

Brigham Young University's Young Company Presents

# A Midsummer Night's Dream



Written by: William Shakespeare

## Teacher's Resource Packet

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## **PLAY SYNOPSIS**

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* is one of Shakespeare's most widely performed comedies. Written in the late 1590's, the play follows the adventures of two pairs of young lovers. Both sets enter into the magical forest of Athens, one set in an attempt to secretly marry and the other to chase their "true love." Also within the magical forest is camped a troupe of mechanicals (or actors) who are rehearsing the play that they will be presenting for the wedding feast of the king and queen of Athens, Theseus and Hippolyta. However, as both the couples and the actors go about their business, they soon find that they are not alone. As the fairy king and queen of the forest have an argument, they soon turn to mischief and the unsuspecting trespassers are caught in the middle. After much fumbling and misinterpretation, the fairy king takes mercy on the mortals and places everything back to normal. All ends well, with the couples finding the lovers they truly wanted.

## **OUR ADAPTATION**

Our production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is very unique. Our director, Nat Reed, has adapted the classic Shakespeare text into a 50 minute condensed version. While some character's parts are reduced or shortened, the overall story is consistent with the Shakespeare classic.

An integral component of this production is the use of puppetry! Our director is a highly trained and skilled carpenter and puppeteer. Drawing on this background, Reed has chosen to have many of the characters portrayed by puppets. This creates a unique dynamic and challenge for our actors and we hope it will be entertaining and educational for our audience members.

## **ABOUT THIS RESOURCE PACKET**

This packet includes supplemental activities, including games and handouts to enhance students' viewing experience. The games and activities also include connections with core curricular standards and can be expanded or adapted to better address your individual classroom goals. They also come with clear instructions, contextualization to the play, and discussion questions.

# THEATRE ETIQUETTE

Just like the performers, the audience also has an important role to play. Because some of the students may not have attended a play before, listed below are some guidelines and expectations to help them prepare for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*!

- Remember to use the restroom before the show.
- No photography, please, and be sure to turn off your cellphones.
- Before the play starts, quietly follow the actors' instructions when they are seating you.
- Remember to sit flat on the floor with your legs crossed. This allows everyone to see the actors better and prevents limbs from falling asleep during the show.
- During the show, follow the actors' instructions when you are asked to participate.
- Don't speak with your neighbors during the show. We want everyone to be able to hear the actors.
- Please enjoy the show and laugh when you think it's funny.
- You can (and hopefully will!) clap at the end of the performance.

## CHARACTER LIST:

**Oberon** - The king of the fairies

**Titania** - The beautiful queen of the fairies.

**Puck** - Puck is Oberon's jester, a mischievous fairy who delights in playing pranks on mortals.

**Lysander** - A young man of Athens, in love with Hermia.

**Demetrius** - A young man of Athens, initially in love with Hermia and ultimately in love with Helena.

**Hermia** - Egeus's daughter, a young woman of Athens. Hermia is in love with Lysander and is a childhood friend of Helena.

**Helena** - A young woman of Athens, in love with Demetrius.

**Theseus** - The heroic duke of Athens, engaged to Hippolyta.

**Hippolyta** - The legendary queen of the Amazons, engaged to Theseus.

**Nick Bottom (Puppet in this production)**- The overconfident weaver chosen to play Pyramus in the craftsmen's play for Theseus's marriage celebration.

**Peter Quince (Puppet in this production)**- A carpenter and the nominal leader of the craftsmen's attempt to put on a play for Theseus's marriage celebration.

**Francis Flute (Puppet in this production)**- The bellows-mender chosen to play Thisbe (a girl) in the mechanical's play for Theseus's marriage celebration.

**Robin Starveling (Puppet in this production)**- The tailor chosen to play Thisbe's mother in the craftsmen's play for Theseus's marriage celebration. He ends up playing the part of Moonshine.

**Tom Snout (Puppet in this production)**- The mechanical who ends up playing the part of Wall, the divider of the two lovers.

# ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT:

## INSTRUCTIONS:

Share the following fun facts and information about William Shakespeare by dividing students into groups to read the section or by simply taking turns reading aloud as a class. The following discussion questions can be discussed in groups or as an entire class.



Although many of the details of Shakespeare's life are unknown, it is clear that the playwright made a significant contribution to the world of drama and literature. Here are some fun facts about his life!

- Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon, England in the spring of 1545.
- It is thought that the Greek and Latin stories he studied in grammar school were used for inspiration in writing *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.
- It was very common for Shakespeare to draw on previously told stories or events in creating and writing his plays.
- After moving to London, Shakespeare began writing plays and even acting in a troupe called the Lord Chamberlain's Men. They performed for Queen Elizabeth, who was a great lover of the arts.
- It is believed that Shakespeare authored around 38 plays and over 150 poems and sonnets! That's a lot of writing.
- The first collection of Shakespeare's work was officially published as the First Folio in 1623, seven years after his death.

- It is said that Shakespeare introduced nearly 2,000 words into the English language. Even though we don't use all the words in everyday language, he also introduced commonly used phrases like "one fell swoop," "vanish into thin air," and "flesh and blood."

While scholars agree that is difficult to agree on many of the details of Shakespeare's life, we can turn to the Bard's works to learn more about the life of one of the greatest and most respected playwrights the world has known.



**HERE ARE SOME GREAT QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR STUDENTS ABOUT SHAKESPEARE:**

- Why do you think we don't know a lot about Shakespeare's life?
- Do you think Shakespeare's early life and education influenced his works? Why or why not?
- Why do you think Shakespeare's plays were first published after his death?
- Do you think Shakespeare made a significant contribution to drama and literature?

