

SHAKESPEARE

**LESSON PLANS FOR THE
CLICKVIEW CURRICULUM LIBRARY**



FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

► ClickView

Shakespeare

Lesson Plans for the ClickView Curriculum Library

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Published by:
ClickView Pty Ltd.
Jones Bay Wharf,
125/26-32 Pirrama Rd,
Pyrmont NSW 2009

ABN: 78 106 176 514



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A Midsummer Night's Dream

Introduction and Context

OBJECTIVE

To introduce/reintroduce the study of William Shakespeare and ask students to consider why we study his plays in a secondary context. To have students consider the literary and dramatic context of the play and symbolism of its twin settings in the Athenian court and 'Wood Outside of Athens'.

Key points explored are:

- Why should we read Shakespeare? What is the play about?
- Who are the central characters in this play? Where is the play variously set?
- Why did Shakespeare set the play in Greece?
- What is the symbolic function of the twin setting?

ACARA CONTENT DESCRIPTIONS

Recognise and analyse the ways that characterisation, events and settings are combined in narratives, and discuss the purposes and appeal of different approaches
(ACELT1622) Year 7 - Literature

Lesson Plans

RESOURCES

1. ClickView video:
[A Midsummer Night's Dream - 'Context and Background'](#)
[Shakespeare: The Animated Tale - 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'](#)
2. Worksheets:
[Context and Background](#)
[Plot and Character Overview](#)
[Characters' Love Web](#)
3. Laptops or smart devices to conduct research

LESSON PLAN

1. Play the ClickView video, *A Midsummer Night's Dream - 'Context and Background'*. As students watch the video, ask them to fill in the *Context and Background* worksheet.
2. Play the animation video on ClickView Exchange, *Shakespeare: The Animated Tale - 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'* to acquaint students with the plot, characters, and setting of the play.
3. Begin a class discussion using the following questions:
 - Why should we read Shakespeare? For fun and entertainment? Or to learn about life? Or is it because Shakespeare is a part of our literary and cultural inheritance?
 - Can we learn about life on a deeper level and simultaneously have fun?
 - Did Shakespeare's plays deliberately delve into thorny issues of love, power, and family problems to teach us a lesson about life?
 - Should we first consider whether Shakespeare actually meant to say what we commonly think, believe, and interpret in his plays?
 - Which Shakespearean plays are you familiar with?
4. Using the *Plot and Character Overview* worksheet, ask students to complete questions 1-7 from their viewing of the animation. Allow students to use laptops or smart devices for question 7.
5. Discuss students' responses as a class.
6. Question 8 tests students' knowledge about characters' names and events in the play. Have students complete the question within three minutes individually then review answers as a class.
7. Distribute the *Characters' Love Web* worksheet. Ask students to work in pairs and work through the instructions to figure out the different relationships between characters. Go through the answers once students have finished.

Answers

LESSON PLAN

Worksheet: Context and Background

- Q1) love
Q2) magic
Q3) four
Q4) part-owner, actor
Q5) The law banned women from acting professionally.
Q6) Character groups: Court/royalty; young lovers/nobility; mechanicals/craftsmen; fairies.
Q7) Greece
Q8) in a forest
Q9) playing tricks on humans
Q10) Queen Elizabeth I

Class discussion answer:

Since 1967 and the work of French theorist Roland Barthes ('The Death of the Author'), critics and scholars are not concerned whether an artist such as Shakespeare intended their work to have any particular meaning/s. Rather, we are now concerned as educators in the 21st century that students bring their own experience and meanings to the interpretation of a text ('reader response theory'). It is possible to read Shakespeare on multiple levels and the purpose of the following lesson is to challenge students to both enjoy the texts and think critically.

