

# Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream Lesson Ideas

## #1 Character Web

An interesting but potentially confusing thing in A Midsummer Night's Dream is the tangled web of relationships that goes on throughout the play. For this reason, it makes for an excellent example of a character web.

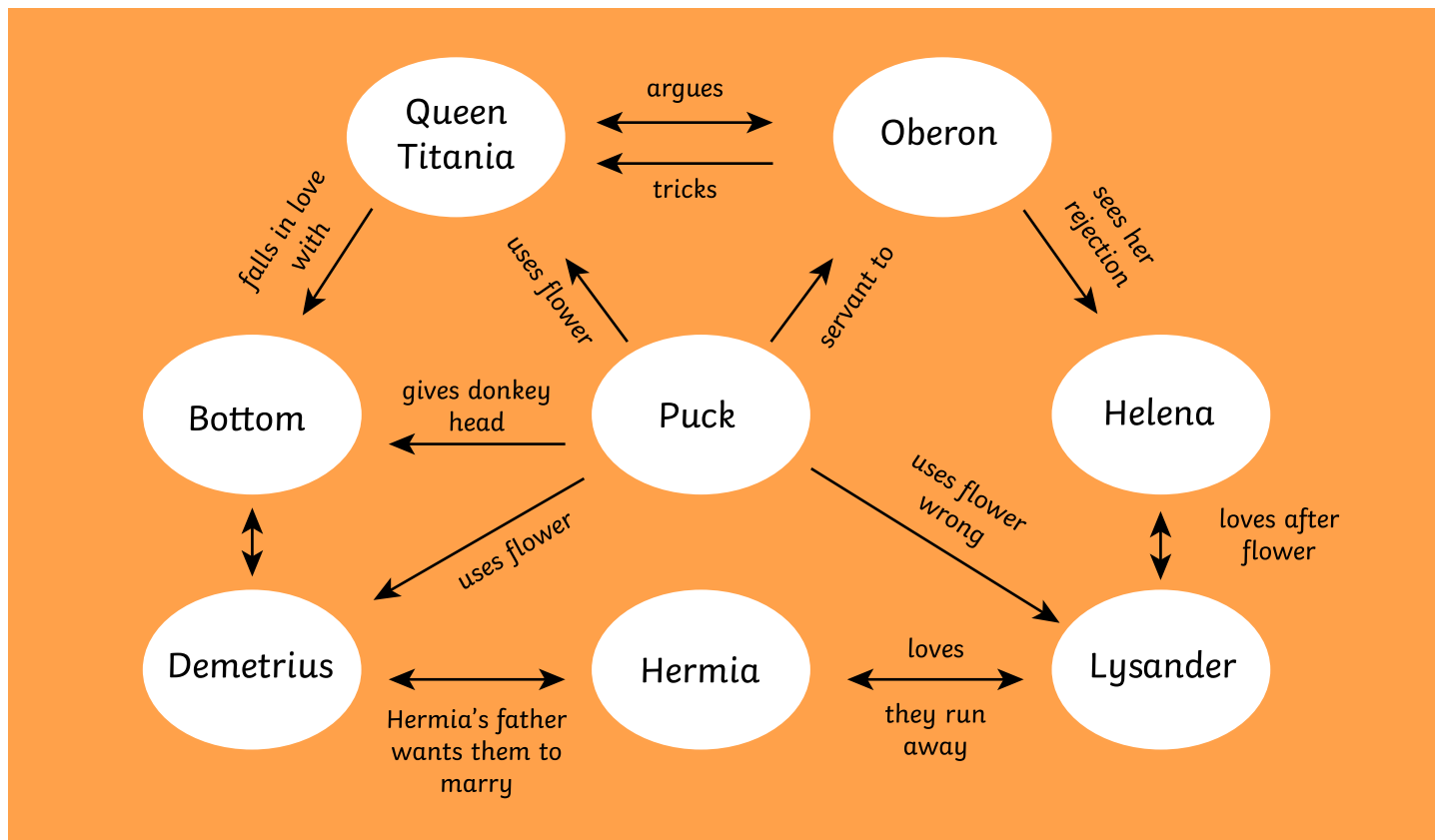
Children plan first on a whiteboard or rough piece of paper where characters are placed as this can have different effects on how the lines of the web fit with each other.

