



A Midsummer Night's Dream

By William Shakespeare

In a version for touring by Carl Heap 2008

Resources for Teachers

These resources have been developed by the National Theatre as part of the Primary Classics programme 2007-2008. The materials in this pack are designed for Key Stage 2 teachers in primary and junior schools and can support the National Theatre touring production and workshop programme in schools.

For further information on Primary Classics and National Theatre Education go to www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/education

Resources and Primary Classics developed by Rachel Dickinson for the National Theatre 2007-2008

NT Primary Classics: A Midsummer Night's Dream

Aims to

- Introduce children in primary and junior schools to Shakespeare's text through a range of approaches that focus on the experience of live theatre and drama.
- Provide an opportunity to see a top-quality touring production of a Shakespeare play, especially produced for a younger audience.
- Use drama as a means for developing literacy; speaking & listening, & group work.
- Use **A Midsummer Night's Dream** as the basis for addressing social questions and themes about ourselves, the world and human experience.
- Encourage teachers to make links between practical creative workshops in schools and the delivery of the National Curriculum, particularly the Literacy Hour.
- Develop a model of effective practice for partnership between the National Theatre and primary and junior schools.
- Through participation in creative activity to address other aspects of children's learning such as:
 - Team work, communication skills & physical learning
 - Use of voice, language and vocabulary
 - Imagination and inventiveness
 - Critical judgement & an understanding of the aesthetic
 - Self confidence and self esteem

These overall project aims will be achieved through the following objectives:

- Training for theatre practitioners to work in a school setting
- INSET for teachers
- Six half-day, in-school sessions, led by National Theatre practitioners
- Supporting resources
- National Theatre touring production of **A Midsummer Night's Dream**
- Evaluation

Plot Synopsis

Celebrations are planned to mark the marriage of Theseus, Duke of Athens and Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons. The nobleman Egeus brings his daughter Hermia before Theseus, as she is in love with Lysander although her father is insisting that she marry Demetrius. The Duke orders Hermia to obey her father, or, according to Athenian Law, she must face death or enter a convent.

Hermia and Lysander decide to elope that night. Hermia tells her best friend Helena, but Helena is in love with Demetrius (even though he doesn't love her) so she decides to tell Demetrius of their plan in the hope of winning his affection. That night, all four lovers steal away to the woods – Hermia and Lysander together in love and Demetrius being followed by Helena.

A group of Athenian tradesmen, such as carpenters (sometimes called the rude Mechanicals) including Bottom the weaver, are planning to perform a play (The Tragedy of Pyramus and Thisbe) at the Duke's wedding in four days time. They decide to rehearse in the same woods.

Oberon and Titania are the fairy rulers of the forest, but are arguing over the care of a changeling boy; Oberon is jealous that the boy is living with Titania. Their magic is powerful and their argument has upset the natural world, even making frosts come in summer. Oberon orders his servant fairy Puck to seek out a magic flower called love-in-idleness, whose juice, squeezed on the eyes of someone asleep, will cause them to fall in love with the first person that they see on waking. Oberon uses the juice on Titania and she falls rapturously in love with Bottom, who has just been bewitched and turned into an ass by Puck. While Titania is thinking only of her love for Bottom, Oberon seizes the changeling boy to be his henchman, delighted that his plan has worked.

Oberon also sees Demetrius and Helena arguing, and asks Puck to put some juice on sleeping Demetrius, so that he will fall in love with Helena when he awakes. But Puck, mistakes Demetrius for Lysander whom he comes across first and he puts juice in Lysander's eyes in error. So it is Lysander who happens to see Helena first when he wakes up and he instantly falls in love with her, forgetting about his true love Hermia. Trying to rectify his mistake, Puck puts juice on Demetrius' eyes rather late, and when Demetrius wakes up he too sees Helena, leaving both men worshipping Helena. Hermia is distraught when she sees this and an argument and chase take place. Puck intervenes and casts a thick black fog over the woods, so that the lovers become lost and tired and eventually fall asleep, exhausted, after chasing about in the woods. Puck sees his chance and puts a counter-juice on Lysander's eyes, so that Lysander reverts his love back to Hermia, leaving Demetrius to still love Helena. Meanwhile, Oberon also puts a counter-juice on Titania's eyes so that their love is restored, and a harmony begins to fall in the woods. Puck lifts the enchantment from Bottom, whose head returns to normal and he becomes human again, to return to his acting company.