Worksheet: Plot and Character Overview

- Q2) a) The Athenian Court and its four lovers with Hermia's father Egeus, Theseus, and Hippolyta
b) The Rude Mechanicals including Peter Quince and Bottom
c) The Fairies, including Oberon, Titania, and Puck
- Q3) The play is set in the ancient Athenian court and the woods. The play is set in Greece for a variety of possible reasons: to allude to the origins of Western civilisation; to allude to ancient Greek narratives and their importance to English story-telling; to allude to ancient notions of law, ownership and filial (parental) obligation; to set a play in a European country whilst making pointed comments about contemporary England.
- Q4) In Shakespeare's time, the woods were seen as a spiritually 'dark' and dangerous place where witches practised their craft and a setting where people commonly believed the supernatural existed (including fairies, elves, and goblins). Shakespeare's decision to set the play in the woods and include devilish fairies conspiring to create adulterous acts (not to mention a queen sleeping with a donkey) was a bold move - perhaps the equivalent of staging a play today about the royal family in the training-ground of terrorists. Shakespeare made references to Queen Elizabeth I that were more 'cheeky' than reverent about her rumoured love life.
- Q5) What makes the play special is the multi-layered plot which collapses reality with a dream-like imaginary world free of civilised constraint, where the characters explore love as a way to unburden themselves of the rule of parents and the Athenian law. As we will explore later, the twin settings of the Athenian court and 'the woods' effectively symbolise the split between the civilised and imaginary worlds - the woods also suggest what Sigmund Freud would later refer to as the 'sub-conscious'.
- Q8) True or False Quiz
a) F, b) F, c) T, d) T, e) F, f) T, g) T, h) T, i) F, j) F, k) T, l) F, m) F, n) T, o) F, p) T, q) T, r) T, s) T, t) F, u) T, v) F, w) F, x) T, y) F, z) T

Worksheet: Characters' Love Web

Truly loves		Puts flower juice on		Under a love spell			
Lysander	to	Hermia	Oberon	to	Titania	Lysander	
Hermia		Lysander	Puck		Lysander	Demetrius	
Demetrius		Hermia	Puck		Demetrius	Titania	
Helena		Demetrius					
Theseus		Hippolyta					
Hippolyta		Theseus					

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Context and Background

Answer the following questions to demonstrate your understanding of the content.

1. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a play about _____.
2. A _____ potion features in the story.
3. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was first performed _____ hundred years ago.
4. As well as being a playwright, what two other roles did Shakespeare have at the Globe Theatre?

5. Explain why boys would have played the female characters.

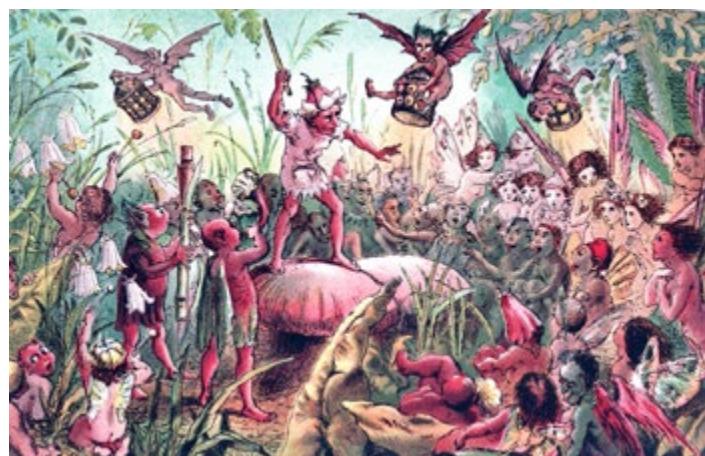
6. There are four sets of characters in the play - list them as groups.

7. In what country is the play set?

8. Where does most of the action of the play take place?

9. What were fairies known for?

10. Titania might have reminded the play's first audiences of _____.



A Midsummer Night's Dream

Plot and Character Overview



Questions to Ponder:

Is Shakespeare asking us to laugh at the power that presumes to govern an emotion as fickle as love (represented by the angry father Egeus)? Or are we called upon to laugh at love itself? To laugh at its various twists and turns?

What makes people funny when they are in love? Their spontaneity? Their absent-mindedness? Their sudden love of nature and its beauty? Their starry-eyed and blank facial expressions?

