Folger Method Express: Teaching *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* right now and quickly.

Folger Method Express: Teaching *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*

Resources

- 20-minute play: *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* ................................................................. 2
- Line Tossing: *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* ................................................................ 5
- Two-Line Scenes: *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* ............................................................. 6
- Focus Scenes and Speeches for *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* ......................................... 7
- Close Reading a Soliloquy: Helena Act 3 Scene 2 .............................................................. 9
- Promptbook: Play within a Play ....................................................................................... 11
- Images/Illustration Study ............................................................................................... 12

*Special thanks for the curation of this Folger Method Express bundle to:*
*Debbie Gascon, HS Teacher, South Carolina*
*Greta Brasgalla, Assistant Principal, Texas*

Stay Connected. Tweet us @FolgerED

For the latest Folger Education News and Updates: Join BardNotes

Questions/Comments? Please email folgereducation@folger.edu

Folger SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY EDUCATION
20-minute play: A Midsummer Night’s Dream

WHY DO THIS ACTIVITY? Giving students the plot upfront frees them up to focus on the most important thing: the language! Twenty-minute plays also get students working collaboratively in high-energy, low-stakes groups to own bite-size language from the play. Right from the start, students develop a sense of ownership over the words and their ability to interpret them for themselves. This essential practice lays the foundation for what’s ahead!

HOW TO DO THIS ACTIVITY? Assign each student a line to practice. If you want to give this to them a day before for them to practice or get props, that is an option. When having a class video meeting, the teacher reads the narrator part and then calls on the number for the line. The student then says the line (with props or not). Afterward, use the chat feature to have students share some of the lines that were memorable/questionable/interesting. Have students begin to create the plot through what they remember. You can also have teams of students write a plot summary with quotations if your class has already started the play. It’s important to keep the summary very short and simple—otherwise, there is too much narrative in proportion to performed quotations.

Once upon a time in Athens . . . in the court, in the forest, and in fairyland . . . there is A LOT going on [1. THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE NEVER DID RUN SMOOTH!] In MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM, there’s … happiness/unhappiness, love/anger, confusion, fear, and even a pissed off parent … just like real life, right? Oh, and there’s also revenge, mischief, and magic [2. LORD, WHAT FOOLS THESE MORTALS BE!]

Theseus, the Duke of Athens, is about to get married to Hippolyta, the Amazon Queen [3. I WOOED THEE WITH MY SWORD . . . BUT NOW I WILL WED THEE . . . WITH POMP, WITH TRIUMPH, AND WITH REVELING!]

Also in Athens, Egeus is furious with his daughter, Hermia [4. FULL OF VEXATION COME I, WITH COMPLAINT AGAINST MY CHILD!]. He wants his daughter to marry Demetrius but she’s in love with some other guy named Lysander. Egeus tells the Duke [5. AS SHE IS MINE, I MAY DISPOSE OF HER, WHICH SHALL BE EITHER TO [DEMETRIUS] ... OR TO HER DEATH!]. Hermia has four days to decide her fate.

So here’s the “tea” (or situation):

Hermia loves Lysander and Lysander loves Hermia [6. I SWEAR TO THEE BY CUPID’S STRONGEST BOW].
Hermia’s BFF Helena loves Demetrius, but... Demetrius loves Hermia [7. THE MORE I LOVE, THE MORE HE HATETH ME!]

And NOBODY loves Helena [8. I AM YOUR SPANIEL!]

Meanwhile, a group of workmen are preparing to perform a play about doomed love for the Duke and Hippolyta’s wedding. And they begin to practice [9. IS ALL OUR COMPANY HERE?] They have the whole discussion about who plays whom [10. WHAT IS PYRAMUS—A LOVER OR A TYRANT?] and they schedule their next rehearsal [11. WE WILL MEET AND THERE WE WILL REHEARSE MOST OBSCENELY AND COURAGEOUSLY!]

There’s a lot going on in the play, and we’re just getting started!

In the fairy kingdom, Oberon and Titania, king and queen of the fairies, are arguing over a darling orphaned little boy. Each wants to take care of him. Titania won’t bend to Oberon’s will, and it makes him so angry. He says [12. AM NOT I THY LORD?] And she says [13. I WILL NOT PART WITH HIM!] Oberon’s not happy and wants revenge.

