



**92NY Theater  
for Young  
Audiences**

Presented by The Diamond Family




# A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM



## **Curriculum Guide**

The fun doesn't have to stop at the theater.  
Keep the fun going and continue the experience of *A Midsummer  
Night's Dream* in your classroom or at home!



# How to Use This Guide - What's Inside?

This comprehensive curriculum guide has been thoughtfully created in collaboration with 92NY's Theater for Young Audiences production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Its purpose is to provide educators with a variety of engaging activities that support students in multiple areas of learning. Not only are the activities designed to inspire students as performers, but they also aim to develop key skills as English language learners, writers, and critical thinkers. Through a blend of theatrical exercises, literary analysis, and creative projects, students will have the opportunity to deepen their understanding of the text, explore the characters and themes of Shakespeare's iconic play, and connect with the material in meaningful ways.

The guide is divided into two sections: one designed for the classroom and the other designed to be done at home with family and friends.

# MIDSUMMER FUN AT HOME!

Bring the magic of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to your home with a variety of exciting family-friendly activities that are sure to spark creativity and energy in everyone! Whether you're looking to enjoy some outdoor fun or dive into imaginative indoor crafts, these active and creative ideas are perfect for making lasting memories with your loved ones. From backyard treasure hunts to hands-on character masks, there's something for every age and interest to celebrate the joy of this beloved play together.

## Enchanted Forest Obstacle Course

Mischief happens in the enchanted forest and chaos ensues! Have fun creating your own mischief at home by making an Enchanted Forest Obstacle Course. You can only use household objects to create your obstacles (pillows, chairs, tape, blankets, etc). Design an “enchanted forest” obstacle course in your living room, bedroom, or backyard, inspired by the enchanted forest in the play. Kids can crawl under tables (for tunnels), jump over pillows (to represent trees), or balance on lines of tape (to mimic stepping on delicate branches).



# Enchanted Character Masks

Have some magical fun creating masks for characters from the play, like Oberon, Puck, or Titania. After making the masks, kids can put on a short play or act out some of the scenes. Visit this [link](#) for a brief tutorial on how to make a mask out of a paper plate. The materials needed are simple: paper plates, yarn, string or piece of elastic, hole punch, scissors, stickers, and any coloring materials desired (colored pencils, crayon, markers, finger paints, etc).



## Puck's Mischief Treasure Hunt

Have a little fun at home by making a treasure hunt inspired by Puck's mischievous tricks. Leave clues around the house that lead to different objects (fairy-themed toys, flowers, etc.). Make a simple map or leave clues with each hidden object. You could even add a little mystery by making some of the clues rhyming riddles or puzzles. This is a great activity to do indoors on a rainy day, or search for treasure outside in the park or backyard.



# MIDSUMMER FUN AT SCHOOL!

The following activities are intended for grades 3-8 and can be done in a Drama or English Language Arts class. They can be done as a stand alone activity, or used as a whole Shakespeare unit on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. These activities will not only stretch students creatively and intellectually, but it will also make the play more accessible and relatable to them while also having a little fun.

This guide is connected to the following Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in Theater strands:

## **Theater Making : Acting, Playwriting/Play Making, Design and Technical Theater, and Directing**

Theater Making provides multiple avenues for active learning. Through the interpretation of dramatic literature and the creation of their own works, students engage as writers, actors, designers, directors and technicians. Students learn to use

their minds, bodies, voices, emotions and sense of artistry to examine the world and its meaning.

## **Developing Theater Literacy**

Theater Literacy provides the skills and knowledge to deepen a student's understanding of many forms and genres of theater. Students explore theater history and the multiple roles that theater plays in society. They use theater vocabulary when making and responding to performance, and develop critical, analytical and writing skills through observing, discussing and responding to live theater and dramatic literature. In this strand, dramatic literature is also viewed as a catalyst for production and performance. Therefore, the associated activities are experiential in nature and support Theater Making as well as a deeper understanding of text.





This guide is connected to the following New York State Next Generation English Language Arts Learning Standards:

### Reading Anchor Standards

#### KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

**Standard 1:** Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly/implicitly and make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

**Standard 2:** Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

#### INTEGRATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND IDEAS

**Standard 9:** Analyze and evaluate texts using knowledge of literary forms, elements, and devices through a variety of lenses and perspectives.