How do people change when they are in love?

1. What is the play about in a nutshell?



What would Donald Trump tweet about the plot of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*?

"Play about young lovers in the woods breaking the law. Sad! Bad people!"

Write your own tweet about the play beneath:

140 Characters



2. Who are the three sets of main characters in the play? What are their names?

- a) The Athenian Court and four young lovers: including Theseus,...?

- b) The Rude Mechanicals: including Peter Quince,...?

- c) The Fairy world: including Oberon, Puck,...?

3. Why do you think Shakespeare set the play in Greece? And in particular the Athenian court and 'the wood'?

4. What would contemporary audiences have understood about the play that modern audiences do not?

5. In your opinion, what makes this play so special?

- 6. What do students usually find difficult and enjoyable about the text?**

I'll answer that one!

The sheer amount of characters! The multiple settings and multi-layered plot about four young lovers and the rule of law in Athens. Then there is the play within a play ('The Most Lamentable Comedy and Most Cruel Death of Pyramus and Thisbe') performed by the Rude Mechanicals.

Students often ask: 'Why does the action continually shift between three different sets of characters?' Are they meant to mirror and reflect each other in the narrative? What students find most enjoyable about the play is the sheer sense of fun, whimsy, and frivolity in the set scenes - especially so in the woods as the four young lovers are tricked into believing they are deeply in love with each other, and then out of love with each other - just as Queen Titania is deceived by her husband Oberon into temporarily falling in love with Bottom (who Puck has magically transformed into an ass!)

7. Research FIVE (5) interesting facts about *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and write these in the space below.

Hint! Research the image of the ‘fair vestal throned by the west’ struck by Cupid’s arrow, and the image of a mermaid riding a dolphin’s back. The history behind the images might surprise you!

8. True or False?

A quick quiz to be answered in less than 3 minutes to test your knowledge. Set your timers... And go!

T / F

a	Hermia is the daughter of Demetrius.	
b	Lysander is the son of Theseus.	
c	Helena is in love with Demetrius.	
d	Hermia is in love with Lysander.	
e	Hippolyta is the Queen of the Fairies.	
f	Titania is the wife of Oberon.	
g	Oberon and Hippolyta argue over the custody of an Indian child.	
h	Hermia and Lysander enter the woods first, followed by Demetrius and Helena.	
i	Helena and Demetrius enter the woods first, followed by Puck and the Rude Mechanicals.	
j	The Rude Mechanicals rehearse a play for the marriage of Hermia and Demetrius.	
k	The Rude Mechanicals rehearse a play for the marriage of Theseus and Hippolyta.	
l	The Rude Mechanicals rehearse a play for the marriage of Helena and Demetrius.	
m	Puck places love juice in the eyes of Titania.	
n	Oberon himself places love juice in the eyes of his wife, Titania.	
o	Titania wakes up in the woods and immediately falls in love with Demetrius.	
p	Titania wakes up in the woods and immediately falls in love with Bottom, who has already been transformed into an ass.	
q	Egeus loses his battle to make Hermia marry Demetrius.	
r	In the play, there are three sets of weddings in Athens.	
s	The two settings of the play are 'Athens in Antiquity' and 'Wood Outside of Athens'.	
t	The two settings of the play are 'Athens' and 'Boggy Bottom, Hertfordshire'.	
u	Hippolyta makes fun of the Rude Mechanicals bad acting.	
v	Oberon divorces Titania and marries the unwed Helena.	
w	Shakespeare concludes the drama by having Puck tell the audience that Egeus really did love Demetrius.	
x	Shakespeare concludes the play by having Puck tell the audience that they may have dreamt the entire play.	
y	Titania eventually receives back the changeling boy and he speaks the final lines of the play in an eloquent English blank verse.	
z	The final play performed at the wedding by the Rude Mechanicals is about the death of two young lovers separated by a wall.	



Shakespeare: "Why test the students? Test the teachers! Thou herring-pickled, wall-eyed slaves!"

