play unsure of what space they are occupying between these various kinds of opposite states.

Hermia has a dream that she is being attacked by a snake. This is the only time in the play that someone has an actual, real dream, and yet characters are constantly plagued with the suspicion that they are dreaming. Hermia's dream tells her something very real about what is happening around her. The dream is true, the waking is illusion, and her hard and dangerous forest bed is what makes both possible. Hippolyta's first words in the play are also evidence of the pervasiveness of dreams ('Four days will quickly steep themselves in night, / Four nights will quickly dream away the time'), and various characters mention dreams throughout (I.i.7-8). Shakespeare is also interested in the actual workings of dreams and how time loses its normal sense of flow and the impossible occurs as a matter of course. He seeks to recreate this environment in the play through the intervention of the fairies in the magical forest. At the end of the play, Puck extends the idea of dreams to the audience members themselves, saying that, if they have been offended by the play, they should remember it as nothing more than a dream, imagining they have simply been asleep.

In Act 4, Scene 1, Demetrius on waking says, 'Are you sure that we are awake? It seems to me that yet we sleep, we dream.' As the lovers and the mechanicals are affected by the fairies and their pranks, the characters cling to the idea of sleep to account for the strange and hilarious things they experienced, but it is an inadequate explanation. Sleep is actually only the transitional space that gets them from the world of magic back to the reality they know. As these characters awake and try and discover what has happened, they are confounded: 'I have had a dream, past the wit of man to say what dream it was. Man is but an ass if he go about to expound this dream,' Bottom says. 'My Oberon! What visions have I seen! / Methought I was enamour'd of an ass,' says Titania. But Bottom's dream and Titania's vision were true, as far as we, the audience could see. Theatres, of course, are famous as liminal spaces, neither reality nor pure illusion, telling truths in the form of lies.

SET DESIGN BY NATHANAEL VAN DER REYDEN

Our designers had an extra challenge this year, creating a backdrop banner that would work for both *Midsummer Madness* and *Macbeth: Undone*, two very different plays. However, both plays take place on the edges of civilisation, at a time that is somewhere between history and myth.



Janine (Director *Midsummer Madness*): It's beautiful and serves both of us really well. I'm letting the banners tell the story, in a sense. Once they get to the woods and they're in those asymmetrical positions where we're focusing on creating the illusion of depth, it's trees and moonlight, so they do a lot of work for us. Once they get to the woods they're staying in that position and it's the actors and their physical language that tell the rest of the story.

Jo (Director *Macbeth Undone*): They're beautifully designed as objects but we're using them very much as screens that create all sorts of different shapes. We create mood and shape by putting them in various places. Sometimes those shapes are very specific to represent a very specific place or room, and those shapes get repeated so we know where we are, and sometimes they're more abstract spaces that are just about a mood. It's an incredibly multifunctional way to create lots of different spaces.

INTERVIEW WITH CO-WRITER, MATT EDGERTON

James Evans, Resident Artist in Education, in conversation with the co-writer of *Midsummer Madness*, Matt Edgerton.

Matt, you are one of the co-writers of the show. Could you describe the process of how you came up with the script?

The process for *Midsummer Madness* was a really harmonious collaboration between co-writer Joanna Erskine and myself over a number of weeks. We started by reading the play together and talking about what excited us as well as the things we thought would resonate with a young Australian audience. We were both really struck by the playful, irrational and surreal spirit of the story, captured in Demetrius' line, on waking in Act 4: 'Are you sure that we are awake? It seems to me that yet we sleep, we dream'. We were also reminded how much Shakespeare's theatre is a theatre of the imagination. He asks a lot of the audience, making us use our imaginary forces, and creating three very distinct worlds with little more than words. Once we chose our scenes, we spent a week with four wonderful Bell Shakespeare actors – Frankie, Jo, Scott and Marko – who workshopped the script with us. This was a really fun process and meant we had a tight and clear script to take into rehearsals.

Obviously you can't put every scene from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in your show. What were the factors in deciding which scenes should stay and which should go?

The play is breathtakingly well-structured and so cutting anything is difficult. To get the play into fifty minutes, so many of my favourite parts of the play had to go. Joanna and I divided the text into three worlds – the Lovers, the Mechanicals and the Fairies and then colour-coded the text, working out what we could possibly cover with storytelling and what absolutely had to be performed. In the end, I was actually surprised at how much we covered. An audience will experience the full story in a format that's easy to follow and sees all the crucial dramatic moments of the play performed.

Shakespearean comedy is often tough, because some of Shakespeare's gags and references are not as funny to us as they might have been to Shakespeare's audience. How do you keep *A Midsummer Night's Dream* funny for a modern Australian audience?

The crucial thing is to identify the essential myth or story or situation that's being depicted, and then let the humour come from that. People make the mistake with Shakespeare of trying to impose things on it that don't come from the text itself and this is when it gets lame and the humour misses. But Shakespeare was a funny guy so the humour works if you mine what's there. There are a few different comic tones in the play. A lot of the humour for the lovers in *Dream* is black situational comedy – it needs to be truthful but extreme – we're often laughing at their pain which as it turns out can actually be very, very funny. The Mechanicals' comedy is a bit different – it's more observational character comedy – Shakespeare's depicting a bunch of tradesmen who fancy themselves as actors. Shakespeare's also showing us all the excruciatingly funny things that happen in amateur theatre. A little of the word-play might be lost on us, but fundamentally the comedy still works because we recognise the archetypes today. We've been exploring Aussie tradies for the Mechanicals and finding some character gold.

Which situations, characters and themes in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* still resonate for us today?

I think it all does – the whole play is still strikingly moving and resonant. The play depicts blind passions, unrequited love, the challenges of friendship and loyalty, controlling parents and the quest for self-expression – struggles common to everyone. But unlike in our own lives, these are depicted on an epic scale – we see our lives played out amongst gods and fairies.

Being a play that features fairies, many people see the Dream as just 'light' or 'sweet'. Have you found darker elements to the story?

The play is profoundly optimistic, but nonetheless has these wonderful dark base-notes throughout. There's this fantastic tonal shift when we meet the king and queen of the fairies whose conflict has produced a kind of climate change disaster that has thrown the natural and human world into disarray. The language changes here – we have this passionate blank verse as Oberon and Titania argue over the fate of the environment, in contrast to the lyrical rhyming couplets we've heard from the lovers. Even the most joyful and comic part of the play – the performance of Pyramus and Thisbe by the Mechanicals – is actually based on a Greek myth about how the blood of a tragic lover turned the fruit of the Mulberry tree from white to purple. So Shakespeare gives us a happy ending with marriages, reconciliations, reunions and triumphs, but there is always a sense that these things have a shadow side.

Is Shakespeare making fun of the Mechanicals, or is there a genuine affection for them in the play?

There's certainly satire in the depiction of Mechanicals, but I think there's genuine affection there too. Kath and Kim does the same thing – it's observational comedy full of malapropisms that simultaneously celebrates and makes fun of suburban Australia. The Mechanicals are amateurs in the true sense of the world and there is real joy in their rehearsals and their ultimate triumph in being chosen to perform at the court and then succeeding in that performance. Theseus defends their lack of skill, because of their good intentions: 'For never anything can be amiss when simpleness and duty tender it'.

INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR JANINE WATSON

Creating the world

The great thing about *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is that the conceit of actors putting on a show is already within the world of the play. As our actors tour they are acting in the traditional way that actors of Shakespeare's time would have. And so the world is one of capitalising on the actors' imagination. We play on the idea of using the language as the primary source of that imaginative stimulus. There is quite a complex story, there are three worlds, so it can get quite complicated. So the idea of actors putting on a show and using their imaginations to fire up the students – the excitement about that is the starting point.