# **ACTIVITY# 1: CHARACTER CONNECTIONS**

## **CORE STANDARDS:**

Key Ideas and Details: Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

## **RELEVANCE TO PLAY:**

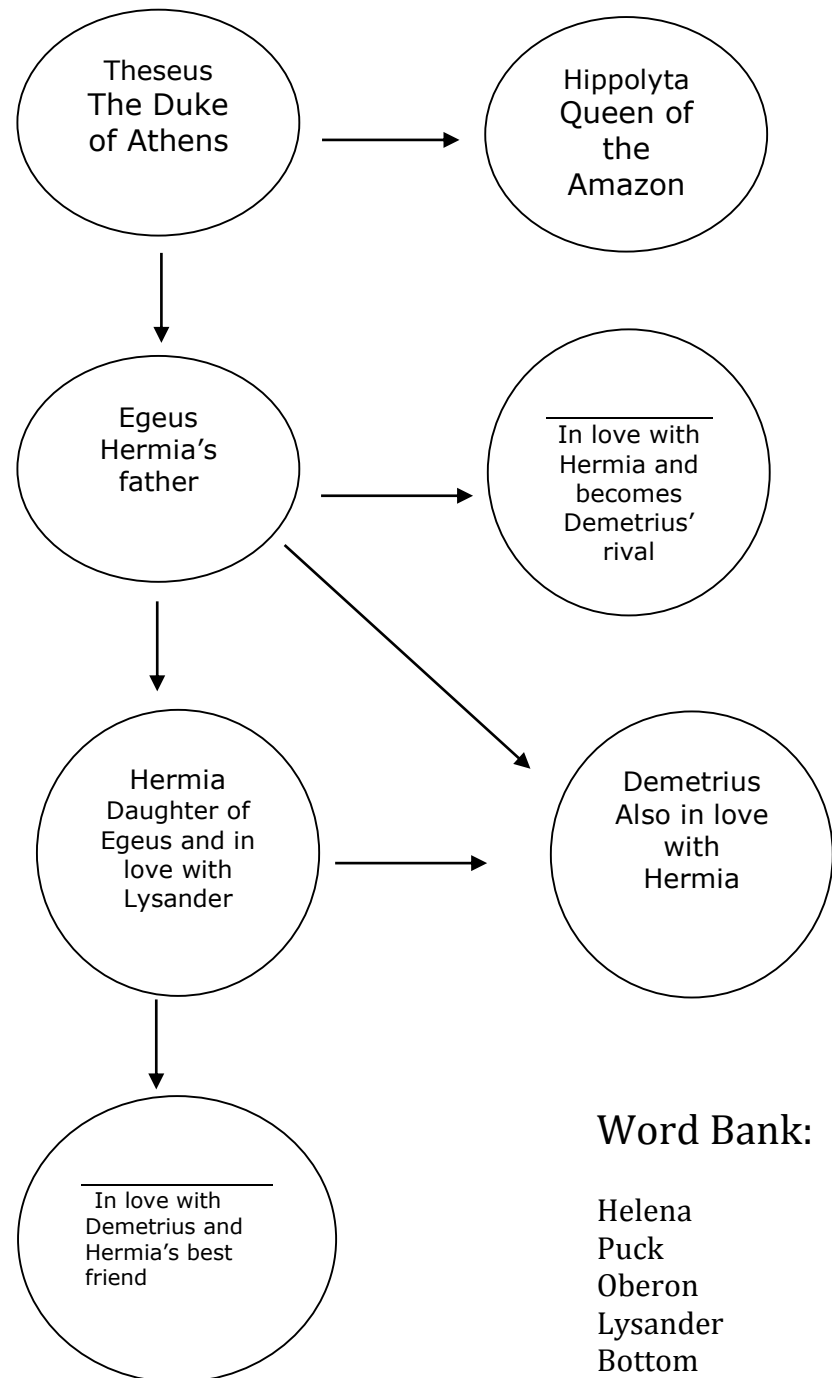
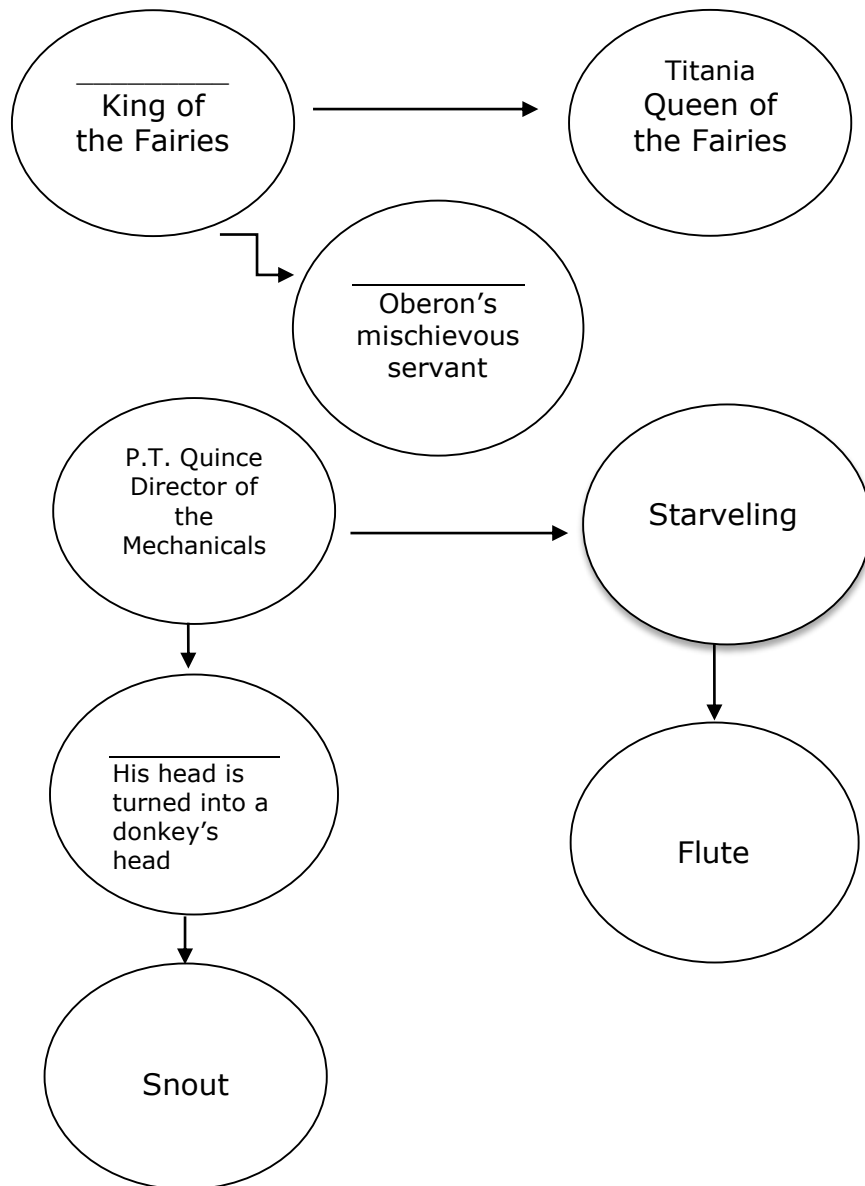
William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has a colorful cast of characters—there are many pairs of lovers in this play, as well as other characters. In order to better understand the relationships and connections between the characters in the play, students will fill out the character map using the word bank provided.