### What to include:

- all the main characters
- what main actions occur in the play
- what their relationships are
- arrows where the direction is important

Here's an example of a simple character web for A Midsummer Night's Dream.

This shows clearly that Puck is in the centre of the tangled web.



# Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream Lesson Ideas

## #2 Set Design

Children can draw and even make 3D versions of the set design for the play.

It would also be good to do some research on the job of a set designer, as if you were considering it as a career path.

### Thoughts:

Firstly, use the planning sheet to write down initial ideas and create a mood board through drawing or collage. Here are some ideas and guidance to get you started:

- Style and tone: Magical? Eco? Natural? Earthy?
- Mood and atmosphere: Dark? Moody? Magical? Night time?
- Physical items:
  - clearing for play rehearsal
  - Queen Titania's bed
  - sleeping area for Hermia and Lysander
  - path through the wood and to the city
  - trees
  - flowers
- Colours: Browns? Greens? Pinks? Earthy colours? Pastel colours? Vibrant colours?
- Textures: Leafy? Rough? Natural? Smooth?
- Key words: Nature? Magical? Fairies? Flowers? Leaves? Queen? Fairy lights?



### Sketches:

Once the planning sheet has been completed, children should create a 2D drawing of the scene which is labelled in detail with materials, sizes, etc.

### Modelling:

If you want to take this activity further, children can make a 3D model of their set. This is called a 'maquette' by set designers and is a miniature version of the set.

This can be done using a cardboard shoe box with one side cut out, forming a base to work on.

However, you can also make more substantial maquettes using a piece of wood for the base and creating wire trees and other pieces, which are fixed to the base. These can then be covered with plaster of Paris modelling bandage to add a top, smoother layer which will then set hard. This can all then be painted, varnished and decorated as necessary.

# Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream

## Set Design Planning

Style and tone: \_\_\_\_\_

Mood and atmosphere: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Physical items: \_\_\_\_\_