A Midsummer Night's Dream

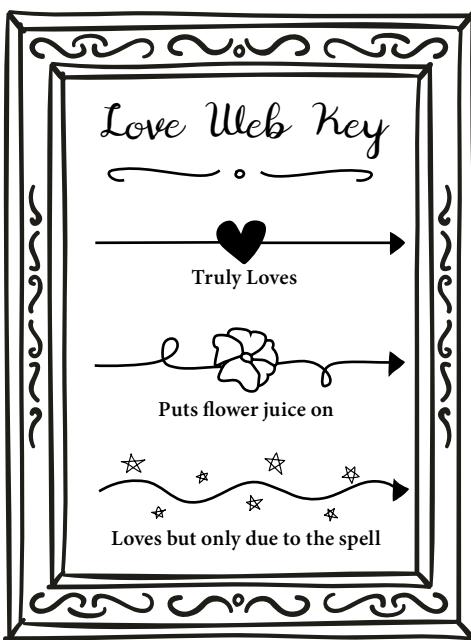
Characters' Love Web

The relationships between the characters just got so much more complicating because of the flower juice!

In this activity, figure out the different kinds of relationships between the characters after watching the video and following the instructions.

Instructions:

1. Cut out each of the characters found on the worksheet.
2. Arrange the characters in a circle on a piece of A3 paper in the following order: Helena, Hermia, Demetrius, Puck, Oberon, Titania, Bottom, Theseus, Hippolyta, then Lysander.
3. Show the relationship between characters with the 'Love Web Key' by drawing one of the three relationship lines:
 - A Love line shows a character's love interest.
 - A Flower line shows characters who have used the flower juice on another character.
 - A Love Spell line shows a character's love interest solely due to the flower juice's effects.



For example,



This means that A truly loves B.



This means that A has put flower juice on B.



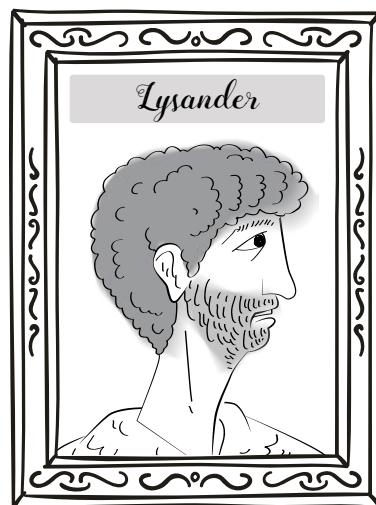
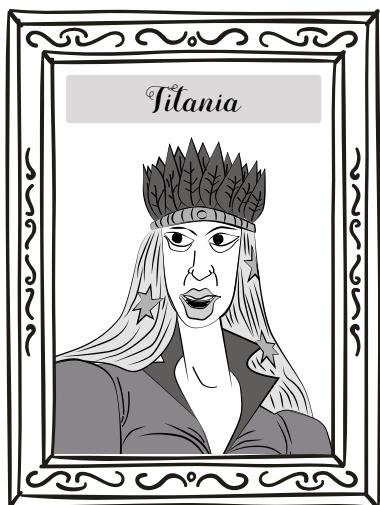
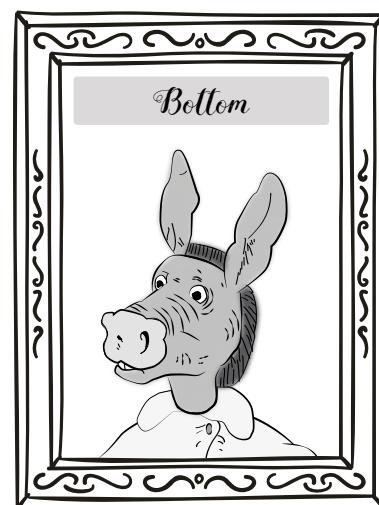
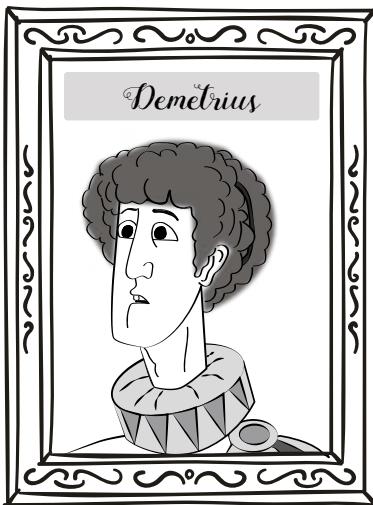
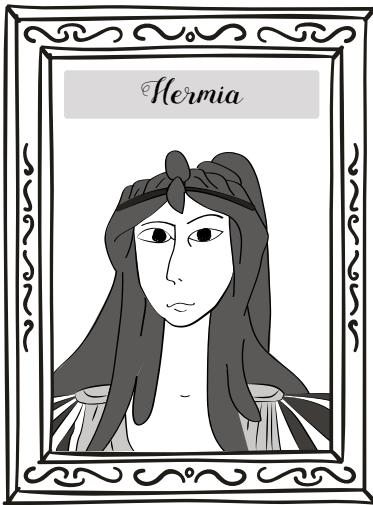
This means that A loves B, but only due to the spell.