When Theseus and Egeus are out riding the next day, they come across the young lovers who all just waking up and who are wondering about the strange visions that they have had in the night and whether it was all just a dream. Demetrius confesses to the Duke and Egeus that he now loves Helena and it is decided that this is a happy outcome and that there should now be a triple wedding. The mechanicals perform their funny play at the wedding and calm begins to reign in the land.

Cast of Characters

People of high Social Class

Theseus - Duke of Athens (just about to marry Hippolyta)

Hippolyta - Queen of the Amazons

Egeus - nobleman, Hermia's Father

Hermia - young lady, loves Lysander

Lysander - young nobleman, loves Hermia

Demetrius - young nobleman

Helena - young lady, secretly loves Demetrius

Magical Characters

Oberon - King of the Fairies

Titania - Queen of the Fairies

Puck - Servant of Oberon

Working people, group of amateur actors (sometimes called the Mechanicals)

Nick Bottom - a weaver

Peter Quince - a carpenter, who leads the troupe

Francis Flute - a bellows-mender

Robin Starveling - a tailor

Tom Snout - a tinker

Snug - a joiner

Historical Context

It is not known exactly when *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was written or first performed, but, on the basis of topical references and an allusion to Spencer's *Epithalamion*, it is usually dated in 1595 or 1596. Some have theorised that the play might have been written for an aristocratic wedding; numerous such weddings took place in 1596. Others suggest it was written for the Queen to celebrate the feast day of St. John, but no concrete evidence exists to link the play with either of them. In either case, it would also have been performed at The Theatre and, later, The Globe in London.

The play was entered into the Register of the Stationers Company on 8 October 1600 by the bookseller Thomas Fisher, who published the first quarto edition later that year. A second quarto was printed in 1619 by William Jaggard. The title page of the first quarto states that the play was "sundry times publicly acted" prior to 1600. The first performance known with certainty occurred at Court on 1 January 1604.

Seven Dream Ideas for Classroom Activities

Activity 1

Characters and Symbols

Resources needed

Plot Synopsis

Paper and coloured pencils

How to play

Tell the story (plot synopsis) to the class.

Place children in groups working at their tables and ask each child to design and draw one of the following symbols on a piece of paper and colour it in. Make sure that there is a range of symbols at each table so they are not all working on the same symbol.

Magic Wand	Donkey Head	Love Heart	Potion Bottle
Wedding Ring	Flower	Fairy Wings	Crown
Hammer	Needle	Moustache	Broken Heart
A Crying Tear	A Fairy	A Wizard	Cigar

Once completed, ask the children to discuss which character their symbol could represent and why that symbol is relevant to that character. For example, the Donkey Head could only be used to describe Bottom, but the Wedding Ring could be used to talk about any of the following six characters as they all end up getting married at the end of the play: Theseus and Hippolyta, Hermia and Lysander, Helena and Demetrius.

Ask some children to present their ideas to the rest of the class, holding up their symbols and discussing their understanding of the themes, plot and characters in the play.

Using these presentations, facilitate a brief class discussion of the play, to recap upon the main characters and action.

Activity 2

Cartoon Storyboards

Resources needed Paper and coloured pencils

How to play

Place children in pairs or small groups and ask them to decide upon the main stages of action in the play, and to agree upon how this could be divided into 10 pictures with 10 captions.

Make a storyboard template for children to work with, showing a strip of 10 cartoon boxes that they will use to draw their storyboard cartoons, with their captions written as headers or footers in each picture box.

For example:

1	2	3	4	5
Cartoon here Caption here				
6	7	8	9	10
Cartoon here Caption here				

Ask pairs of children to swap their cartoons with another pair and then discuss their choices (of action, storyboard and caption).

Gather the whole class together to discuss whether similar choices were made. Critique the artistic interpretations of characters and how children have decided to draw certain characters. Do the captions tell the complete story?

Activity 3

Fridge Magnet Poetry

Resources needed Word Bank, paper and pencils

How to play

Using the word bank below ask each child to write some poems, including as many of these powerful words from the play as they can. Themes or titles for poems could include:

1. How Magic Changed My Life
2. A Journey Through The Dark Woods
3. What Love Looks Like

4. Fairies Are Magic!
5. Don't Cast A Spell on Me

Or you might like to suggest different titles for your class.