## **INSTRUCTIONS:**

Instruct the students to get into groups or assign them groups of three or four. Have them fill out the map (using the word bank provided) and talk about the relationships and connections between each of the characters on the map. Students may also use the character list provided in this packet and their own recollections, if they are filling it out after seeing the play.



**ACTIVITY #1:  
A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM CHARACTER MAP**



**Word Bank:**

- Helena
- Puck
- Oberon
- Lysander
- Bottom

## **ACTIVITY #2: A *MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM* WORD SEARCH**

### **CORE STANDARDS:**

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

### **PLAY CONTEXTUALIZATION:**

Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is stock full of themes, characters, and ideas that some students may be unfamiliar with. By participating in this word search activity, students will become more familiar with these themes and better recognize them during their viewing of the production.

### **POST ACTIVITY DISCUSSION:**

- What do these words have to do with the play?
- What was the hardest word for you to find?
- How can these words help us better our understanding of the play?
- How many words were spelled backwards?
- How many words were spelled diagonally?

# A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM WORD SEARCH

There are 12 words that relate to the themes and characters in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* hidden in this word search! Make sure you look up, down, diagonally and backwards. Can you find all 12 of the words?

P R H E R M I A D P H K C D Q  
U L L V H H P R P I O W M S H  
P V K O F X E G P H O T O M I  
P E V O L A O P K J R S I M T  
E S O A M A O A H A V C N O B  
T H K W I L A I P N W H U E N  
T A N C Y N P S U E S E H T Q  
D K J T U F A J L B K B L A G  
U E A U P P V T R G G E N H W  
C S Y J Y O L E I R J Q L Y C  
G P E P Y U W E W T F A R B P  
E E K F O O G C G I P J T B X  
I A N Q L P V Z M U J N Q E X  
V R O F I O R F K B J P W C D  
U E D B H N D W O Z H E R O E

DONKEY	DREAM
FLOWER	HERMIA
HIPPOLYTA	LOVE
POTION	PUCK
PUPPET	SHAKESPEARE
THESEUS	TITANIA

**Answer Key:**

P R H E R M I A D P H K C D Q  
U L L V H H P R P I O W M S H  
P V K O F X E G P H O T O M I  
P E V O L A O P K J R S I M T  
E S O A M A O A H A V C N O B  
T H K W I L A I P N W H U E N  
T A N C Y N P S U E S E H T Q  
D K J T U F A J L B K B L A G  
U E A U P P V T R G G E N H W  
C S Y J Y O L E I R J Q L Y C  
G P E P Y U W E W T F A R B P  
E E K F O O G C G I P J T B X  
I A N Q L P V Z M U J N Q E X  
V R O F I O R F K B J P W C D  
U E D B H N D W O Z H E R O E

## **ACTIVITY# 3 MAGIC AND MYSTERY**

### **CORE CURRICULUM:**

- Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
- Introduce a topic clearly, provide a general observation and focus, and group related information logically; include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
- Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.
- Link ideas within and across categories of information using words, phrases, and clauses (e.g., in contrast, especially).