In the forest, we meet Puck (a.k.a. Robin Goodfellow), who is kind of Oberon’s minion [14. I AM THAT MERRY WANDERER OF THE NIGHT!]. When the lovers escape to the forest to straighten things out, Puck starts working the fairy magic. But mistakes are made. Things get all mixed up [15. I LOVE THEE NOT! THEREFORE PURSUE ME NOT!] and [16. GODDESS, NYMPH, PERFECT, DIVINE!] and [17. VILE THING, LET LOOSE!] and [18. I YIELD YOU UP MY HEART]. There’s also a pretty epic fight [19. YOU JUGGLER! YOU CANKERBLOSSOM! YOU THIEF OF LOVE!] and [20. I AM NOT YET SO LOW BUT THAT MY NAILS CAN REACH UNTO THINE EYES]. It’s all a big mess!

And through all of this... those workmen keep rehearsing that play! They worry about all kinds of things. [21. WILL NOT THE LADIES BE AFEARED OF THE LION?] and the set [22. YOU CAN NEVER BRING IN A WALL!]

Puck helps Oberon get revenge on Titania: he turns one of the workmen-actors into a kind of ass (a donkey kind of ass), causing the workmen to say [23. O MONSTROUS! O STRANGE! WE ARE HAUNTED!]. But the Fairy Queen falls in love with the ass. She says [24. I WILL WIND THEE IN MY ARMS].
All the happy stuff comes right at the end: Titania and Oberon make up [25. METHOUGHT I WAS ENAMORED OF AN ASS!] The lovers are happily arranged [26. MY LOVE, MY LIFE, MY SOUL, FAIR HELENA!] and there’s a triple wedding! Finally, Hermia’s father can relax.

Then it’s time for the play by the workmen! In the play, there’s a fabulous death [27. THUS I DIE . . . NOW AM I DEAD. NOW AM I FLED . . . NOW DIE, DIE, DIE, DIE, DIE!] And everyone obeys Theseus’ last command [28. SWEET FRIENDS, TO BED!]
Line Tossing: A Midsummer Night’s Dream

WHY DO THIS ACTIVITY? This activity helps students connect with the language in a quick and active way. By engaging in Shakespeare’s words in an active and experiential way, students will come to own the lines and deepen the readings and interpretations of the text. This activity scaffolds the language and serves as a bridge to the language of longer, more complex excerpts of the text.

HOW TO DO THIS ACTIVITY? Give students different lines to read aloud. You can assign them before your video class meeting or just randomly put them into the chat and call on students to say the line. You can use tone words to have students say the line with different tones and explore the change in meaning. Have students predict where the lines fit into the plot you sketched out from the 20-minute version.

The course of true love never did run smooth.

Lord, what fools these mortals be!

Though she be but little, she is fierce!

I give him curses, yet he gives me love.

Be as thou wast wont to be.

I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.

O, I am out of breath in this fond chase!

Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.

My soul is in the sky.

O monstrous! O strange! We are haunted!

Take pains. Be perfect.

So quick bright things come to confusion.

The more I love, the more he hateth me!

Do I entice you? Do I speak you fair?

You, in my respect, are all the world.

My mistress with a monster is in love.

I swear to thee by Cupid’s strongest bow!

Vile thing, let loose!

How now spirit? Whither wander you?

Methought I was enamored of an ass!

This is the silliest stuff that ever I heard.

You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant!

I am sick when I do look on thee

I charge thee, hence, and do not haunt me thus.
Two-Line Scenes: A Midsummer Night’s Dream

WHY DO THIS ACTIVITY? Similar to line tossing, two-line scenes help students connect with the language in a quick and active way. Not only does this essential get a line from Shakespeare into a student’s mouth, but it also gets that student interacting with another classmate.

HOW TO DO THIS ACTIVITY? If you can use a breakout feature, assign students to do two-line scenes with one another. Each student takes a line and connects it with the other line to create a short scene. Students must read their lines with feeling and should add gestures and/or movement. Another option is to assign two-lines to each student and have them work with someone at home (a family member, puppet, pet, avatar) to create the scene.

