A Midsummer Night’s Dream
By William Shakespeare

Family Learning Pack
2010
Family Learning

Hello!

Thank you very much for picking up the Oxford Playhouse Family Learning Pack for A Midsummer Night’s Dream. In this pack you will find a variety of games and activities to give your family a head start on understanding the play.

Activities are aimed at children aged 7 to 12 and there’s a story synopsis for the family to read together.

We hope you enjoy the show,

Very best wishes,

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Who’s in it?

Before you come to see A Midsummer Night’s Dream why not familiarise yourself with the characters and the story first?

The play follows the story of three different sets of characters and their actions one balmy summer’s night in a wood outside Athens. The characters encounter one another during the course of the play and their stories become intertwined. Look out for…

The Lovers and the Athenian Court
- **Theseus**, Duke of Athens
- **Hippolyta**, Queen of the Amazons, betrothed to Theseus
- **Egeus**, Hermia’s father
- **Hermia**, in love with Lysander
- **Lysander**, in love with Hermia
- **Helena**, in love with Demetrius
- **Demetrius**, in love with Hermia

The Fairies
- **Oberon**, King of the Fairies
- **Titania**, Queen of the Fairies
- **Puck**, Oberon’s right hand man!
- **Changling Boy**, Titania’s page boy
- **Titania’s Fairy Band**

The Mechanicals
- **Nick Bottom**, Weaver, plays Pyrimus in the production
- **Peter Quince**, Carpenter, director of the production
- **Francis Flute**, Bellows Mender, plays Thisbe in the production
- **Robin Stavelling**, Tailor, plays Moonshine in the production
- **Tom Snout**, Tinker, plays Wall in the production
- **Snug**, Joiner, plays Lion in the production
What happens?

Far away in Athens…

Duke Theseus has returned to court with his bride to be Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons. He is greeted by Egeus who is “full of complaint.”

Egeus’ daughter Hermia is refusing to marry her father’s choice of husband Demetrius because she is in love with Lysander instead. Her disobedience makes Egeus very angry and he tells Hermia unless she obeys him she will face death or life in a nunnery.

That night, Hermia and Lysander decide to run away to the forest to escape Egeus and get married. Before she leaves, Hermia tells her friend Helena her plan, but Helena, who is in love with Demetrius, decides to reveal Hermia’s plan to him, hoping to win his favour. Demetrius on hearing the news, scorns Helena and sets off after Hermia determined to bring her back.

Hermia and Lysander reach the wood safely and lie down to sleep.

Meanwhile, Oberon, King of the Fairies, and, Titania Queen of the Fairies, are having an argument. Oberon wants Titania’s page boy to use as his henchman, but Titania refuses to part with him. Oberon, wanting to punish Titania for her stubborness calls on his mischievous servant Puck to help him apply a magical juice from a flower called “love-in-idleness”, to Titania’s eyes. When she awakes the potion will make Titania fall in love with the first living thing she sees. Oberon hopes she wakes “when some vile thing is near.”

Just as Oberon is creeping away from sleeping Titania, he sees Demetrius storming through the wood in search of Hermia. Following him is Helena, pleading for him to stop, but Demetrius shouts at her to go away. Seeing this, Oberon orders Puck to spread some of the magical juice from the flower on Demetrius’s eyelids to make him love Helena. Puck sets off, but comes across Lysander and Hermia first. Mistaking them for Helena and Demitrius, he puts the magical juice on Lysander’s eyes instead. Later, Helena stumbles across Lysander. She wakes him and the magical juice takes effect; he instantly falls in love with her and runs after her into the wood.

Oberon sees Demetrius still searching for Hermia and realises that Puck has made a mistake. He tries to make amends. When Demetrius finally decides to go to sleep,
tired from searching from Hermia, Oberon sends Puck to get Helena while he charms Demetrius' eyes. Upon waking up, Demetrius sees Helena. Now, both he and Lysander are in pursuit of her and she is very confused!

Hermia catched up with Helena, Lysander and Demetrius and a quarrel breaks out. They are all angry with each other. Lysander and Demetrius vow to duel each other to the death to prove whose love for Helena is the greatest. Oberon orders Puck to keep Lysander and Demetrius from harming one another and to remove the charm from Lysander, so that he goes back to being in love with Hermia. Somehow, Puck manages it!

Elsewhere, a band of six labourers have arranged to perform a play about Pyramus and Thisbe for Theseus' wedding to Hippolyta and have met to rehearse in the wood, near where Titania is sleeping. Nick Bottom, who is very keen on amateur dramatics, is spotted by Puck. Puck sees the perfect chance to reek revenge on Titania on behalf of Oberon. When Bottom is waiting to make his entrance, Puck transforms his head into that of a donkey and when Bottom walks on to say his line the other workmen take one look at him and run away screaming in terror.