So many characters

It's very exciting to see them take on different roles, they have to change in a heartbeat. One actor has five characters to play and she has to transform within a scene. They have to be quite spontaneous and make decisions on the spot, be bold, be brave. We shortcut the students' imaginative process by giving them signifiers for each character. The four lovers are reflective of the actors themselves, we create a little backstory within the script that alludes to similar romantic inclinations, and that helps us make the leap. Instead of there being a lot of exposition you get there in comedy and reflecting and opining on the situation. The actors take on characters who have an investment in having the story told right or told the way they see it. So the students see the actors having mini debates within the story as to what's right, what's wrong, what's important and what's not important.

An incredibly poetic play

[We're] trying to go through a traditional process of ascertaining greater intentions for the characters, going through a process with the actors of them interpreting Shakespeare's language and really having a greater understanding of what words mean, what each line means. The contemporary language segues quite neatly into classical language an out, while still keeping an eye on the rhythm and the metre. A lot of other plays break form with the poetry, whereas in the *Dream* so much of it is poetry. The fairies have their own way, they have seven beats in the line instead of ten. You've got to keep an eye on that, you've got to honour that, because that's what make the *Dream* quite special. That's where it's different from a lot of other plays, in that it does use rhyme, and a lot of the scene between Helena and Hermia is in rhymed couplets. It's really deliberate, so you have to make sure you highlight and illuminate that.

The action and the word

The four-hander between the lovers is really tough. It looks really simple but what you have to manage is a kind of physical expression that doesn't overwhelm the integrity of the language. We want to give them a physical experience, you want the actors to tussle, to actually wrestle. They can find a lot of humour from it, because it all of it comes from love and fear rather than hatred and violence, because they're trying to figure out what's going on. We're trying to give it a good physical shape but not lose the focus on the language.

Outside the boundaries

So much of that symbolic information is handed to you by Shakespeare. With the woods you get a very asymmetrical world. The court is very symmetrical, the spatial relationships between the actors are very structured. Then when they get to the woods... in that world the gloves have come off, the rules don't exist anymore and chaos reigns because Oberon with his mischievous intentions of revenge has created a sense of anarchy.

A director's play

Watching it I do love Quince, he's so sweet, his admiration of Bottom. What we're trying to do with the mechanicals is focus not on any sort of competition but that they all want to make it the greatest play ever, and sometimes egos get in the way of that but they're all fighting for the same thing. That creates a more delightful atmosphere than if he was just arguing with Bottom. Often pushed into the background, his ideas sublimated for Bottom, but at the end of the day those relationships are beautiful, and I feel he gets to the heart of what theatre is about.

Watching the actor take on Oberon there's a real sense that Shakespeare has illuminated puppet masters within this world. The people who are from the court, the most susceptible and sheltered people, are at the mercy of someone else's plan.

[The director's influence] is reflected when you see productions of this show, you can get your fairy wings and green body paint and that's lush and fun and outdoor theatre, awesome, but if you see productions in a theatre you often see a completely new take.

Power and breaking free

Egeus loves Hermia but he needs to exert his power over her by not allowing her to marry the man she wants. And you see the same power in Oberon who wants to take something from Titania and won't take no for an answer. And what wins out? And Shakespeare never answers the questions, he poses them. You leave with the sense that the lovers don't even know. Helena says 'I found Demetrius like a jewel, mine own and not mine own' and we talked about what does she mean by that, and ultimately it means 'is he mine?' Love seems so fickle to her now. And in a way that's great. That's great. 'I have you, but I don't own you, and you don't own me.'

PRE-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITY 1

TABLEAU EXPLORATION

Introduce the class to the concept of tableaux, explaining that through physical gestures, blocking and freeze-frame action the story can be told, characters explored and images created to enhance storytelling.

We all know how expressive a picture can be, therefore working with tableaux is a wonderful way to control meaning through physical choices in space and with an ensemble. This is a great exercise to engage students in group work, cooperative learning and the development of creative skills.

To begin with, as a warm-up for Tableau Exploration, start with some simple shapes. In groups of five or six, allow the students 30 seconds to create immediate shapes, sharing the creating evenly, all contributing to the ultimate image. Encourage them to use their bodies and work together to create the following objects/images in the set time frame:

- Elephant
- Letter 'H'
- Sandwich
- Sydney Opera House
- The Pyramids of Egypt

Extend their skills by then allowing them 45 seconds to a minute to create specific scenes in which individuals contribute images to an overall picture. For example, a 'beach scene' might involve students illustrating a surfer, a lifeguard and volleyball game etc.

Following on from this, begin to relate the activity to the specific worlds of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Offer the students the following images/environments to create as groups, detailing the work in a more drawn-out time frame. The following worlds can be explored over a 10-minute period in which the students come up with a tableau for each scenario:

- An ancient Athenian city with columns, marble vases, a throne and a Duke with servants and attendants.
- A forest scene populated by fantastic forest folk, strange and exotic trees, dangerous creatures, a moon, and a mischievous fairy by the name of 'Puck'.
- City-dwellers who have found themselves lost in the forest.
- A local inn populated by tradesmen, all with different skills...plumbers, carpenters etc.

Then go on to ask them to make statues of specific characters in the play, and then specific moments of interaction between the characters: Titania and the fairies waiting on Bottom, the four lovers quarrelling, Pyramus and Thisbe, and so on.

You could conclude by telling the whole story of the play in a series of tableaux.

DRAMA CURRICULUM (ACTIVITY 1)

Year	Strand	Codes	Explanation
F-2	Making	2.1	Imagine and act out roles and situations
		2.2	Explore feelings, ideas, facial expressions, gesture and movement
		2.3	Work with others to create imagined situations
		2.5	Share role play, co-operate and follow cues for moving in and out of the space
	Responding	2.8	Watch and listen as a performer and audience member
3-4	Making	4.1	Create roles and relationships, experimenting with facial expression
		4.2	Create dramatic action and place using body, movement, language and voice, varying movement and stillness
		4.5	Plan, rehearse and perform their drama
	Responding	4.9	Identify features of drama from different times and places
		4.7	Paying attention to the performance, showing appropriate appreciation
5-6	Making	6.1	Imagine and create roles and relationships, convey character, explore and convey status
		6.2	Create mood and atmosphere through the use of body, movement, language and voice
		6.3	Offer, accept and extend situations, collaborate in group devised drama
		6.4	Sustain roles to develop and drive the dramatic action
		6.5	Rehearse and perform devised and scripted drama
	Responding	6.7	Enjoying drama as an active audience member

PRE-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITY 2

WHAT IS THIS WORLD?

WHO ARE THE FAIRIES?

'I am that merry wanderer of the night.'

Puck, or Robin Goodfellow as he is also called, is mostly known for the tricks he plays to cause trouble or make humans look foolish. Titania and Oberon obviously care a great deal for mortals, but have also been causing storms and floods with their arguing. If you were designing the fairies for a production, what would they be like? Are they pretty and sparkly, or something darker and more anarchic?



More like this?



Or this?

Write a description both of how they would look, and what that appearance represents about their character and role in this world.

Bonus research task: What can you find out about the history of Robin Goodfellow? Everyone in Shakespeare's audience would already have heard of him, probably from their grandmother. What were his favourite tricks? What other authors besides Shakespeare have included him in their stories?

Can you find out which flower is traditionally supposed to be love-in-idleness?



Or this?

WHAT IS THE WOOD LIKE?

*And in the wood where often you and I
Upon faint primrose beds were wont to lie*

– Hermia (Act 1, Scene 2)

Is the wood outside Athens a comfortable and comforting place, or is it dangerous and frightening? Is it a place of freedom, where the rules of the court don't apply, or somewhere a person could be lost forever?