*For these lines in addition to the lines from the Line Tossing activity.

Full of vexation come I with complaint against my child!

O that your frowns would teach my smiles such skill!

I’ll follow thee and make a heaven of hell To die upon the hand I love so well.

And yet, to say the truth, reason and love keep little company together nowadays.

Lovers and madmen have such seething brains...

The lunatic, the lover, and the poet, are of imagination all compact.

O, when she's angry, she is keen and shrewd!

Love's stories written in love's richest books.

Thus I die. Thus, thus, thus. Now I am dead, Now I am fled, My soul is in the sky.

O me, you juggler, you canker-blossom, you thief of love!

One sees more devils than vast hell can hold!

Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind.

Nay! Faith, let me not play a woman! I have a beard coming!

O spite! O hell! I see you all are bent To set against me for your merriment.
Focus Scenes and Speeches for *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*

**WHY DO THIS?** The focus scenes and spotlight speeches below offer a rich environment for the studying of characters, literary terms, motifs, and, most importantly, the language. These scenes can be assigned to be read with an audio version and can be supplemented with video as well. After students read the scenes, they can respond to teacher-created questions (these would depend upon the grade/levels you teach and your focus).

**HOW TO DO THIS?** Some options include: 1) Have students preview the scene and then assign parts in your whole group meeting. Read aloud and have questions in the chat. 2) Have students read then watch the Folger Theatre *Macbeth* performance. Then, choose selected parts of the scene to read aloud as a group. Use the chat box or discussion time to focus on specific student objectives. 3) Assign different groups to discuss each scene. They should have notes prepared and will run the classroom conference/chat feature. The spotlight speeches can be done synchronously or asynchronously. Students can annotate and share their annotations or write in a group document.

**ACT 1**

1.1.1-84: Initial exposition; Theseus and Hippolyta Wedding. Lovers introduced.

**Spotlight Speeches:** These can be done synchronously or asynchronously. Students can annotate and share their annotation or do in a group project.

- **Egeus 1.1.23-46:** Disobedient daughter speech
- **Lysander 1.1.158-170:** Lysander and Hermia discuss elopement
- **Helena 1.1.232-257:** Helena bemoans her lovesickness

**ACT 2**

2.1.121-194: Theseus and Hippolyta argue

2.2: Puck makes the potion

**Spotlight Speech:**

- **Oberon 2.1.256-275:** Instructions for the love potion

**ACT 3**

3.1.122-184: Bottom falls under the spell of Titania

3.2.37-93: Oberon and Puck see what Puck has done to Hermia and Demetrius

3.2.241-370: The lovers argue, and Puck sees his mistake

**Spotlight Speech:**

- **Puck 3.2.6-36:** Puck reports his mischief to Oberon
ACT 4

4.1.76-96: Oberon and Titania make up
4.1.133-205: The lovers are given forgiveness

Spotlight Speech:
- Oberon 4.1.47-76: Oberon feels guilty about Titania
- Demetrius 4.1.167-183: Demetrius makes his case for Helena’s love
  Bottom 4.2.34-45: Bottom’s instructions to actors (compare to Hamlet’s ‘speak the speech’ advice)

ACT 5

5.1.114-364: Pyramus and Thisbe

Spotlight Speech:
- Oberon/Puck 5.1.418-end: Magic spells for the newly wedded couples

**Instead of just choosing 5 scenes in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, we’ve chosen a few more but cut them significantly. We’ve cut the mechanicals (horror!) thinking perhaps these may be supplemented with video.**
Close Reading a Soliloquy: Helena Act 3 Scene 2

WHY DO THIS? Soliloquies are full of possibilities. Getting students inside a soliloquy can lead to all kinds of deep reading and surprising discoveries about the words, characters, and big questions of the play.

HOW TO DO THIS? You can have students use Flipgrid or TikTok to show what the scene might look like. Students can then view a video version after creating their own promptbooks to compare.

Helena has some of the best speeches in the play.