### **PLAY CONTEXTUALIZATION:**

This play is full of magic and mystery. The forest of Athens is full of fairies that love to make mischief. From sleeping potions to transformative magic, Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is one of his most fantastic plays.

### **ACTIVITY:**

Have the students get into groups. Instruct them to discuss the stories that they know where magic takes place, fairytales, TV shows, dreams that they've had, etc. After several minutes of discussion have each group decide on a magical word, and write the word from each group on the board. Examples might be: "Alakazam," "Bippidy Boppity," "Magico," etc. Once all words have been written on the board, instruct each student to write a story that includes as many of these words as possible.



## **ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITY OPTION TO ACTIVITY**

### **#3:**

For younger classes, read an age-appropriate book that deals with magic. When the story is read, talk about several magical words or instances from the book. Have each student draw a picture of his or her own magic story. Encourage them to use ideas from the book and clearly portray them in their drawing.

### **CORE CURRICULUM:**

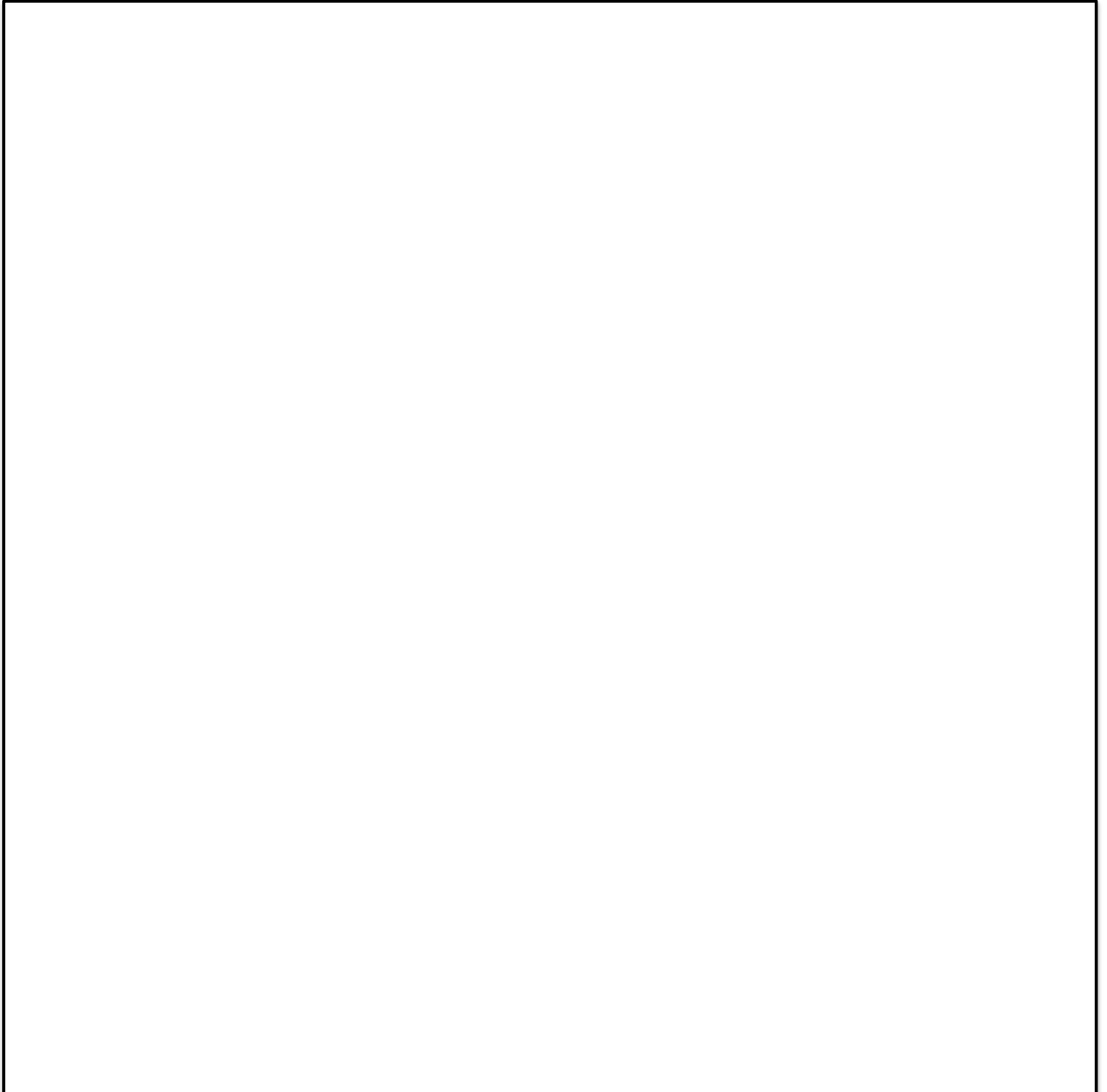
Interpret and apply visual arts in relation to cultures, history, and learning