FUN FACTS - Did You Know?

(Points to make you better understand the play or else to simply inform and amuse)

- The play within a play ('Pyramus and Thisbe') performed by the Rude Mechanicals provides an alternate ending were the play is a tragedy. That is, we witness in the death of Pyramus and Thisbe the (avoided) tragic death of the rebellious young lovers, Lysander and Hermia, should Theseus have ultimately demanded that they obey the Athenian law.
- Shakespeare deliberately includes bad acting in the 'Pyramus and Thisbe' scene to draw comedy out of amateur theatre. Or does he? Is there a deeper meaning here which critics and scholars have overlooked? (A point we will consider later.)
- In this play within a play ('Pyramus and Thisbe') the 'walls' separate the lovers who are kept apart by their parents. This story derives from the ancient Roman writer Ovid, but Shakespeare was also referring to another little play he had written that same year which you may have heard of, *Romeo and Juliet*.
- 'The Wedding March' tune played at most modern weddings was composed by Felix Mendelssohn in 1842 when the composer was commissioned to score a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.
- The practice of children ending a creative story with the line - 'It was all a dream' - originates in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, with Puck concluding the story via a reference to the idea that the audience might have dreamt the entire play.
- *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was not performed on the British stage for almost 200 years after Shakespeare's death partly because fairies were not commonly believed to be real.



A Midsummer Night's Dream

Themes and Concepts

OBJECTIVE

To introduce students to the significant underlying ideas, themes and concepts of the play.
To consider the way that Shakespeare challenges the received ideas of his own time and develop students' explanations of this phenomena.

Key points explored are:

- What ideas or themes is the play exploring?
- What are the concepts which arise from these themes?

ACARA CONTENT DESCRIPTIONS

Explore the ways that ideas and viewpoints in literary texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts may reflect or challenge the values of individuals and groups
(ACELT1626) Year 8 - Literature

Lesson Plans

RESOURCES

1. ClickView video:
[A Midsummer Night's Dream - 'Theme of Dreams'](#)
[Shakespeare Uncovered - 'A Midsummer Night's Dream with Hugh Bonneville'](#)
2. Worksheets:
[Theme: Dreams 1 and 2](#)
[Themes and Concepts](#)