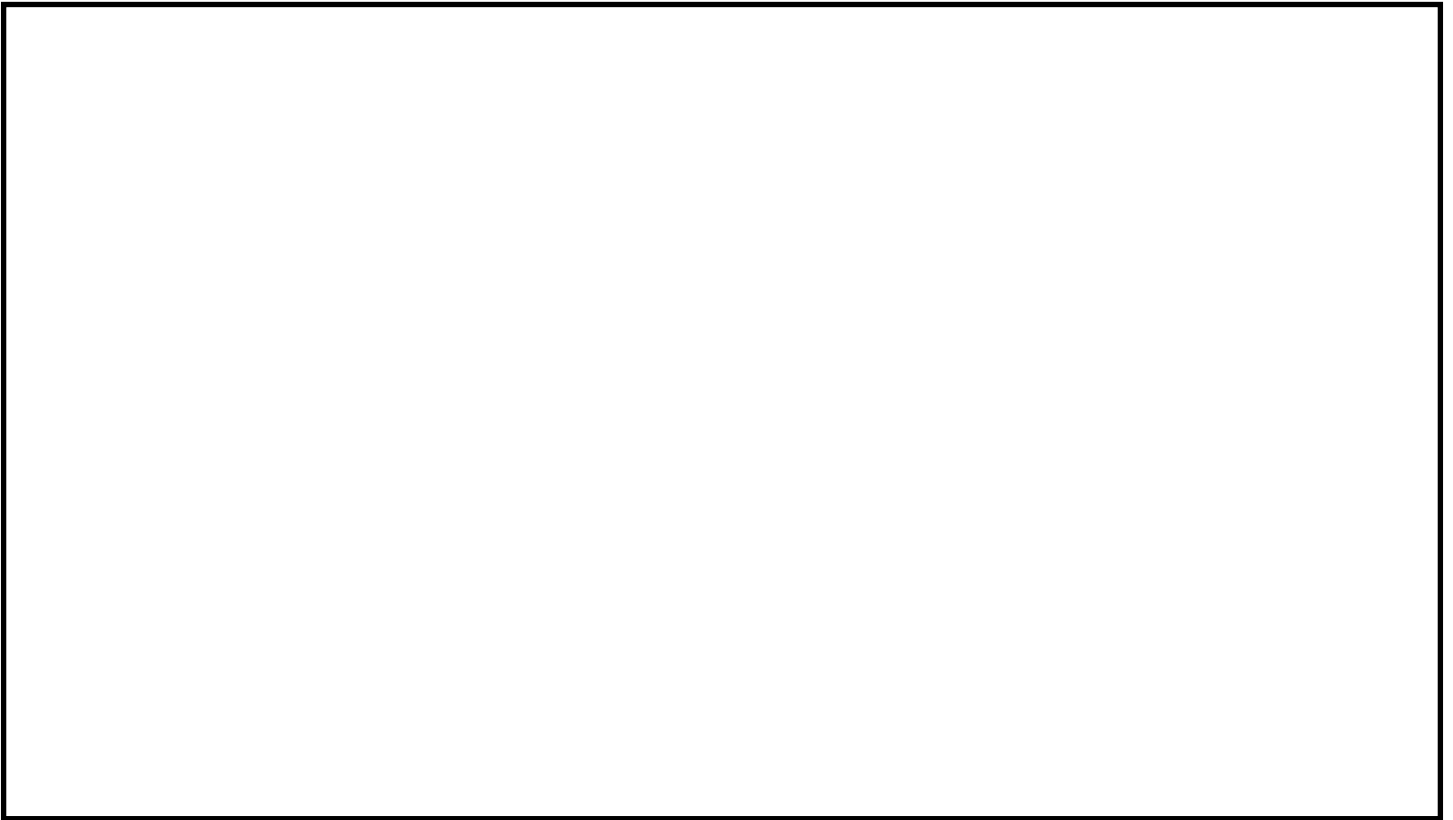
\_\_\_\_\_

Colours: \_\_\_\_\_

Textures: \_\_\_\_\_

Key words: \_\_\_\_\_

## Mood Board



# Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream Lesson Ideas

## #3 Costume Design

Children could go so far as to turn this into an art or design technology project or simply make this a paper exercise.

It would also be good to do some research on the job of a costume designer as if considering it for a career path. On a real production, the costume designer would:

- Read the script, discuss your ideas with the production, director, make-up, set and lighting designers;
- Create costume ideas to fit the production's overall look and budget;
- Research appropriate costume styles, fabrics and designs;
- Sketch costume designs;
- Give instructions to costume makers, who would turn your sketches into reality.

For this activity you might want children (depending on ability and time constraints) to create one costume for one character, two costumes for a pair of linked characters or the whole set of costumes that all fit together in the same themes.

### Thoughts:

Firstly, use the planning sheet to write down initial ideas and create a mood board through drawing or collage. Here are some ideas and guidance to get you started:

- Style and tone: Magical? Eco? Natural? Earthy?
- Mood and atmosphere: Dark? Moody? Magical? Night time?
- Fabrics: netting? Silky? Rough hessian? Frayed edging?
- Colours: Browns? Greens? Pinks? Earthy colours? Pastel colours? Vibrant colours?
- Textures: Leafy? Rough? Natural? Smooth?
- Key words: Nature? Magical? Fairies? Flowers? Leaves? Queen?
- Do you want the real pairings of characters to have a coloured link in their costumes to avoid the tangled web of confusion in the play?

### Sketches:

Once the planning sheet has been done, children should create a 2D sketches of the costumes.

Use pencil crayon or careful water colour washes over pencil shading to colour the designs.

Remember to label your sketches with design instruction such as types of fabrics and any other details.

### Modelling:

Particularly artistic children may also want to make 3D models of their costumes on small dummies or mannequins.

# Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream

## Costume Design Planning

Style and tone: \_\_\_\_\_

Mood and atmosphere: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Fabrics: \_\_\_\_\_

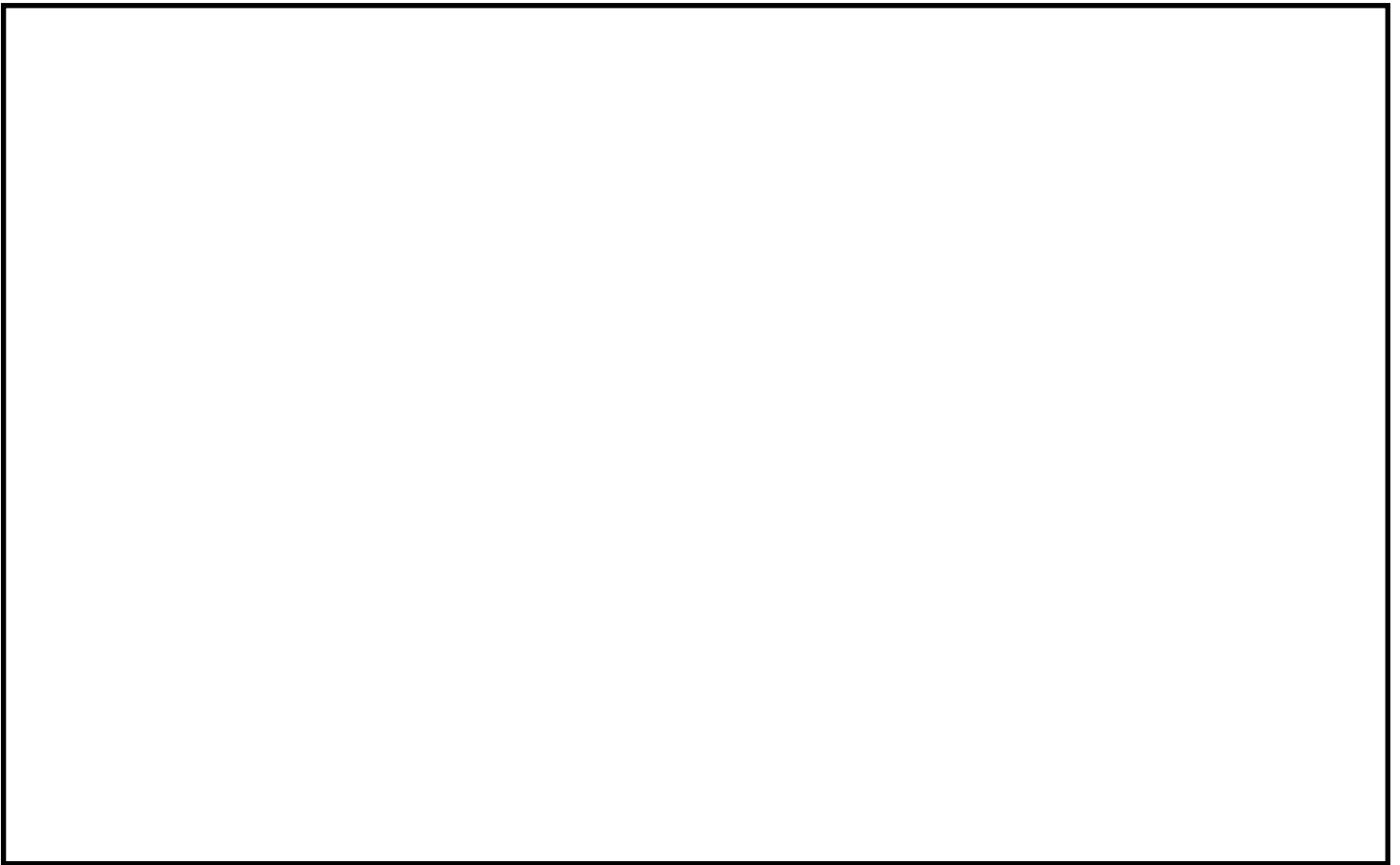