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

- What is magic about your story?
- If you had magic powers, would you use them for good or bad? Why?
- The fairy King Oberon has a magical flower. When it is rubbed on people's eyes while they sleep, it makes them fall in love with the first thing they see when they wake up. If you had this magical flower, whose sleeping eyes would you rub it on?

# ART ACTIVITY: A PICTURE OF THE MAGIC

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_





# **ACTIVITY 4: LOST IN THE FOREST**

## **GAME: Hotter--Colder**

### **CORE CURRICULUM:**

- Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., gaining the floor in respectful ways, listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion).

### **RELEVANCE TO THE PLAY:**

In this play, the four lovers and the mechanicals or players, become lost and separated in the forest of Athens. Puck, servant of Oberon knows his way around the forest too well to get lost and decides to play tricks on the mortals. Luckily, Puck's master Oberon sees what he has done and restores all back to normal. In this game the students will have the opportunity to play a similar role to Oberon and help one student find their way.

### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

The teacher designates one student to step outside the classroom. While the designated student is out of the classroom, the other students choose an item (something that the teacher chooses or is already an important item in the classroom) for the designated student to find. When the designated student returns to the room, the other players must tell him or her whether he or she is hot (close to the item) or cold (far from the item) until the item is found. You can symbolize proximity through louder/ softer clapping or louder/ softer singing.

## **ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITIES:**

### **PLAY CONTEXTUALIZATION:**

Shakespeare wrote *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to purposely feel chaotic. Like the contextualization for activity three, it is Oberon who ultimately sorts out the confusion. Both games below will allow the children to take on this role Oberon. In both "Charades Story," and "Zoom," in either figuring out what story a person is telling or finishing the story as a group; the children must sort out the confusion.

"Charades Story" (15 minute rehearsal): Students act out a recognizable story/movie/book entirely through mime in front of the class.

1-4 people in a group, with scenes about 1-2 minutes long. Then the class guesses what story they are telling.

"Zoom" (10-15 Minutes): Gather the students in a circle. Give each student a card with either a picture or the name of any random noun. Start a story and then call on any student to continue the story, including the noun on their card and then go counter clockwise or clockwise in the circle from that student. The game ends when the story ends and the story ends when every student has told part of it using their noun.

### **POST-GAME DISCUSSION:**

- What was hard about this game?
- How is working as a team helpful in a confusing situation?
- What were the similarities between the play and the games that we played?
- What did you like most about working as a team?

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