Titania is awakened by the commotion and seeing Bottom immediately falls in love with him! She lavishes him with lots of attention before lying down to sleep again. Oberon, seeing her in this state, takes pity on his Queen and orders Puck to remove the donkey's head from Bottom and lift the enchantment from Titania as she sleeps. He also orders Puck to arrange everything so that Hermia, Lysander, Demetrius, and Helena will believe that they have been dreaming when they awake.

The Fairies disappear, and Theseus and Hippolyta arrive on the scene during an early morning hunt. They wake the lovers and, magically, Demetrius does not love Hermia anymore, but is now in love with Helena. Lysander and Hermia are in love once again and Theseus overrules Egeus's and commands that the couples be wed.

They leave the wood and a few minutes later Bottom awakes, and, thinking he fell asleep in the wood, dashes back to Athens in time to play his part in the workmen's production of Pyramus and Thisbe for Theseus, Hippolyta and the Lovers. The play is badly performed but well received and at the end everyone applauds before retiring to bed.

Oberon, Titania, Puck, and the Fairy Band magically appear to bless Theseus’ court and bid us all good night.
Prick up your ears!

A Midsummer Night's Dream is full of beautiful language. See if you can match the quotes (lines from the play) below to their meanings and fill in the table at the bottom. Listen out for these lines while you are watching the show!

1. The course of true love never did run smooth.
2. Bless thee, Bottom! bless thee! thou art translated.
3. Ill met by moonlight proud Titania!
4. I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
   Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows, there sleeps Titania.
5. Lord, what fools these Mortals be!
6. My Oberon! what visions have I seen!
   Me thought I was enamoured of an ass!
7. If we shadows have offended, think but this, and all is mended,
   That you have but slumbered here, while these visions did appear.

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So, what do we know about Shakespeare?

William Shakespeare was working as an actor, poet, businessman and Playwright when Queen Elizabeth I was on throne of England.

He was born in Stratford- Upon-Avon, in Warwickshire, in 1564 but moved to London later in his life to seek his fortune.

He wrote 38 plays in his lifetime, including comedies, tragedies and histories. We also know 154 sonnets that he wrote, but there maybe more!

He married a woman called Anne Hathaway and they had three children together.

He died in 1616, and is buried in Holy Trinity Church in Stratford. His wife Anne, died seven years later and is buried next to him.

The complete works of Shakespeare, a book containing all his plays and sonnets, has been translated into 30 different languages!

His was not of an age, but for all time.
Ben Jonson

What do you think Ben Jonson meant when he said this?
“Methought I was enamoured of an ass!”

Make your own donkey mask so that you can look just like Bottom!

1. Using scissors, snip out the Donkey’s head below and colour it in.

2. Find an old cardboard box, (maybe a cereal box), stick the mask to it and cut it out.

3. Ask an adult to remove the eyes from the mask so you can see!

4. Ask an adult to cut a hole in either side of the mask, then attach some ribbon/string/elastic to either side, so the mask will stay on your head.
Hocus Pocus!

Puck gets up to lots of mischief enchanting the Lovers and Titania with the magic love potion from the flower love-in-idleness. Imagine you had a magic potion that you could enchant people with. What would it do? Who would you give it to?!

Write or draw the ingredients list for your potion in the bottle below, give it a name and decide what effect it would have on its victims!

This is a __________potion

Watch out! When you drink it, it will________________
The Globe

Below is a picture of what the stage at Shakespeare’s own theatre, The Globe would have looked like. A replica of The Globe has been built on the South Bank in London, and the actors you see in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* perform there when they’re not on tour in Oxford or in other places round the country. Why not stage your favourite scene from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* by drawing the characters on to the stage?
What did you think?

We are always really excited to hear what our audiences think of the shows they see. Why not write to us at Oxford Playhouse and tell us what you thought of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*?

There are two ways of writing a letter. There is the traditional version and the modern word processed version.

**Traditional;**

- Your address should go on the right hand-side of the page.
- Underneath the address should be the day’s date.
- Underneath this should be the greeting. If you
  a) do not know the name of the person you are writing to the address should be “Dear Sir or Madam,”
  b) know the name of the person you are writing to but do not know them personally the greeting should be formal i.e. Dear Mr, Mrs etc+ the person’s surname. Why not address your letter to Michelle Dickinson, Director of Oxford Playhouse?
- Indenting the first line, underneath the greeting, the main body of the letter starts. The first sentence should explain why you are writing.
- Next move onto some observations about the production – what did you enjoy? Who was your favourite character and why?
- Lastly, conclude the letter and sign your name. If you do not know the name of the person, put “Yours Faithfully”. If you do know the name of the person put, “Yours Sincerely”. Then sign your name with a flourish (!) and print underneath. If typing the letter, you should sign your name in ink next to your printed name.

**Word processed;**

Word processed letters are different in two ways.
- The address should go on the left hand-side of the page.
- Paragraphs are not indented. Instead, a line is left between them.