### Speaking and Listening Anchor Standards

#### COMPREHENSION AND COLLABORATION

**Standard 1:** Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners; express ideas clearly and persuasively, and build on those of others.

#### Prerequisite

In order to have the most success with these activities, students should have read or watched the full play of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* before doing them. That said, it can be difficult to get a student excited about reading or acting Shakespeare. With this in mind, we have compiled three summaries of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, each in a different format. They are short and sweet with only the relevant information needed to fully participate in the activities. These short synopsis can also be used to earn student buy-in.

🔪 Midsummer in 60 Seconds on TikTok

🔪 Animated Summary

🔪 An animated YouTube video that gives you a summary in under 4 minutes!

🔪 A Storyboard!



# Comprehension Check

## UNDERSTANDING THE SYNOPSIS

Split the class into 5 groups. Assign each group a different Act from the play – for example one group has Act I, and another has Act II, and so on. Each group must write a one paragraph summary of the Act. Next, students in the group should work together to act out the summary. Students can choose to act out the summary in one of the following ways:

- 🔪 Pantomime
- 🔪 Tableau
- 🔪 A newscaster with Breaking News
- 🔪 A podcaster
- 🔪 TikTok video
- 🔪 Spoken Word
- 🔪 Comic Strip or Comic Book



Synopses should not be more than 2 minutes in length. Challenge students to summarize only the important information from the text.

## Character Analysis

### WIZARDS, GIANTS, GOBLINS – REBRANDED

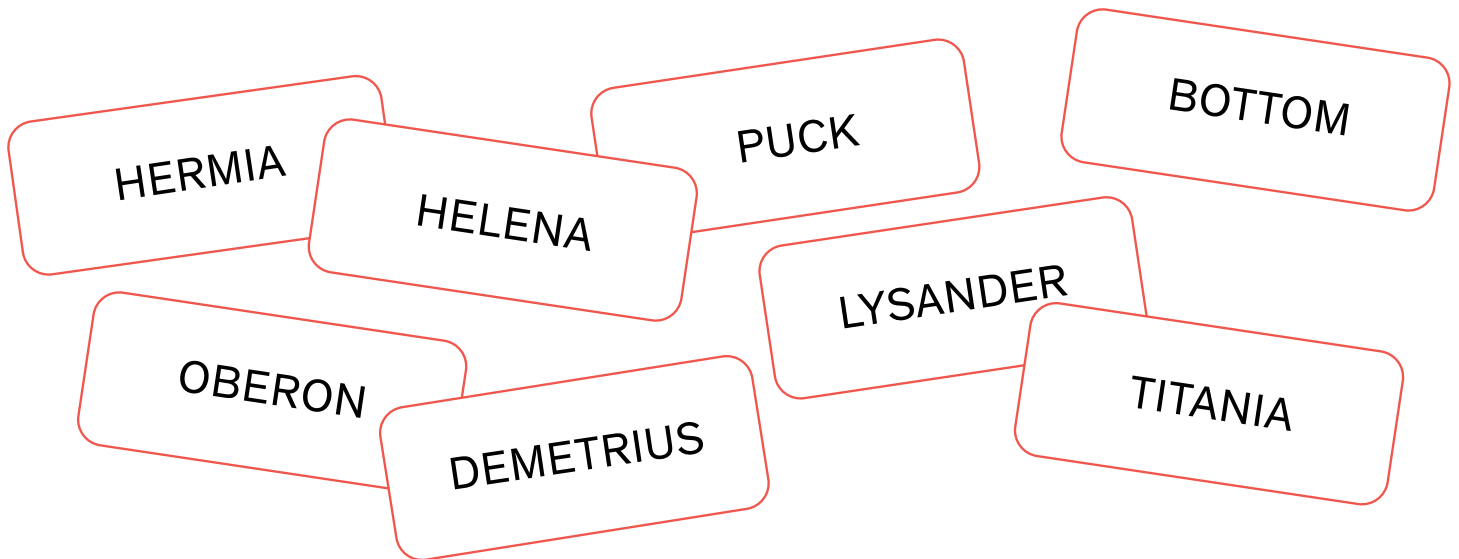
This is a rebrand of the classic game “Wizards, Giants, Goblins”. Visit this [link](#) from Beat By Beat for full instructions on how to play the game “Wizards, Giants, Goblins”. Rebranding the game, it is now “Duke, Fairy Queen, Hobgoblin”. The same rules apply, but now with character types from each world within *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Work with students to come up with and agree on a gesture and a word for each. It can be simple! For example, “Duke” can simply be to bow and say “Theseus.” “Fairy Queen” can be to put a crown on or flap fairy wings and say “Queen.” “Hobgoblin” can be magic hands and the word “Puck”. These are not hard and fast words and gestures, so have fun creating them together as a class.