Fridge Magnet Poetry Word Bank

Vile thing	Spotted snakes	Cherry lips	Nodding violets
Glow	Fairies	Vixen	Knavish sprite
Weaving spiders	Thorny hedgehogs	Canker-blossom	You juggler!
Moonlight	Hobgoblin	Dewberries	Wild thyme
Dove	Airy spirit	Hated potion	Canopy of trees
Bush and brier	For shame	Jangling	Hindering knot-grass
Sweet honeysuckle	Fiery glow-worms	Night and silence	Flower
Lion	Bear	Wolf	Beast
Sad looks	Grace	Pure white	Heart
Divine	Perfect	Cunning	Sleeping eyes
Fly!	Help!	Moonshine	Serpent
Run away	Sweet lullaby	Pillow	True love

Extension

1. Attention could be given to the shape, layout and design of the poem on the page.
2. Children could work on ways of performing their poems individually or in pairs.
3. Poems could be used in classroom displays alongside Character Symbols and Cartoon Storyboards.

Activity 4

Dream Cube

Resources Needed

Cube net below, or similar 3D nets

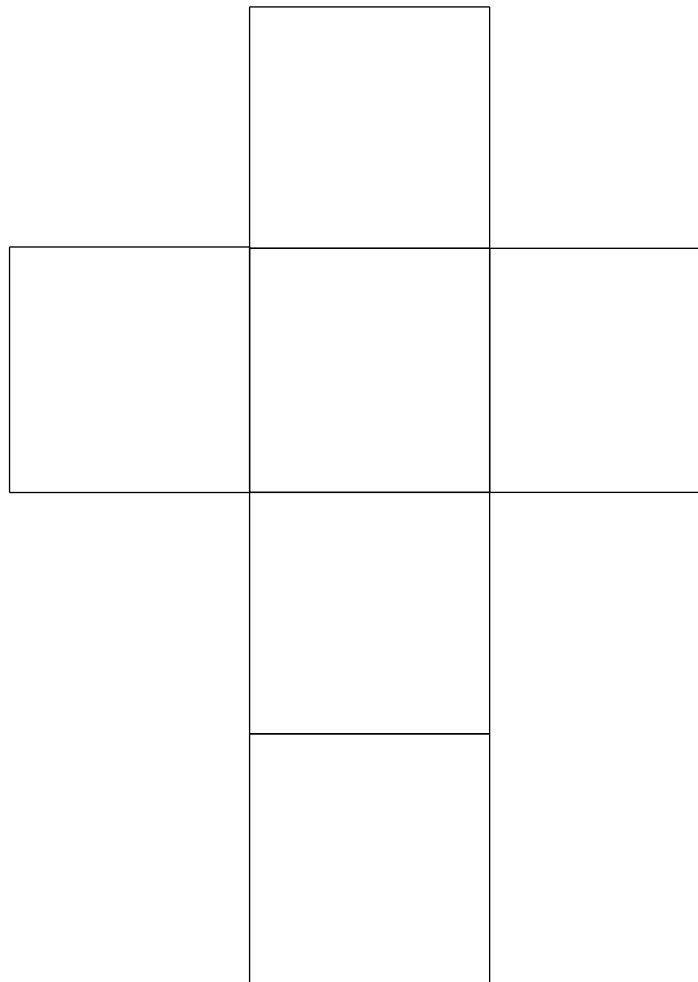
How to play

Ask children to discuss what they think are the main themes of the play and put up their suggestions on the Interactive White Board. Ask children to choose six themes and write these on the outside squares of the cube net, adding dramatic backgrounds, designs and colours.

If needed, prompt for some of the following themes:

Magic	Love
Transformation	Trickery
Chaos	Nature
Journeys	Dreams
Reality	Order

Make, display and discuss.



Activity 5

Magical Designs

Resources needed

Magazine pictures and scrap paper

To be torn into small pieces for collage work.

How to play

Fairies are tiny creatures with butterfly wings – or are they? How would you describe a modern-day fairy or magic-maker. Write a short description of a magic-maker that could exist today and draw their picture. Turn your picture into a collage.