Helena 3.2.148-164: Helena thinks Demetrius is making fun of her

| HELENA |
| O spite! O hell! I see you all are bent  |
| To set against me for your merriment. |
| If you were civil and knew courtesy, |
| You would not do me thus much injury. |
| Can you not hate me, as I know you do, |
| But you must join in souls to mock me too? |
| If you were men, as men you are in show, |
| You would not use a gentle lady so, |
| To vow and swear and superpraise my parts, |
| When, I am sure, you hate me with your hearts. |
| You both are rivals and love Hermia, |
| And now both rivals to mock Helena. |
| A trim exploit, a manly enterprise, |
| To conjure tears up in a poor maid’s eyes |
| With your derision! None of noble sort |
| Would so offend a virgin and extort |
| A poor soul’s patience, all to make you sport. |
Helena 3.2.197-224: Helena continues to berate Hermia

A Midsummer Night’s Dream

ACT 3. SC. 2

HELENA

Lo, she is one of this confederacy!
Now I perceive they have conjoined all three
To fashion this false sport in spite of me.—
Injurious Hermia, most ungrateful maid,
Have you conspired, have you with these contrived,
To bait me with this foul derision?
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 all forgot?
All schooldays’ 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 grew together
Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,
But yet an union in partition,
Two lovely berries molded 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.
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.
Promptbook: Play within a Play

WHY DO THIS? The Banquet scene with Banquo’s ghost has lots of characters and lots of movement that would need to be examined for it to work onstage. Doing a promptbook allows students to justify movements onstage that work with the action in the scene.

HOW TO DO THIS? Have students create a GoogleDoc by pasting the text on the left and then putting production notes on the right side or by using the comments feature. You can also have students use Flipgrid or TikTok to show what the scene might look like. Students can then view a video version after creating their own promptbooks to compare.

Two scenes in the play require students to really grapple with many actors on stage at once:

- **Act 2.2**: The lovers, Titania, and Puck all get into mischief in the forest
- **Act 5.1**: Pyramus and Thisbe play within a play

The remainder of the scene can be downloaded for FREE from *The Folger Shakespeare* texts
Images/Illustration Study

WHY DO THIS ACTIVITY: Providing images to the students helps them see the characters in the play, envision the scenes, determine tone, mood, power, emotion by making connections between the language and the images, and also to help with interpretations of the play or analyze other possible interpretations of scenes. The visuals can be a jumping off point for students to start thinking about the play, an extension of a scene, or a post-reading discussion about the play.

HOW TO DO THIS ACTIVITY: There are many options to use the images with students. Ask students to:

- Match lines from the play with an image (can use Google doc, Padlet or Adobe Spark)
- Put images in order of the plot of the play
- Write a tone and/or mood word(s) that they feel is implied in the image
- Analyze the power in the scene: who has the power? Who is dominant? How can you tell? Justify.
- Analyze the clothing choices in the image. What do they imply? Look at the colors the artist chose (white? Sign of purity?) and justify why the artist made those decisions.
- If you’re also doing a vocab study, have students label the scene with vocab words
- Compare two similar scenes, such as the tomb scenes. How are they the same? Different? Why? What effects do these differences have on the feeling the image evokes?
- Create a tableaux of the scene with objects from around their home (similar to what the Met is doing on Instagram). Can be with people, pet, food, furniture...the sky is the limit!
- Create a hashtag to go with the image (the feelings, the mood, the tone)
- Create a conversation the characters are having that is NOT in the play
- Examine how love or hate or family (or whatever motif you want to discuss) is portrayed in the image. Is it through physical touch? Eye glances? Body language? Really LOOK at the image and decide how they are “speaking” with no words on the page.
- Sketch the scene that comes before or after the image you share with the class.
- Watch Corinne Viglietta’s activity in the April 8th Zoom meeting about how you could use the images via Zoom

How to get the images from Luna, the Folger’s image database:

1. Go to luna.folger.edu.
2. Search in the top right for whatever you are searching for--I did a broad search of Romeo and Juliet.
3. You can click Explore and look at media groups which are folders where people have already sorted and curated images.
4. When you find an image you want to use, click on it. You will see in the top right a button that says EXPORT. Click that and choose to export it how you wish (I exported the ones in this doc as small images. They will download to your Downloads folder (most likely in a zipped folder). Click that folder and the images are in there ready to use.
2020 Teaching During COVID-19 Resource

https://www.folger.edu/teaching-during-covid-19