The play is nominally set in Ancient Greece, but in fact the forest is about as English as any woodland could possibly be. Or could it be Australian? Or somewhere entirely different that has not yet been tried?

Make a board of images to suggest what the wood should look like. You can do this with Pinterest using online images, or with real materials: fabrics, papers, leaves. Be creative, the wood does not have to be a literal copy of a real forest.

Bonus task: Look at the text to see how many times the moon is mentioned, as well as how many different ways are invented to show that there is moonlight. How could it be represented that the action is taking place at night, in your version?

THE WORLD IS IN THE TEXT

Go through the play and find any references there are to place and location. How do people see the spaces they are in, or are planning to go to? Do they describe how they feel about where they are? Are there lots of adjectives, or mainly noun-heavy, concrete descriptions of what people see around them?

Highlight or mark out the relevant passages, then read them aloud. The sound of the words matters just as much as their precise meaning.

VISUAL ARTS CURRICULUM (ACTIVITY 2)

Year	Strand	Codes	Explanation
F-2	Making	2.1	Recognizing that drawing, painting, objects and spaces represent and express imagination and emotions. Playing with combining images, shapes, patterns and spaces.
		2.2	Using a range of traditional and digital media, materials and processes, exploring the elements of art, craft and design in an imaginative way.
		2.3	Talking about their own visual arts works describing subject matter and ideas and naming features Beginning to acknowledge their own intentions when taking on the role of artist to make arts works.
		2.4	Creating original art works and describing their subject matter, ideas and the features they use.
3-4	Making	4.1	Exploring images, objects, ideas and spaces representing themselves and other in a variety of situations.
		4.2	Combining the qualities of media and material to explore effects.
		4.3	Making choices about the forms and techniques used to best represent the qualities of their subject matter.
		4.5	Talking and writing about their visual art work focusing on the details, intention and the techniques used.
		4.6	Experimenting with available digital technologies to reconstruct visual arts works in relation to other Arts subjects.
	Responding	4.7	Comparing the use of art making techniques used in their own visual arts works. Identify how they have represented particular people, objects or experiences in their visual arts works. Reflecting on the use of visual and spatial elements in the visual art works.
5-6	Making	6.1	Exploring subject matter of personal and social interest from particular viewpoints including issues, activities and events in place, spaces, people, objects and the imaginary world.
		6.2	Using different artistic concept, for example colour, tone, light, scale and abstract, in the interpretation of subject matter.
		6.3	Investigating a range of art-making techniques to explore and develop skills, including traditional and digital technologies.
		6.4	Justifying and refining decision when responding to a creative challenge.
		6.5	Manipulating visual and spatial ideas for different audiences focusing on the details, intentions and techniques.

ENGLISH CURRICULUM (ACTIVITY 2)

Year	Strand	Codes	Explanation
1	Language	ACELA1452	Explore nouns, adjectives and details such as when, where and how
		ACELA1453	Explore images in narrative and informative texts
	Literature	ACELT1581	Discuss how authors create characters using language and images
		ACELT1582	Discuss characters and events in a range of literary texts
		ACELT1584	Discuss features of plot, character and setting
	Literacy	ACELY1656	Speaking clearly and with appropriate volume; interacting confidently and appropriately with peers, teachers, visitors and community members
		ACLEY1655	Respond to texts drawn from a range of experiences
		ACELY1788	Use interaction skills
ACELY1657		Make short presentations	
		ACELY1660	Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning
2	Language	ACELA1468	Understand that nouns represent people, place, concrete objects
		ACELA1470	Interpreting new terminology drawing on prior knowledge
	Literature	ACELT1589	Compare opinions about characters, events and settings
	Literacy	ACELY1666	Listen for specific purposes and information
		ACELY1789	Use interaction skills
		ACELY1667	Rehearse and deliver short presentations
3	Language	ACELA1483	Learn extended and technical vocabulary
	Literature	ACELT1596	Draw connections between personal experiences and the worlds of texts
		ACELT1599	Discuss how language is used to describe settings in texts
	Literacy	ACELY1676	Participate in collaborative discussions
		ACELY1679	Reading aloud with fluency and intonation
		ACELY1792	Use interaction skills
ACELY1677		Plan and deliver short presentations	
4	Language	ACELA1498	Incorporate new vocabulary
	Literature	ACELT1602	Comment on how different authors have established setting and period
		ACELT1603	Discuss literary experiences with others
		ACELT1605	Discuss how authors make stories exciting, moving and absorbing
	Literacy	ACELY1686	Identify and explain language features of texts from previous times
		ACELY1692	Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning
ACELY1689		Plan and deliver short presentations	

5	Language	ACELA1500	Understand that the pronunciation, spelling and meanings of words have histories and change over time
		ACELA1508	Observing how descriptive details can be built up around a noun or an adjective
	Literature	ACELT1608	Identify aspects of literary texts that convey details and information
	Literacy	ACELY1699	Clarify understanding of content as it unfolds
		ACELY1796	Use interaction skills
		ACELY1700	Plan, rehearse and deliver short presentations
		ACELY1702	Reading a wide range of imaginative texts
		ACELY1703	Use comprehension strategies to analyse information
6	Language	ACELA1523	Understand how ideas can be expanded and sharpened through careful choice of words
	Literature	ACELT1613	Make connections between students' own experiences and those of characters and events represented in texts drawn from different historical contexts
	Literacy	ACELY1816	Use interaction skills, varying conventions of spoken interactions such as voice volume, tone, pitch and pace
		ACELY1710	Plan, rehearse and deliver presentations
		ACELY1709	Participate in and contribute to discussions
		ACELY1713	Use comprehension strategies to interpret and analyse information and ideas

PRE-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITY 3

CHARACTER POSTERS

It can be hard to keep track of who's who in a play with so many characters. The best way to get to know them is through their words. The next best is to support those words with vivid images.

Make one big poster for each important character, with their name in the middle.

Students find things to paste around the name to give the most complete picture of that character. This can include:

- quotes from the play of lines said **by** the character
- quotes from the play of lines said **about** the character
- pictures of the character in previous productions
- pictures of actors, or simply torn from magazines, of people who look how you imagine the character should. Does Jennifer Lawrence look more like Helena or Hermia? Is Oberon old or young? Can anyone tell Lysander and Demetrius apart?
- costume ideas
- scraps of fabric or decorations they might wear
- the students' own drawings of the characters
- song lyrics that suit what the character goes through

Be imaginative. Do the nobles of the Athenian court wear Ancient Greek garments, Elizabethan, or sharp, modern suits? What makes you think of fairies more – a clump of moss, or a sparkly hairclip?

DRAMA CURRICULUM (ACTIVITY 3)

Year	Strand	Codes	Explanation
1	Making	2.2	Explore feelings, ideas, facial expressions, gesture and movement
		2.3	Work with others to create imagined situations
		2.5	Share role play, co-operate and follow cues for moving in and out of the space
	Responding	2.9	Describe experiences of places or contexts in which drama happens
3-4	Making	4.1	Create roles and relationships, experimenting with facial expression
		4.2	Create dramatic action and place using body, movement, language and voice, varying movement and stillness
		4.4	Offer, accept and negotiate situations in spontaneous improvisation
	Responding	4.9	Identify features of drama from different times and places
5-6	Making	6.1	Imagine and create roles and relationships, convey character
		6.2	Create mood and atmosphere through the use of body, movement, language and voice
		6.3	Offer, accept and extend situations
	Responding	6.9	Identify and describe their drama in relation to different performance styles and contexts

PRE-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITY 4

WILL'S WORD QUEST

Given that a lot of Shakespeare's 400-year-old language – particularly individual words and terms – will be new to a lot of students, this task acts as a kind of preamble introduction to the playwright's wonderfully rich and colourful vocabulary.