\_\_\_\_\_

Colours: \_\_\_\_\_

Textures: \_\_\_\_\_

Key words: \_\_\_\_\_

### Mood Board

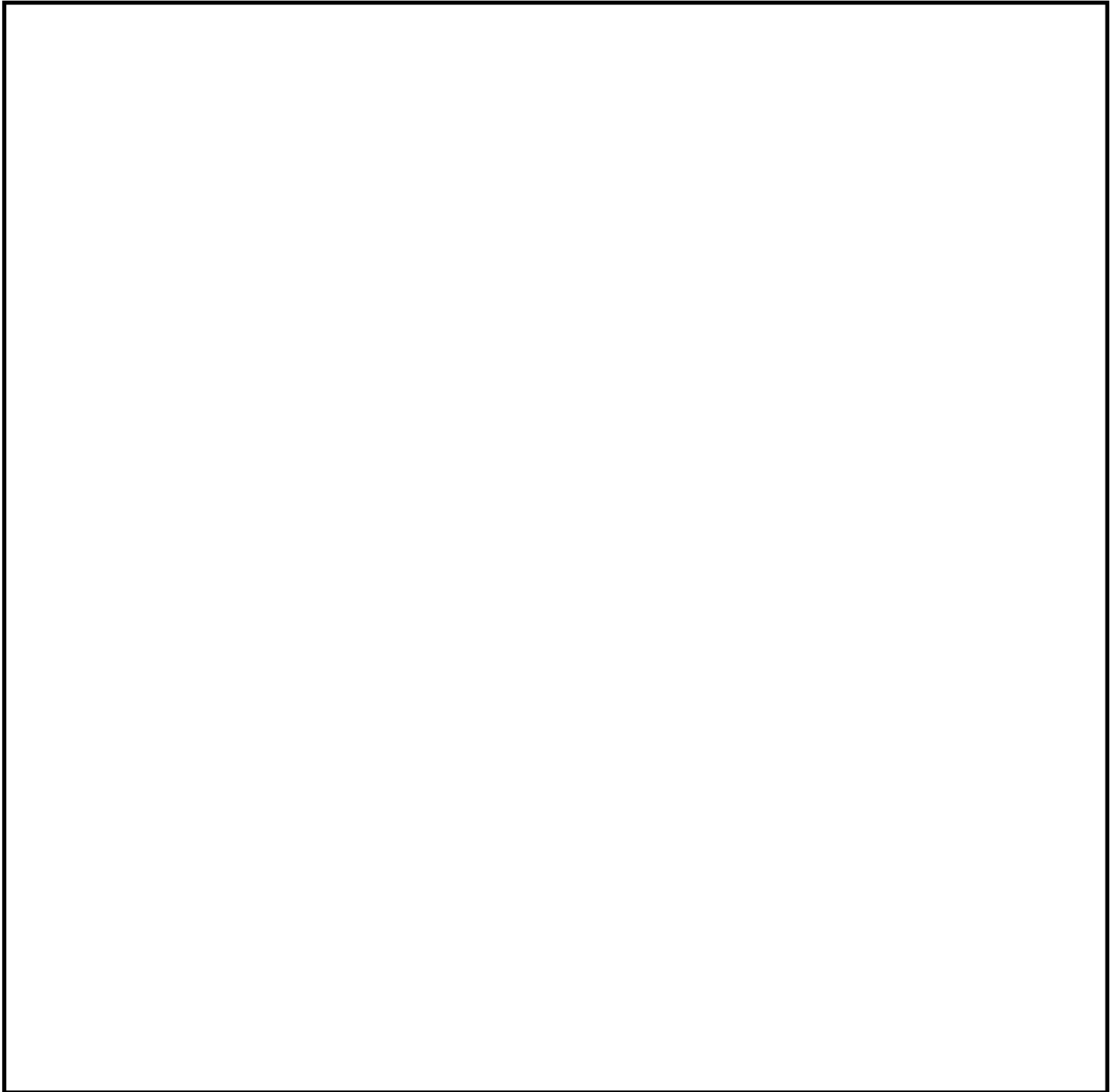


# Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream

## My Costume Design

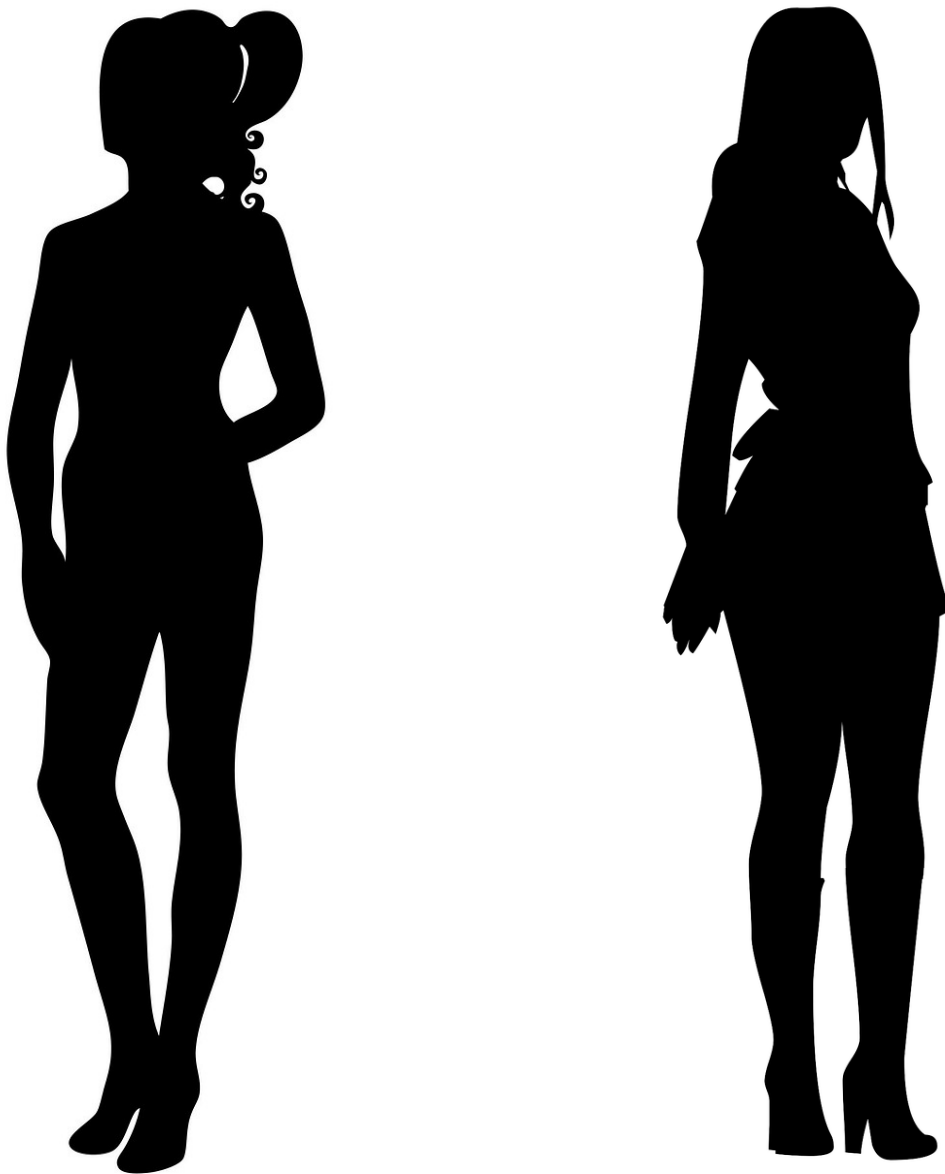
Character: \_\_\_\_\_

Character key words: \_\_\_\_\_

A large empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for a student to draw their costume design for a character from Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream.