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## MIDSUMMER HEADBANZ!

Have some wild fun with character analysis in this themed game of Headbands. Split the class into small groups (no larger than 8). Give each member of the group an index card to

stick in their headband, or a post-it note to stick on their forehead. Remind them to NOT LOOK at what is written on their cards! You can select any 8 characters you wish to have students explore, but here are 8 to get you started:



Once all students have a card on their foreheads, they are to ask their fellow group members questions to try to figure out which character they are. Some sample questions can be, but not limited to:

- “Am I a fairy?”
- “Am I a human?”
- “Do I possess magical powers?”
- “Do I run a kingdom?”

Challenge students to ask questions related to the text. Once they think they know who they are, they have to recite one line their character says in the script. For example: Puck - “Lord, what fools these mortals be!”



**\*\*For ridiculous fun at home, play this game as part of a family game night!**



# 92NY'S DEVISING & CHARACTER MOVEMENT FRAMEWORK

Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) is a method and language for describing, visualizing, interpreting, and documenting all varieties of human movement. When devising and creating a new work at 92NY, we use Laban's Effort Theory as a way to analyze and devise movement.

We share this part of the Laban Movement framework with you as a tool to use with your students, whether you are devising a new take on a Shakespearean classic or creating movement for your school production. In its simplest form, each effort quality has two opposite

extremes. For example: weight is either strong or light. We use these effort qualities to explore how the inner attitude of a character can be expressed through movement and voice. See the chart below for all four effort qualities and examples.

Effort Quality	Effort Defined as:	Example	Effort Defined as:	Example
Space	Direct	A cat watching a fly; tracing the line on your hand	Indirect	taking in the whole room (a teacher); unsure of which cereal to buy at the store
Weight	Strong	Bulldozing; boxing	Light	Tiptoe; sneaking around
Time	Quick	Someone working on Wall Street; a hummingbird	Sustained	A turtle crossing the road; giving a lecture as if you have all the time in the world
Flow	Free	On going; waterfall; turning on the faucet and the water rushes out	Bound	With control; threading a needle; tightening the faucet to turn off the water

Explore the various effort qualities with **Mirror Mirror on the Wall**:

### **Mirror Mirror on the Wall**

Explore character movement and choices using Laban's Effort Qualities with this fun Mirror Game. [Visit this link](#) for instructions on how to play the Mirror Game. Play a round or two of the Mirror Game without any additional characters or effort qualities. Students can play the Mirror Game in silence or with music. If you do it with music, instruct students to move when the music begins and freeze when the music stops. Be sure to inform students of the space in the classroom they can use.

Next play a round where students explore movement with different Effort Qualities. Depending on your class you can either shout out an Effort Quality (Example: Direct Space) for them to use, or make it Student Choice. Use the Effort Qualities listed in **92NY's Devising and Character Movement Framework** above as a reference.

Play this round using music to help students investigate each Effort Quality. Be sure to remind students of the space they can use in the classroom.

*Music Suggestion: Check out Felix Mendelssohn's A Midsummer Night's Dream on YouTube or Spotify.*

For the final round, students will now explore character movement using Effort Qualities. Shout out a character name from Midsummer and an Effort for them to explore. For example: "Hermia, Space." Students will then play the Mirror Game exploring Hermia's use of Space. Is she direct or indirect?

Play this round using music to help students delve into each character. Be sure to remind students of the space they can use in the classroom. Play a few rounds exploring different characters and different Effort Qualities. Challenge students to incorporate more than one Effort Quality for a character.

**Post Activity Questions:** What effort qualities did you use for {Insert Character Name} and why? What word best describes {Insert Character Name} movement. Challenge students to provide textual evidence to defend their choices.