The following writing and research task presents the students with a list of relevant word choices Shakespeare has used for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. This list is not exhaustive and many others can be added to draw the activity out over a longer period of time.

Students ideally work in pairs or groups of three to encourage group learning and cooperative skills.

There are two tables below. In table A, each Will's Word is listed next to the matching correct definition. In table B (for students) each Will's Word is listed with space to fill in the meaning.

Allow students to access internet sites and/or the old fashioned dictionary to find and match the appropriate definitions for the words listed.

Once these words and their definitions have been located and matched, the teacher can then take the students back to the monologues or scenes to see the way in which Shakespeare uses the words in relevant and revealing contexts.

TABLE A - CORRECT DEFINITIONS

Will's Words	Definitions
Methinks	It seems to me
Vexation	The state of being annoyed, frustrated, or worried
Bewitch	To cast a spell on someone and gain magical control over them
Doting	To be extremely and uncritically fond of
Eyne	Eyes
Herein	In this situation
Thither	To or toward that place
Lamentable	Unfortunate, regrettable
Condole	Lament, express great sorrow
Lofty	High
Extempore	Spoken or done without preparation, improvised
Forsworn	To have abandoned or rejected something
Perchance	By some chance, perhaps
Slayeth	Slays, kills
Adamant	Someone who is firm in their views and can't be persuaded
Nymph	A mythological spirit of nature
Hempen home-spuns	Country bumpkins
Swaggering	Walk or behave in a very confident and typically arrogant manner
Knavery	Lack of honesty, acts of lying or cheating or stealing
Enamour'd	In love, captivated, charmed
Sooth	Truth
Wherefore	Why, or for what reason
Jest	A thing said or done for amusement; a joke
Canker-blossom	A worm-infected bud that does not bloom
Vixen	A spiteful or tricky woman (female fox)
Slumber'd	Slept
Yielding	Giving way under pressure

The word activity can now develop further into a performance and creative exploration task.

The students are going to physicalise each word, inventing an action that helps to define what the word means. This is the most important step!

Ask the students which words had different definitions to what they were expecting.

Ask them what images and impressions they get when they say the words aloud.

Words have histories, and words that were used a long time ago can change their meaning over time, and have more than one meaning. As Shakespeare was using these words such a long time ago, their definitions may be different now to what they were when he was writing the plays.

More particularly, Shakespeare is notable for all the words he chooses that have many different meanings in play at once, especially in wordplay like puns.

TABLE B - STUDENT HANDOUT

For students to seek out and fill in

Will's Words	Definitions
Methinks	
Vexation	
Bewitch	
Doting	
Eyne	
Herein	
Thither	
Lamentable	
Condole	
Lofty	
Extempore	
Forsworn	
Perchance	
Slayeth	
Adamant	
Nymph	
Hempen Home-spuns	
Swaggering	
Knavery	
Enamour'd	
Sooth	
Wherefore	
Jest	
Canker-blossom	
Vixen	
Slumber'd	
Yielding	

ENGLISH CURRICULUM (ACTIVITY 4)

Year	Strand	Codes	Explanation
1	Language	ACELA1452	Explore nouns, adjectives and details such as when, where and how
		ACELA1453	Explore images in narrative and informative texts
	Literature	ACELT1581	Discuss how authors create characters using language and images
		ACELT1582	Discuss characters and events in a range of literary texts
		ACELT1584	Discuss features of plot, character and setting
	Literacy	ACELY1656	Speaking clearly and with appropriate volume; interacting confidently and appropriately with peers, teachers, visitors and community members
		ACLEY1655	Respond to texts drawn from a range of experiences
		ACELY1788	Use interaction skills
		ACELY1657	Make short presentations
		ACELY1660	Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning
2	Language	ACELA1468	Understand that nouns represent people, place, concrete objects
		ACELA1470	Interpreting new terminology drawing on prior knowledge
	Literature	ACELT1589	Compare opinions about characters, events and settings
	Literacy	ACELY1666	Listen for specific purposes and information
		ACELY1789	Use interaction skills
ACELY1667	Rehearse and deliver short presentations		
3	Language	ACELA1483	Learn extended and technical vocabulary
	Literature	ACELT1596	Draw connections between personal experiences and the worlds of texts
		ACELT1599	Discuss how language is used to describe settings in texts
	Literacy	ACELY1676	Participate in collaborative discussions
		ACELY1679	Reading aloud with fluency and intonation
		ACELY1792	Use interaction skills
ACELY1677		Plan and deliver short presentations	
4	Language	ACELA1498	Incorporate new vocabulary
	Literature	ACELT1602	Comment on how different authors have established setting and period
		ACELT1603	Discuss literary experiences with others
		ACELT1605	Discuss how authors make stories exciting, moving and absorbing
	Literacy	ACELY1686	Identify and explain language features of texts from previous times
		ACELY1692	Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning
ACELY1689		Plan and deliver short presentations	

5	Language	ACELA1500	Understand that the pronunciation, spelling and meanings of words have histories and change over time
		ACELA1508	Observing how descriptive details can be built up around a noun or an adjective
	Literature	ACELT1608	Identify aspects of literary texts that convey details and information
	Literacy	ACELY1699	Clarify understanding of content as it unfolds
		ACELY1796	Use interaction skills
		ACELY1700	Plan, rehearse and deliver short presentations
		ACELY1702	Reading a wide range of imaginative texts
	ACELY1703	Use comprehension strategies to analyse information	
6	Language	ACELA1523	Understand how ideas can be expanded and sharpened through careful choice of words
	Literature	ACELT1613	Make connections between students' own experiences and those of characters and events represented in texts drawn from different historical contexts
	Literacy	ACELY1816	Use interaction skills, varying conventions of spoken interactions such as voice volume, tone, pitch and pace
		ACELY1710	Plan, rehearse and deliver presentations
		ACELY1709	Participate in and contribute to discussions
		ACELY1713	Use comprehension strategies to interpret and analyse information and ideas

POST-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITY 1

HARSH BUT FAIR? WHEN LOVE TURNS SOUR

A Midsummer Night's Dream portrays situations in which characters find themselves at odds with each other, often battling out arguments through very colourful word choices and expressions. Shakespeare is celebrated for his colourful use of language and no more so than in his incredible array of insults that he used to entertain his equally colourful Elizabethan audiences.

Playing with insults create a wonderful opportunity for students to explore the power and colour of Shakespeare's writing. It allows for students to play with bite-sized chunks of text. It allows for creative expression and vocal play and assists in generating energy, enthusiasm and healthy and fun interpersonal relationships and empowers students to speak language that is 400 years old!

*How low am I, thou painted maypole? Speak!
How low am I? I am not yet so low
But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes!*

Look closely at **Act 3 scene 2, particularly from line 264 onwards.**

Make a list of all the insulting words the confused lovers use against one another.

Choose a partner and practice creating your best Shakespearean insults and hurling them at each other. Try adding a new physical pose for each insult.

If that was fun, you can expand on it by drawing on the many, many other insults that appear in Shakespeare's plays. Give each student a hand-out with the three columns of insults. To construct a Shakespearean insult, combine one word from each of the three columns. You could print up the list and cut each insult out and have children choose them from an envelope.

Instruct them to play with the insults in the following ways. Remember, it can become quite the cacophony of sound!

1. Everyone **choose one word from each list** in the Shakespearean Insults page to create the rudest sounding insult you can.
1. Play with the **vowels, extending them.** (Vowels carry the emotion).
1. Play with the **consonants**
1. Whisper it in the ear of your dying enemy
1. Call it across a chasm
1. Challenge them to a duel to the death
1. Play with the pitch and rhythm making it the silliest insult in the world
1. Find three **physical shapes** that express each part of the insult

Arrange the class into two competing teams. One from each team steps forward ready to 'draw' their insult in battle. The first student delivers their insult and is backed by cheering and barracking from their team mates. Then the second student from the opposition steps forward to respond with their insults, trying to top the first student's efforts. They are also backed by cheering, jeering and encouragement.