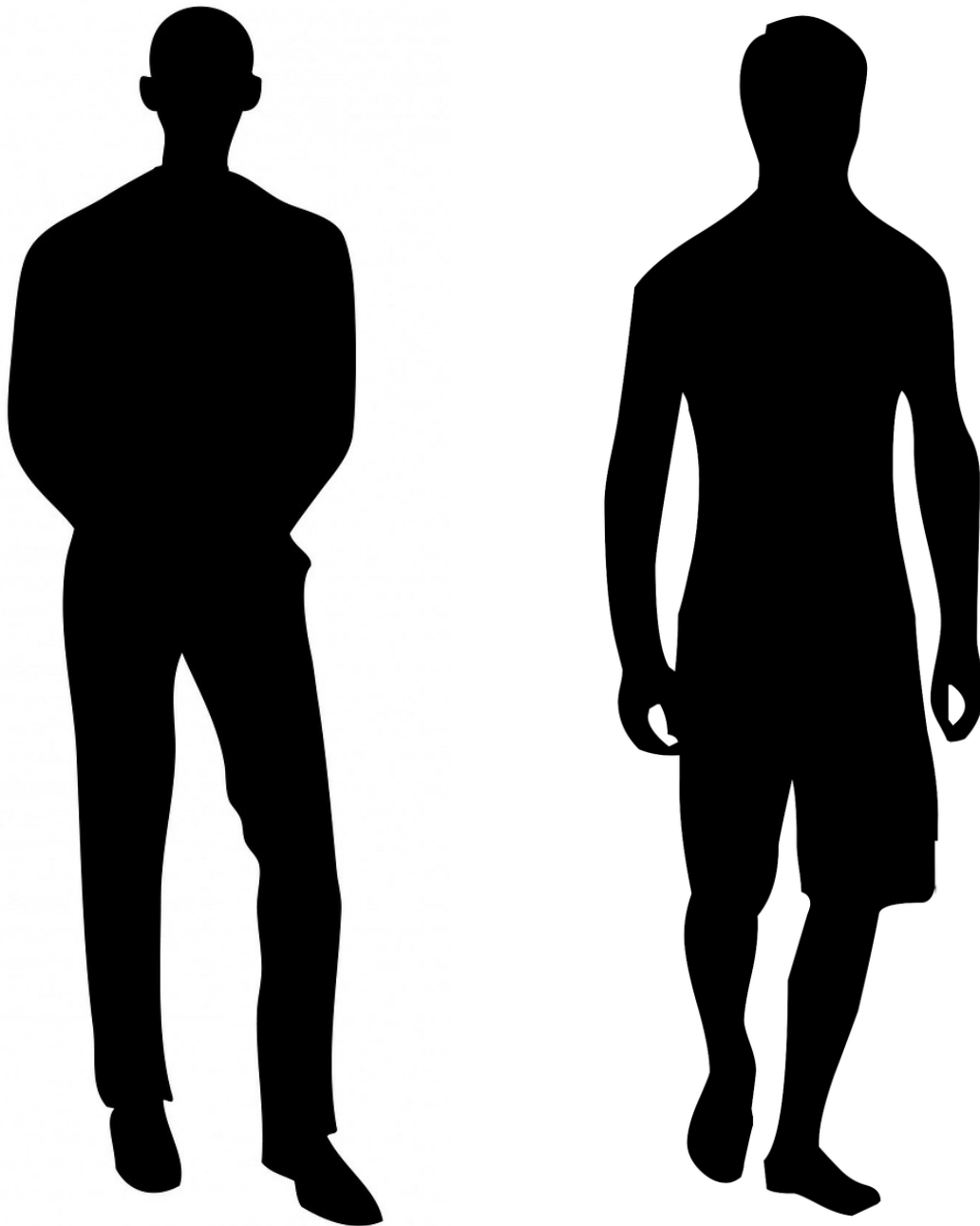
# Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream

Costume Design- Female Outlines for Tracing if Needed



# Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream

Costume Design- Male Outlines for Tracing if Needed





# Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream Lesson Ideas

## #4 Bottom's Dream

When Bottom has turned back to normal after having a donkey's head, he thinks about what has just happened and suggests that it would make a good story in itself. He says that he should get the writer, Quince, to write it up.