Activity 6

Diary Date

Resources needed

English workbook

How to play

Ask children to write a fictitious diary entry from the point of view of one of the characters in the play. Use the following guidelines:

1. Hermia's Diary. Imagine that it is a year after Hermia's wedding day. What is happening in her life now?
2. Bottom's Diary. Bottom has returned to his job as a weaver but has dreams of being a professional actor. How will he make his dream come true?
3. Theseus' Diary. Tired of ruling Athens, Theseus has decided to retire and live in the woods. How does he fill his days?
4. Titania's Diary. Titania has discovered that she has a most unusual power. Write about her new power and what effect it has on people.
5. Puck's Diary. Puck is a naughty sprite and decides to appear in a London primary school in 2008 and cause havoc. Write his diary entry describing all the chaos caused during the day.

Activity 7

Tudor Times

Resources needed

Internet access and research time

How to play

The tradesmen in the company of actors (mechanicals) have jobs that were common in Shakespeare's day: weaver, tailor, bellows-mender, carpenter, joiner. Ask children to research the nature of these jobs and other work that people did in Tudor times. Arrange for this research to be presented back to the class, supported by visual images, artefacts etc.

Ask the class to reflect upon the Tudor life and times.

MINISCENE 2 - THE LOVERS LEAVE

Lysander Steal forth thy father's house tomorrow night,
and in the wood there will I stay for thee.

Hermia Tomorrow, truly will I meet with thee.

(enter Helena)

Helena Teach me how you look, and with what art
You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart.

Hermia The more I hate the more he follows me

Helena The more I love, the more he hateth me.

Hermia Take comfort. He no more shall see my face.

(Exit Hermia and Lysander)

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

MINI SCENE THREE - THE QUARREL

Fairy Our Queen and all her elves comes here anon.

Puck The King doth keep his revels here tonight.
 Take heed the Queen come not within his sight.

(enter Oberon and Titania separately. They see each other)

Oberon Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.

Titania What, jealous Oberon?

Oberon Why should Titania cross her Oberon?
 I do but beg a little changeling boy
 To be my henchman.

Titania Not for thy fairy kingdom!

MINI SCENE FIVE - IN THE WOOD

Lysander We'll rest us Hermia, if you think it good.

Hermia Good night sweet friend.

(They sleep. Enter Puck)

Puck Who is here?
Weeds of Athens he doth wear.

*(Puck puts juice on Lysander's eyes.
Enter Demetrius and Helena)*

Demetrius I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.
I am sick when I do look on thee.

Helena And I am sick when I look not on thee.

(Lysander wakes up and sees Helena)

Lysander Not Hermia but Helena I love.

MINISCENE 6 - MORE CONFUSION

Oberon What hast thou done? Thou hast mistaken quite.
(to Puck)

*(Oberon puts juice on Demetrius' eyes.
He wakes and sees Helena)*

Demetrius Oh Helen, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine.

Lysander I do hate Hermia and love Helena.

Helena Oh spite, oh hell, I see you all are bent
 To set against me for your merriment.

Hermia You thief of love!

(They fight. Helena runs away)

Puck Lord, what fools these mortals be.

MINI SCENE SEVEN- THE REHEARSAL

Bottom Are we all met?

Quince Here's a marvellous convenient place for our
 rehearsal.

Snout Come, sit down and rehearse your parts.

Puck What hempen homespuns have we here
 So near the cradle of the fairy queen?

(Puck puts an asses head on Bottom)

Snout O monstrous! O strange! We are haunted!

(they run away)

Titania What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?

THE PLAY WITHIN THE PLAY

This man is Pyramus if you would know
This beauteous lady Thisbe is certain

This man with lime and rough cast doth present
Wall, that vile wall which did these lovers sunder

And through wall's chink, poor souls, they are content
To whisper, at the which let no man wonder.

This man, with lantern, dog and bush of thorn,
Presenteth moonshine, for, if you will know,

By moonshine did these lovers think no scorn
To meet at Ninus' tomb, there, there to woo.

This grisly beast, which Lion hight by name
The trusty Thisbe, coming first by night,
Did scare away, or rather did affright;

And as she fled, her mantle she did fall
Which lion vile with bloody mouth did stain.

Anon comes Pyramus, sweet youth and tall,
And finds his trusty Thisbe's mantle slain;

Whereat with blade, with bloody blameful blade
He bravely broach'd his boiling bloody breast

And Thisbe, tarrying in mulberry shade
Then saw her love, her dagger drew, and died.