LESSON PLAN

1. Play the ClickView video, *A Midsummer Night's Dream - 'Theme of Dreams'* to initially familiarise students with the entry-level themes of the text. Ask students to complete the questions on the *Themes: Dreams* worksheet whilst watching. Then view '*A Midsummer Night's Dream with Hugh Bonneville*' on the ClickView Exchange to familiarise students with the ideas, themes, and concepts of the play.
2. Begin a class discussion using the following discussion starters:
 - Is Shakespeare presenting the idea that romantic love naturally makes teenagers and young people independent of their parents?
 - Does Shakespeare suggest that children ought to ignore the wishes of their parents about whom they ought to marry and love? Or is Shakespeare presenting us with a play in which the rebellion of young lovers causes near catastrophe and a great deal of confusion, trouble, and strife?
 - In your opinion, where does Shakespeare stand on the issue of love and rebellion? Is he on the side of stern old Egeus or rebellious young Hermia?
3. Using the *Themes and Concepts* worksheet, ask students to write down a response to the thematic questions on the worksheets - ('Romantic Love' and 'The Nature of Dreams and Reality') drawing upon their classroom discussion, knowledge of the text, and viewing of the ClickView videos.

Answers

LESSON PLAN

Worksheet: Theme: Dreams

- Q1)** dreams
- Q2)** A theme is an idea that recurs in the text.
- Q3)** a) She dreams that a serpent is eating her heart.
b) nightmare
- Q4)** Dramatic irony is when the audience understands more than the characters do.
- Q5)** It is ironic because he is rejecting her, so he himself is the serpent and not the protector.
- Q6)** a, b and c) Titania, Bottom, and Demetrius are mentioned in the programme; also accept Helena, Hermia, and Lysander as correct answers.
- Q7)** human mind
- Q8)** Metaphor is when one thing stands for/represents another.
- Q9)** Imagination can invent new worlds/create shape and form from 'airy nothing'.
- Q10)** a) Answers may vary. Possible answer include: nightmare, daydream, fantasy, vision, reverie, illusion, mirage, delusion, etc.
b) Answers may vary.
c) Answers may vary. Possible answers include: shape-shifting, sudden changes in people's attitudes, getting lost, strange sights, not feeling in control.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Theme: Dreams

Answer the following questions to demonstrate your understanding of the content.

1. Which key theme of the play is mentioned in its title?

2. Explain what a theme is in a work of literature.

3. a) What does Hermia dream, before she wakes to find Lysander gone?

- b) What do we call this sort of dream?

4. Explain the term 'dramatic irony'.

5. Why is it a form of dramatic irony when Hermia turns to Lysander for help?

6. Name three characters who feel puzzled and confused by their experiences in the forest.

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

7. The forest is a metaphor for the _____.

8. Explain the term 'metaphor'.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Theme: Dreams

9. What does Theseus claim that imagination can do?

10. Complete the following questions after watching the programme.

a) Think of as many words for 'dream' as you can. (You could look up 'dream' in a thesaurus.)

b) Discuss your list of words with a partner. Do they all mean exactly the same thing?

c) Which elements of the play seem dream-like? Work with your partner to create a list or mind map.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Themes and Concepts

1. What are the major ideas or themes of this play?

As a starting point, circle the following statements you agree with in regards to the play's ideas and themes:

- a) The play is about the power of love to inspire rebellion in young people.
- b) The play is about the importance of dreams to shape our sense of reality and 'discover' our true selves.
- c) The play is about the difficulty of determining what is real and what is imaginary.
- d) The play is about the proper and appropriate role of parents in determining the love-matches and marriages of their children.
- e) The play is about the confusion of life itself and the fuzzy 'borderlines' of the physical and spiritual worlds.
- f) The play is very simply a play about plays, and the wonderful sense of fun and enjoyment we can derive from the theatre.

2. In the space beneath, write down a ONE paragraph response in which you argue the main idea or theme in the play, building upon one of the statements above.



Shakespeare: "Love is a burden and cruel joke played upon us by the gods. But a deeply funny burden when played upon the stage. Stop confusing the students! It's about the comedy thou rank, filching, whiteboard-doting, stuffed cloak-bag of guts!"

– Romantic Love –

3. **Thinking point prior to writing about themes:** *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a play about the consequences of love. In Shakespeare's play, Hermia and Lysander's mutual attraction and willingness to break the law has consequences of legal, ethical, and practical consideration. Matrimony is commonly celebrated as an important decision in one's life, but what is the *value* of that decision if it is made on our behalf?