STUDENT HANDOUT - SHAKESPEAREAN INSULTS

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
artless	beef-witted	apple-john
base	beetle-headed	baggage
bestly	beslubbering	barber-monger
beggarly	boil-brained	barnacle
churlish	brazen-faced	bed-presser
corpulent	clay-brained	boar-pig
craven	cream-faced	bull's pizzle
currish	crook-pated	canker-blossom
dankish	cullionly	clack-dish
dissembling	degenerate	clotpole
droning	dizzy-eyed	codpiece
fawning	dog-hearted	coxcomb
finical	elf-skinned	elf-skin
fobbing	fat-kidneyed	flax-wench
frothy	fen-sucked	flirt-gill
goatish	flap-mouthed	football player
gorbellied	fly-bitten	foot-licker
jarring	folly-fallen	fustilarian
mammering	fool-born	giglet
mangled	glass-gazing	gudgeon
mewling	half-faced	harpy
monstrous	hedge-born	hedge-pig
oily	hundred-pound	hill of flesh
paunchy	idle-headed	jolt-head
pribbling	ill-nurtured	lewdster
puking	knotty-pated	maggot-pie
puny	lily-livered	malt-worm
rank	loggerheaded	mammet
reeky	milk-livered	minnow
roguish	motley-minded	miscreant
ruttish	onion-eyed	mongrel
spleeny	plume-plucked	mumble-news
spongy	pox-marked	pigeon-egg
stinking	rough-hewn	rogue
unbolted	rude-growing	ruffian
unmuzzled	rump-fed	stock-fish
vile	sheep-biting	strumpet
villainous	super-serviceable	varlet
warped	tardy-gaited	vassal
wayward	tickle-brained	villain
weedy	toad-spotted	whey-face

ENGLISH CURRICULUM (ACTIVITY 1)

Year	Strand	Codes	Explanation
1	Language	ACELA1452	Explore nouns, adjectives and details such as when, where and how
		ACELA1444	Recognising the effect of words, symbols, gestures and body language
		ACELA1450	Recognising and using punctuation
	Literature	ACELT1582	Discuss characters and events in a range of literary texts
		ACELT1586	Recreate texts imaginatively using performance
	Literacy	ACELY1656	Speaking clearly and with appropriate volume; interacting confidently and appropriately with peers, teachers, visitors and community members
		ACLEY1655	Respond to texts drawn from a range of experiences
		ACELY1788	Use interaction skills
		ACELY1657	Make short presentations
		ACELY1663	Hand writing
		ACELY1661	Create short imaginative and informative texts
2	Language	ACELA1462	Exploring how language is used to construct settings and characters in narratives
	Literature	ACELT1587	Discuss how characters reflect context in which they were created
		ACELT1593	Create events and characters
	Literacy	ACELY1666	Listen for specific purposes and information
		ACELY1789	Use interaction skills
		ACELY1673	Handwriting
		ACELY1671	Create short imaginative texts
		ACELY1667	Rehearse and deliver short presentations
3	Language	ACELA1476	Understand successful cooperation depends on, for example, turn-taking
		ACELA1484	Build a vocabulary to demonstrate a range of feelings and positions
	Literature	ACELT1594	Discuss texts in which characters, events and settings are portrayed in different ways
		ACELT1596	Draw connections between personal experiences and the worlds of texts
		ACELT1601	Create imaginative texts
	Literacy	ACELY1676	Participate in collaborative discussions
		ACELY1684	Handwriting
		ACELY1792	Use interaction skills
ACELY1677		Plan and deliver short presentations	

4	Language	ACELA1493	Create richer, more specific descriptions
		ACELA1498	Incorporate new vocabulary
	Literature	ACELT1794	Create literary texts
		ACELT1605	Discuss how authors use language to make text exciting, moving, engaging
		ACELT1606	Experiment with word play and language devices
	Literacy	ACELY1686	Identify and explain language features of texts from earlier times
		ACELY1688	Use interaction skills
		ACELY1689	Plan and deliver short presentations
		ACELY1696	Handwriting
5	Language	ACELA1500	Understand that the pronunciation, spelling and meanings of words have histories and change over time
		ACELA1508	Learning how to expand a description
	Literature	ACELT1612	Create literary texts using realistic and fantasy settings
		ACELT1611	Experiment with language and word play
	Literacy	ACELY1699	Clarify understanding of content as it unfolds
		ACELY1796	Use interaction skills
		ACELY1700	Plan, rehearse and deliver short presentations
		ACELY1706	Handwriting
6	Language	ACELA1523	Understand how ideas can be expanded and sharpened through careful choice of words
		ACELA1518	Understand how authors play with language
	Literature	ACELT1617	Identifying how language choice and imagery build emotional connection and engagement
		ACELT1618	Create spoken narratives
	Literacy	ACELY1816	Use interaction skills, varying conventions of spoken interactions such as voice volume, tone, pitch and pace
		ACELY1710	Plan, rehearse and deliver presentations
		ACELY1709	Participate in and contribute to discussions
		ACELY1713	Use comprehension strategies to interpret and analyse information and ideas
		ACELY1716	Handwriting

DRAMA CURRICULUM (ACTIVITY 1)

Year	Strand	Codes	Explanation
F-2	Making	2.1	Imagine and act out roles and situations
		2.2	Explore feelings, ideas, facial expressions, gesture and movement
		2.3	Work with others to create imagined situations
		2.5	Share role play, co-operate and follow cues for moving in and out of the space
	Responding	2.8	Watch and listen as a performer and audience member
3-4	Making	4.1	Create roles and relationships, experimenting with facial expression
		4.2	Create dramatic action and place using body, movement, language and voice, varying movement and stillness
		4.5	Plan, rehearse and perform their drama
	Responding	4.9	Identify features of drama from different times and places
		4.7	Paying attention to the performance, showing appropriate appreciation
5-6	Making	6.1	Imagine and create roles and relationships, convey character, explore and convey status
		6.2	Create mood and atmosphere through the use of body, movement, language and voice
		6.3	Offer, accept and extend situations, collaborate in group devised drama
		6.4	Sustain roles to develop and drive the dramatic action
		6.5	Rehearse and perform devised and scripted drama
	Responding	6.7	Enjoying drama as an active audience member

POST-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITY 2

THREE WORLDS COLLIDE

ANALYSIS AND CREATIVE WRITING

Midsummer Madness centres around the three very different worlds that Shakespeare set up in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: the Lovers, the Mechanicals and the Fairies.

Teachers can prompt a discussion about character, plot and the themes of the plays by asking the students the following questions for group brainstorming and exploration:

1. For each of the three worlds answer the following:
 - Which characters are part of this world?
 - What is the setting for the world?
 - What kind of people live in this world?
 - What is important in this world?
 - Are there any rules in this world?
 - What is possible in this world?
2. Once students have detailed each world, answer the following:
 - What are the similarities between the three worlds?
 - What are the differences between the three worlds?

At several points in the story, the worlds and their characters collide with disastrous results.

List the key plot points where one world and its characters collide with another.

You can make a plot chart to show these points, with a line for each group crossing at the points where they interact.

Choose one of these key points and replace one of the characters involved with one from another world (ie instead of Titania falling in love with Bottom, she spots Lysander with the love potion on her eyes).

Write a scene in contemporary language of what might happen in this imagined situation.

If time allows, perform each scene for the class.