So, over to the children to take up the role of Quince here...

Task: Write a short story entitled 'Bottom's Dream'.

OR

Task: Draw a montage to depict 'Bottom's Dream'.



Think about the key things that we know about Nick Bottom:

(You might want to get the children to compile this list first.)

- He is a weaver by trade.
- He enjoys being the centre of attention (he wanted to play all the parts in the play).
- The magic happened in the magical wood.
- Puck performed the magic.
- He found himself to have a donkey's head.
- Queen Titania fell in love with him (after having the magic flower in her eyes).
- He plays the part of Pyramus in the play they are rehearsing.
- Puck returns his normal head – eventually.

It could be written in a number of different ways:

- a diary entry written from the point of view of Bottom in first person;
- a short story written in the third person;
- a poem with a refrain.

# Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream Lesson Ideas

## #5 Botanical Study of the Flower

Central to the plot of A Midsummer Night's Dream is the magical flower. Children could play the part of serious botanists, who have discovered this flower and are writing their findings.

Commonly-used flowers for this are magical dandelion clock-looking flowers or roses so they might be good starting points.

Use the writing frame on the next page to do the botanical report by:

- Using the large area to do a detailed drawing as a botanist would. Use examples from the internet or this one of a strawberry.
- Giving the flower a common name (the one we would use every day) and also an official Latin name. For example the 'strawberry' is the name we use every day and its Latin name is 'Fragaria ananassa'.
- Adding other notes:
  - 'Found' is the area/habitat where the flower can be found growing.
  - 'Season' is the times/months when it flowers.
  - 'Notes' for any extra information.
- Classifying the flower using a taxonomy. There are two versions of the writing frame with and without the taxonomy to enable you to differentiate within your class.



Useful taxonomies that you might find helpful to replicate up to 'species':

	Dandelion (clock)	Tea Rose
Kingdom	Plantae	Plantae
Phylum	Tracheophyta	Angiosperms
Class	Anthophyta	Eudicots
Order	Asterales	Malvales
Family	Compositae	Malvalceae
Genus	Taraxacum	Hibiscus
Species	officinale	rose-sinensis

You can find other taxonomies on the internet if children use other flowers such as irises for inspiration.

# Botanical Study of the A Midsummer Night's Dream Flower

Common name: \_\_\_\_\_

Latin name: \_\_\_\_\_

Description: \_\_\_\_\_

## Taxonomy

Domain: \_\_\_\_\_

Kingdom: \_\_\_\_\_

Phylum: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Order: \_\_\_\_\_

Family: \_\_\_\_\_

Genus: \_\_\_\_\_

Species: \_\_\_\_\_

Found: \_\_\_\_\_

Season: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

# Botanical Study of the A Midsummer Night's Dream Flower

Common name: \_\_\_\_\_

Latin name: \_\_\_\_\_

Description: \_\_\_\_\_

Found: \_\_\_\_\_

Season: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

# Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream Lesson Ideas

## #6 Speech Bubble Tableau

1. In groups, choose a scene from the play to freeze frame and make a tableau with children taking on the characters. Remember body language and facial expressions. Good moments to use within this play are:
  - When the queen wakes up the second time and realises what has happened.  
Characters: Queen Titania, Oberon, Bottom, any other fairies.
  - When Hermia fights with Helena.  
Characters: Helena, Hermia, Lysander, Demetrius.
  - When Duke Theseus tells Hermia she must marry Demetrius.  
Characters: Duke Theseus, Helena, Demetrius, Lysander and Hermia.
2. Children must also think about one line of speech or thought that their character might say at this time.
3. Children show their tableaux to the rest of the class and the teacher can take the part of 'vox popping' each character during the freeze frame as to what they are thinking. The rest of the class could also pose questions to the frozen characters.

### Written / Display work:

Children can use the template to draw their tableau with speech bubbles or thought bubbles for each of the characters. Then the finished sheets can be put together into a booklet or comic strip frieze around the classroom. This can be done as individuals, pairs or groups.