# Speak the speech, I pray you

## Shakespearean Insults

Shakespeare was meant to be performed, not just be read aloud while sitting at a school desk. So, get up and have some intellectual, acting fun in class! Pair students up. Give each student a **Shakespearean Insult sheet**. Inform students that everyone will be following the same scene outline:

**A: Hey {Insert Insult}**

**B: Hello there {Insert Insult}**

**A: Let me by {Insert Insult}. I have to cross the street.**

**B: You can't.**

**A: Why not.**

**B: Because {Insert Insult}.**

**A: Cause why {Insert Insult}.**

**B: Cause there's a parade {Insert Insult}.**

**A: Why didn't you say so {Insert Insult}.**

For easy access to everyone, you can put this scene up on the board, or print it out as a handout for each student. Challenge students to create new insults for each one. Give students 5-10 minutes to work together and practice, then have each pairing share their scene with the class.

## Shakespeare Abridged

Divide the class into groups. Assign each group three to four scenes. One person in the group will take on the role as narrator, narrating the story of their scene while everyone else acts it out with minimal dialogue. This is not a full re-enactment of the scene, but rather a synopsis of what happens in the scene. They are encouraged to use lines in the scene, but the actors should predominantly pantomime the scene. Have the class come together and present their short scenes in the order of the play.

Next, have students go back in their groups to make their scenes even shorter...one word and tableau that summarizes their scene. Then have the class come together and present their abridged scenes in the order of the play. You can even have a Rapid Fire Challenge! For an extra challenge, have students try it in reverse order?



# Shakespeare on the Move

Break the class into small groups and assign each group one scene. If there are five groups, then one scene from each act per group.

The group should read through the scene and discuss what is happening in the scene. What is the climax of the scene? What happens at the beginning of the scene? What happens at the end of the scene? Who is involved in the scene? Who is talked about in the scene but not physically in the scene?

The group will then decide who is playing which character, and who will be blocking the action of the scene. Rehearse and perform the scene as written with the blocking given by the student director. Finally, do the scene again, but without words or sound at all. What changes with the predetermined action so the audience still comprehends the story? What

changes for you as a performer? What did you learn about communicating without using words? Students can refer to the 92NY Devising and Character Movement Framework as a tool to help as well.

## Adapting A Midsummer Night's Dream

For our productions at 92NY, we adapt classic plays, like Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, to make an hour long, musical appropriate for young audiences. An adaptation is when someone rewrites a composition into a new form. In order to adapt a play like *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, we have to decide what needs to be kept because it is important to the plot and what may get cut. We know we want to make the play into a musical, but there are many other formats a play can be adapted to.

With this in mind, students can have fun making their own adaptations of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*!



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Break the class into small groups and assign each group one scene. If there are five groups, then one scene from each act per group. In groups, students should review what the scene is about, who is in the scene, and what each character wants in the scene. Once they have answered their analysis questions, students must work together in their groups to adapt the scene in one of the following ways:

- 🔴 Muppet style
- 🔴 Hip hop artists
- 🔴 Current TikTok celebrity
- 🔴 Sales pitch
- 🔴 Presidential Candidates (or Presidential Debate)
- 🔴 SNL Sketch
- 🔴 An original song & dance
- 🔴 Mimes
- 🔴 Interpretative dance piece

For ALL adaptations students can use some lines or phrases from the script, but all dialogue should not be verbatim from the script. The scene adaptation can be no longer than 16 lines. Lines can be one word only as long as it summarizes the original text. If students choose Mime or Interpretative dance – they do not have to use language, but their movements must convey and summarize the story of the scene.

Have students present their adaptations in the order of the play!





# Resources

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<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/teaching-resources/teaching-primary/lesson-plans/level-3/shakespeare-extension-activities-kids>

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Royal Shakespeare Company. (n.d.). *A Midsummer Night's Dream.*

<https://www.rsc.org.uk/shakespeare-learning-zone/a-midsummer-nights-dream>



## **92NY Theater for Young Audiences (TYA)**

Presented by The Diamond Family

Kid-sized musicals. Giant-sized heart. The magic of musical theater in classic and original productions created especially for young audiences and their families — introducing a new generation to the joy of the art form in an intimate setting with unforgettable performances.

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# 92NY

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