POST-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITY 3

LOVE-IN-IDLENESS

*The juice of it on sleeping eyelids laid
Will make or man or woman madly dote
Upon the next live creature that it sees.*

– Oberon (Act 2, Scene 1)

It looks like a happy ending when Demetrius continues to love Helena. Perhaps no harm is done to Titania, and Bottom certainly seems happy enough. But is it really OK to win someone's love with a potion or a spell?

Form two teams and debate the ethics of the idea of giving someone a love potion. Should we worry about free consent? Or is it 'all's well that ends well'?

ENGLISH CURRICULUM (ACTIVITIES 2 & 3)

Year	Strand	Codes	Explanation
1	Language	ACELA1452	Explore nouns, adjectives and details such as when, where and how
		ACELA1444	Recognising the effect of words, symbols, gestures and body language
		ACELA1450	Recognising and using punctuation
	Literature	ACELT1582	Discuss characters and events in a range of literary texts
	Literacy	ACELY1656	Speaking clearly and with appropriate volume; interacting confidently and appropriately with peers, teachers, visitors and community members
		ACLELY1655	Respond to texts drawn from a range of experiences
		ACELY1788	Use interaction skills
ACELY1657		Make short presentations	
2	Language	ACELA1462	Exploring how language is used to construct settings and characters in narratives
	Literature	ACELT1589	Compare opinions about characters, events and settings
		ACELT1587	Discuss how characters reflect context in which they were created
		ACELT1593	Create events and characters
	Literacy	ACELY1666	Listen for specific purposes and information
		ACELY1789	Use interaction skills
	3	Language	ACELA1484
Literature		ACELT1594	Discuss texts in which characters, events and settings are portrayed in different ways
		ACELT1596	Draw connections between personal experiences and the worlds of texts
Literacy		ACELY1676	Participate in collaborative discussions
		ACELY1792	Use interaction skills
4	Language	ACELA1488	Recognising that language is adjusted in different contexts
		ACELA1489	Understand differences in language used to report facts and express feelings
		ACELT1605	Discuss how authors use language to make text exciting, moving, engaging
		ACELT1603	Discuss literary experiences with others
	Literacy	ACELY1686	Identify and explain language features of texts from earlier times
		ACELY1688	Use interaction skills
5	Language	ACELA1500	Understand that the pronunciation, spelling and meanings of words have histories and change over time
		ACELA1502	Understand how to move beyond making bare assertions and take into account other points of view
	Literature	ACELT1612	Create literary texts using realistic and fantasy settings
		ACELT1609	Present a point of view about literary texts
	Literacy	ACELY1699	Clarify understanding of content as it unfolds
		ACELY1796	Use interaction skills

6	Language	ACELA1523	Understand how ideas can be expanded and sharpened through careful choice of words
		ACELA1518	Understand how authors play with language
	Literature	ACELT1613	Make connections between students' own experiences and those of characters and events represented in texts drawn from different historical contexts
		ACELT1618	Create spoken narratives
	Literacy	ACELY1816	Use interaction skills, varying conventions of spoken interactions such as voice volume, tone, pitch and pace
		ACELY1709	Participate in and contribute to discussions
		ACELY1713	Use comprehension strategies to interpret and analyse information and ideas

POST-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITY 4

IMPROVISING *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM*.

The following activity has the flexibility to be used for the duration of one lesson, or drawn out and explored more in depth over several lessons. For the purposes of exploring the contrasting worlds of Shakespeare's story, it can also be acted out within a 20-minute time period for the sake of pacing and pulling together a story quickly and energetically.

This activity allows for the story of the play's worlds, to be told together with students in ensemble fashion. Narration is spoken by the teacher, involving students in focussed listening and the descriptive building of the play's setting in its three distinct locations. The teacher can take their time to describe in details the characters and the events as they unfold. The students contribute by playing the various characters as they present themselves in each world, acting out their physical and vocal choices to make their own version of these characters as they see fit.

Begin by dividing the class into three separate worlds as follows:

- The Athenians
- The Fairy Forest Dwellers
- The Mechanicals

THE ATHENIANS.

In the ancient city of Athens, Theseus is about to wed Hippolyta. The festivities are interrupted when Egeus comes storming into the court, expressing great "vexation" as his daughter Hermia is refusing to marry the man his father deems appropriate. Rather, she has fallen in love with Lysander, a young man her father completely disapproves of. Demetrius is the ideal suitor for Hermia, according to her dad who enlists the aid of Theseus, the Duke of Athens, to enforce his wishes upon his daughter. According to Athenian law, Hermia is given four days to choose between Demetrius, life in a nunnery, or a death sentence. Hermia, ever defiant, chooses to escape with Lysander into the surrounding forest.

THE FAIRY FOREST DWELLERS

There is unrest in the land of the Fairies as the King and Queen of this ethereal world are locked in a custody battle over a young boy that Titania has adopted. Oberon is driven by jealousy and exchanges harsh worlds with his Fairy Queen. Oberon instructs his servant Puck to bring him magic love drops, which Oberon will sprinkle on the Queen's eyelids as she sleeps, so Titania will fall in love with the first creature she sees upon awakening.

THE MECHANICALS

A group of craftsmen are rehearsing for a production of 'Pyramus and Thisbe', to be played for the Duke at his wedding. The mechanicals are very likeable, earthy and working class characters, but fancy themselves as accomplished actors when really, they are over-acting hams! Nick Bottom is trying to steal all the roles in the play to the point that the director gets somewhat annoyed. In the midst of their rehearsals, Oberon's mischievous Puck casts a spell on Bottom to give him the head of a donkey. Bottom, as luck would have it, is the first thing Titania sees when she awakens; hence, Bottom ends up being pampered by the love-struck Queen.

The following scenarios guide the students to build the worlds as listed above and lead them into an improvisation activity.

The above scenarios are read slowly by the teacher, allowing the students to begin to piece together the basic narrative as the activity unfolds. Students are encouraged to improvise the various characters and to create moments of contemporary dialogue that support the relationships between the characters. Some students will also contribute by playing other extra characters, such as advisors or guards in Athens and teams of fairies for Titania in the forest.

Students can arrange themselves into a large circle, allowing all of the action to unfold in the centre (as in theatre in the round) to keep their engagement active, or seat themselves in a more typical auditorium style with the action taking place in a proscenium arch style presentation

Dialogue should be spoken with expressive clarity and colour, with good volume audience address. Students should be encouraged to have fun with what they create and may use techniques from the previous tableaux activity to build detail into the three worlds as they are explored by the class, one world at a time.

To extend the exercise: Once everyone has improvised their section, using narration and mime, or their own words, everyone can return to the original text and find the passage that fits their character's key thought, feelings or moments. They should read these aloud (short extracts, even just a few words, are fine. This is about identifying a powerful point of expression). Then go on to discuss what is gained by using the words in the text.

POST-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITY 5

CRAZY CUE SCRIPTS

It may be hard to believe, but when Shakespeare wrote *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the actors were never given a copy of the whole play. Every actor would only get his own lines, plus the last few words of the person speaking before – his 'cue'. These portions written up for each character were called 'parts' by Shakespeare's contemporaries, and then later 'cue scripts'.

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act 3, Scene 2 is fast, physical and complicated. Imagine not knowing who was going to speak next, or whether someone was going to try to grab you or fight you! You would have to listen very carefully, and be ready to speak or move at any moment.

Divide the class into groups of 4. Distribute the cue scripts provided here (for obvious reasons it works best to give Hermia to shorter people and Helena to taller people).

Everybody should spend some time looking at their script individually. Students should NOT discuss their part with others in their group, and if they have copies of the play in class they should NOT be allowed to look at these either. You might like to put all the Hermias together, all the Lysanders together, etc. to discuss meaning and possible action, but separate study is fine, too. Students should mark in anything they notice about what the lines are telling them to do, or which words seem important.

With **no practice run**, have the groups stage the scene for the rest of the class.

[START]

LYSANDER You are unkind, Demetrius; be not so;
For you love Hermia. This you know I know;
And here, with all good will, with all my heart,
In Hermia's love I yield you up my part;
And yours of Helena to me bequeath,
Whom I do love and will do till my death.

-----There to remain.

LYSANDER Helen, it is not so.

-----thou leave me so?

LYSANDER Why should he stay whom love doth press to go?

-----from my side?

LYSANDER Lysander's love, that would not let him bide-
Fair Helena, who more engilds the night
Than all yon fiery oes and eyes of light.
Why seek'st thou me? Could not this make thee know
The hate I bare thee made me leave thee so?

-----soon shall remedy.

LYSANDER Stay, gentle Helena; hear my excuse;
My love, my life, my soul, fair Helena!

-----I can compel.

LYSANDER Thou canst compel no more than she entreat;
Thy threats have no more strength than her weak prayers
Helen, I love thee, by my life I do;
I swear by that which I will lose for thee
To prove him false that says I love thee not.

-----than he can do.

LYSANDER If thou say so, withdraw, and prove it too.

-----tends all this?

LYSANDER. Away, you Ethiopel!

_____a tame man; go!

LYSANDER Hang off, thou cat, thou burr; vile thing, let loose,
Or I will shake thee from me like a serpent.

_____ Sweet love?

LYSANDER Thy love! Out, tawny Tartar, out!
Out, loathed med'cine! O hated potion, hence!

_____and so do you.

LYSANDER Demetrius, I will keep my word with thee.

_____not trust your word.

LYSANDER What, should I hurt her, strike her, kill her dead?
Although I hate her, I'll not harm her so.

_____shall I say?

LYSANDER Ay, by my life!
And never did desire to see thee more.
Therefore be out of hope, of question, of doubt;
Be certain, nothing truer; 'tis no jest
That I do hate thee and love Helena.

_____ can match her.

LYSANDER Be not afraid; she shall not harm thee, Helena.

_____ me come to her.

LYSANDER Get you gone, you dwarf;
You minimus, of hind'ring knot-grass made;
You bead, you acorn.

_____ not of Helena;

LYSANDER Now follow, if thou dar'st, to try whose right,
Of thine or mine, is most in Helena.

_____cheek by jowl.

Exeunt LYSANDER and DEMETRIUS

-----more idle breath.

DEMETRIUS Lysander, keep thy Hermia; I will none.

If e'er I lov'd her, all that love is gone.

My heart to her but as guest-wise sojourn'd,

And now to Helen is it home return'd,

There to remain.

-----it is not so.

DEMETRIUS Disparage not the faith thou dost not know,

Look where thy love comes; yonder is thy dear.

-----not scorn her so.

DEMETRIUS If she cannot entreat, I can compel.

-----I love thee not.

DEMETRIUS I say I love thee more than he can do.

-----and prove it too.

DEMETRIUS Quick, come.

-----Away, you Ethiopel!

DEMETRIUS No, no, he will Seem to break loose- take on as you would follow,

But yet come not. You are a tame man; go!

-----my word with thee.

DEMETRIUS I would I had your bond; for I perceive

A weak bond holds you; I'll not trust your word.

-----harm thee, Helena.

DEMETRIUS. No, sir, she shall not, though you take her part.

-----bead, you acorn.

DEMETRIUS You are too officious

In her behalf that scorns your services.

Let her alone; speak not of Helena;

----- most in Helena.

DEMETRIUS Follow! Nay, I'll go with thee, cheek by jowl.

Exeunt

_____is thy dear.

Enter HERMIA

HERMIA Thou art not by mine eye, Lysander, found;
Mine ear, I thank it, brought me to thy sound.
But why unkindly didst thou leave me so?

_____doth press to go?

HERMIA What love could press Lysander from my side?

_____me leave thee so?

HERMIA You speak not as you think; it cannot be.

_____feel the injury.

HERMIA I am amazed at your passionate words;
I scorn you not; it seems that you scorn me.

_____ by your consent?

HERMIA I understand not what you mean by this.

_____O excellent!

HERMIA Sweet, do not scorn her so.

_____Quick, come.

HERMIA Lysander, whereto tends all this?

_____like a serpent.

HERMIA Why are you grown so rude? What change is this,
Sweet love?

_____hated potion, hence!

HERMIA Do you not jest?

-----not harm her so.

HERMIA What! Can you do me greater harm than hate?
Hate me! wherefore? O me! what news, my love?
Am not I Hermia? Are not you Lysander?
I am as fair now as I was erewhile.
Since night you lov'd me; yet since night you left me.
Why then, you left me- O, the gods forbid!-
In earnest, shall I say?

-----and love Helena.

HERMIA O me! you juggler! you cankerblossom!
You thief of love! What! Have you come by night,
And stol'n my love's heart from him?

-----you puppet you!

HERMIA 'Puppet!' why so? Ay, that way goes the game.
Now I perceive that she hath made compare
Between our statures; she hath urg'd her height;
And with her personage, her tall personage,
Her height, forsooth, she hath prevail'd with him.
And are you grown so high in his esteem
Because I am so dwarfish and so low?
How low am I, thou painted maypole? Speak.
How low am I? I am not yet so low
But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes.

-----she is fierce.

HERMIA 'Little' again! Nothing but 'low' and 'little'!
Why will you suffer her to flout me thus?
Let me come to her.

-----cheek by jowl.

Exeunt LYSANDER and DEMETRIUS

HERMIA You, mistress, all this coil is long of you.
Nay, go not back.

-----to run away.

HERMIA I am amaz'd, and know not what to say.

Exit

_____do till my death.

HELENA Never did mockers waste more idle breath.

_____it cannot be.

HELENA Lo, she is one of this confederacy!

Now I perceive they have conjoin'd all three
To fashion this false sport in spite of me.
And will you rent our ancient love asunder,
To join with men in scorning your poor friend?
It is not friendly, 'tis not maidenly;
Our sex, as well as I, may chide you for it,
Though I alone do feel the injury.

_____that you scorn me.

HELENA Have you not set Lysander, as in scorn,
To follow me and praise my eyes and face?
And made your other love, Demetrius,
Who even but now did spurn me with his foot,
To call me goddess, nymph, divine, and rare,
Precious, celestial? Wherefore speaks he this
To her he hates? And wherefore doth Lysander
Deny your love, so rich within his soul,
And tender me, forsooth, affection,
But by your setting on, by your consent?

_____you mean by this.

HELENA Ay, do- persever, counterfeit sad looks,
Make mouths upon me when I turn my back,
Wink each at other; hold the sweet jest up;
But fare ye well; 'tis partly my own fault,
Which death, or absence, soon shall remedy.

_____soul, fair Helena!

HELENA O excellent!

_____Do you not jest?

HELENA Yes, sooth; and so do you.

_____heart from him?

HELENA Fine, i' faith!

Have you no modesty, no maiden shame,
No touch of bashfulness? What! Will you tear
Impatient answers from my gentle tongue?
Fie, fie! you counterfeit, you puppet you!

_____unto thine eyes.

HELENA I pray you, though you mock me, gentlemen,
Let her not hurt me. I was never curst;
I have no gift at all in shrewishness;
I am a right maid for my cowardice;
Let her not strike me. You perhaps may think,
Because she is something lower than myself,
That I can match her.

_____you take her part.

HELENA O, when she is angry, she is keen and shrewd;
She was a vixen when she went to school;
And, though she be but little, she is fierce.

_____Nay, go not back.

HELENA I will not trust you, I;
Nor longer stay in your curst company.
Your hands than mine are quicker for a fray;
My legs are longer though, to run away.

Exit

ENGLISH CURRICULUM (ACTIVITIES 4 & 5)

Year	Strand	Codes	Explanation
1	Language	ACELA1452	Explore nouns, adjectives and details such as when, where and how
		ACELA1444	Recognising the effect of words, symbols, gestures and body language
		ACELA1450	Recognising and using punctuation
	Literature	ACELT1582	Discuss characters and events in a range of literary texts
		ACELT1586	Recreate texts imaginatively using performance
	Literacy	ACELY1656	Speaking clearly and with appropriate volume; interacting confidently and appropriately with peers, teachers, visitors and community members
		ACLEY1655	Respond to texts drawn from a range of experiences
		ACELY1788	Use interaction skills
		ACELY1657	Make short presentations
		ACELY1663	Hand writing
		ACELY1661	Create short imaginative and informative texts
2	Language	ACELA1462	Exploring how language is used to construct settings and characters in narratives
	Literature	ACELT1589	Compare opinions about characters, events and settings
		ACELT1587	Discuss how characters reflect context in which they were created
		ACELT1593	Create events and characters
	Literacy	ACELY1666	Listen for specific purposes and information
		ACELY1789	Use interaction skills
		ACELY1673	Handwriting
		ACELY1671	Create short imaginative texts
		ACELY1667	Rehearse and deliver short presentations
	3	Language	ACELA1476
ACELA1484			Build a vocabulary to demonstrate a range of feelings and positions
Literature		ACELT1594	Discuss texts in which characters, events and settings are portrayed in different ways
		ACELT1596	Draw connections between personal experiences and the worlds of texts
		ACELT1601	Create imaginative texts
Literacy		ACELY1676	Participate in collaborative discussions
		ACELY1684	Handwriting
		ACELY1792	Use interaction skills
		ACELY1677	Plan and deliver short presentations

4	Language	ACELA1488	Recognising that language is adjusted in different contexts
		ACELA1489	Understand differences in language used to report facts and express feelings
	Literature	ACELT1794	Create literary texts
		ACELT1605	Discuss how authors use language to make text exciting, moving, engaging
		ACELT1603	Discuss literary experiences with others
	Literacy	ACELY1686	Identify and explain language features of texts from earlier times
		ACELY1688	Use interaction skills
		ACELY1689	Plan and deliver short presentations
			ACELY1696
5	Language	ACELA1500	Understand that the pronunciation, spelling and meanings of words have histories and change over time
		ACELA1502	Understand how to move beyond making bare assertions and take into account other points of view
	Literature	ACELT1612	Create literary texts using realistic and fantasy settings
		ACELT1609	Present a point of view about literary texts
	Literacy	ACELY1699	Clarify understanding of content as it unfolds
		ACELY1796	Use interaction skills
		ACELY1700	Plan, rehearse and deliver short presentations
		ACELY1706	Handwriting
6	Language	ACELA1523	Understand how ideas can be expanded and sharpened through careful choice of words
		ACELA1518	Understand how authors play with language
	Literature	ACELT1613	Make connections between students' own experiences and those of characters and events represented in texts drawn from different historical contexts
		ACELT1618	Create spoken narratives
	Literacy	ACELY1816	Use interaction skills, varying conventions of spoken interactions such as voice volume, tone, pitch and pace
		ACELY1710	Plan, rehearse and deliver presentations
		ACELY1709	Participate in and contribute to discussions
		ACELY1713	Use comprehension strategies to interpret and analyse information and ideas
		ACELY1716	Handwriting

DRAMA CURRICULUM (ACTIVITIES 4 & 5)

Year	Strand	Codes	Explanation
F-2	Making	2.1	Imagine and act out roles and situations
		2.2	Explore feelings, ideas, facial expressions, gesture and movement
		2.3	Work with others to create imagined situations
		2.5	Share role play, co-operate and follow cues for moving in and out of the space
	Responding	2.8	Watch and listen as a performer and audience member
3-4	Making	4.1	Create roles and relationships, experimenting with facial expression
		4.2	Create dramatic action and place using body, movement, language and voice, varying movement and stillness
		4.5	Plan, rehearse and perform their drama
	Responding	4.9	Identify features of drama from different times and places
		4.7	Paying attention to the performance, showing appropriate appreciation
5-6	Making	6.1	Imagine and create roles and relationships, convey character, explore and convey status
		6.2	Create mood and atmosphere through the use of body, movement, language and voice
		6.3	Offer, accept and extend situations, collaborate in group devised drama
		6.4	Sustain roles to develop and drive the dramatic action
		6.5	Rehearse and perform devised and scripted drama
	Responding	6.7	Enjoying drama as an active audience member

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The best version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for school students to use is the Cambridge School edition:

Buckle, Linda. (Ed.), Cambridge School Shakespeare *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2005, Cambridge University Press)

BOOKS WITH GOOD EXERCISES FOR TEACHERS TO USE TO INTRODUCE SHAKESPEARE:

Bayley, P., *An A-B-C Of Shakespeare* (1985, Longman Group)

Gibson, Rex, *Stepping Into Shakespeare* (2000, Cambridge University Press)

Gibson, Rex, *Discovering Shakespeare's Language* (1998, Cambridge University Press)

Winston, Joe and Miles Tandy, *Beginning Shakespeare* (2012, Routledge)

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Chubbuck, I, *The Power Of The Actor* (2005, Currency Press)

Crystal, David & Ben Crystal, *Shakespeare's Words: A Glossary & Language Companion* (2002, Penguin Books)

Dunton-Downer, Leslie & Alan Riding, *Essential Shakespeare Handbook* (2013, Dorling Kindersley)

Fantasia, Louis, *Instant Shakespeare* (2002, Ivan R. Dee)

Wells, Stanley, *Is It True What They Say About Shakespeare?* (2007, Long Barn Books)

VERSIONS AND VARIATIONS OF A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM ON FILM:

Ed Fraiman's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2005),
BBC Shakespeare Retold for TV (not using the original text.)

Michael Hoffman's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1999),
with Michelle Pfeiffer as Titania, Rupert Everett as Oberon, Kevin Kline as Bottom and Christian Bale as Demetrius

Adrian Noble's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1996),
Royal Shakespeare Company

The English National Opera's *The Fairy Queen* (1995),
for TV, a production of the 1692 masque by Henry Purcell, based on Shakespeare's play

Yvon Gerault's *The Fairy Queen* (1989)

Elijah Moshinsky's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1981),
for BBCTV

Peter Hall's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1968),
with Helen Mirren as Hermia and Diana Rigg as Helena

Benjamin Britten's opera *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1960),
filmed for TV by Glyndebourne Festival Opera in 1981

Max Reinhardt's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1935),
with James Cagney as Bottom and Mickey Rooney as Puck, using Mendelssohn's orchestral music

Next is a five minute animation showing the complete works of Shakespeare:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WGUYenMRkcl>

SOME WEBSITES (BESIDES OURS!) WITH GREAT RESOURCES:

Shakespeare's Globe in London, which has a very comprehensive Education section:

<http://www.shakespearesglobe.com/education/teachers/teaching-resources>

The Royal Shakespeare Company, which has plot summaries and records of previous productions:

<http://www.rsc.org.uk/education/>

The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust has some fun blogs and other bits and pieces:

<http://www.shakespeare.org.uk/explore-shakespeare/students-and-enthusiasts.html>

Shakespeare Online is a commercial site, but the information is reliable:

<http://www.shakespeare-online.com>

The Touchstone database is very UK-focused, but has some amazing images from a huge number of productions of all Shakespeare's plays, including a special section on Peter Brook's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*:

<http://traffic.bham.ac.uk>