 - a) Write TWO paragraphs in which you make an argument in plain and simple language that Hermia is justified in marrying Lysander. What are your reasons for arguing this way?
 - b) Now write TWO paragraphs in which you make an argument in plain and simple language that Egeus is right to insist that Hermia marry Demetrius. What are your reasons for arguing this way?

Points you might consider include:

- Should the law govern love?
 - How is Egeus presented in most productions of the play? As a thoughtful and caring man, or as a 'control-freak'?
 - Should fathers decide whom their daughters marry?
 - Is love and marriage to be celebrated as an act of obedience to our parents, or as an act of adult independence?
 - Is it possible that parents such as Egeus understand better than young people that love quickly fades and cools?
 - What sustains a long-term marriage? Is it compatibility, finance, and agreeable families?
 - Does Shakespeare use the absence of Hermia's mother (Egeus' wife) to allude to the idea that Egeus has experienced the same fate as Hermia and knows that romantic love is brief and illusory?

– The Nature of Dreams and Reality –

4. **Thinking point prior to writing about themes:** *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a play about the confusing dividing line between dreams and reality. In Shakespeare's play, the four young lovers and Titania are tricked into believing that their 'love' is authentic, real, and heartfelt, but Shakespeare shows us that it is an *illusion* based upon a love-juice that inspires a temporary, dream-like reality.

Is Shakespeare attempting to show his audience that the imaginary world of dreams are deceptive, illusory, and hollow? Or rather that our 'dream lives' are the place where we experience true joy and wish fulfilment? Does Shakespeare celebrate love, dreams, and the imagination as the ultimate form of human experience? Thinking ahead to the technical aspect of his play, does the 'wood' symbolise that the 'place' of our true selves is more natural than the 'civilised' world of law, duty, and civil obedience?

 - a) Write TWO paragraphs in which you make an argument in plain and simple language that Shakespeare warns his audience about the deceptive and hollow nature of our dream lives. What are your reasons for arguing this way?
 - b) Now write TWO paragraphs in which you make an argument in plain and simple language that Shakespeare celebrates dreams as the place where our true selves are uninhibited by the law, our duty to parents, and social convention. What are your reasons for arguing this way?

Points you might consider include:

- The lovers are drawn to the woods to escape the law and order of Athens. Here in the woods they love, dream, and imagine they are with their 'true love'. But they are deceived.
 - Shakespeare presents their concrete feelings of 'true love' as vulnerable to the slightest shift in fortune and chance, and the whims of Oberon and Puck.
 - Shakespeare compares the transitory feeling of love to the rise and fall of flowers and trees in the wood. Both only flower for a short period of time before they ultimately and inevitably die, but possess intense beauty while they last. However, it is also arguable that Shakespeare presents us with four young lovers who are at least 'natural' and following their hearts rather than the rule of law.
 - It is arguable that Shakespeare reminds his audience that to exist in the 'dream' is to at least possess true creativity, passion, spontaneity, and heart-felt love. It is to possess knowledge of our intimate desires and 'buried' selves.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Comedic Techniques

OBJECTIVE

To introduce students to the use of comedic techniques in the play.

Key points explored are:

- How is comedy used by Shakespeare in his play?
- What makes a Shakespearean comedy?
- Who are the humourous characters in the play?

ACARA CONTENT DESCRIPTIONS

Identify and evaluate devices that create tone, for example humour, wordplay, innuendo and parody in poetry, humorous prose, drama or visual texts

(ACELT1630) Year 8 - Literature

Interpret and analyse language choices, including sentence patterns, dialogue, imagery and other language features, in short stories, literary essays and play

(ACELT1767) Year 8 - Literature

Lesson Plans

RESOURCES

1. ClickView video:
[A Midsummer Night's Dream - 'Comedic Techniques'](#)
2. Worksheets:
[Comedic Techniques](#)
[Making Mischief](#)
[The Funniest Mechanicals' Play](#)
3. Laptops to write their own scripts

LESSON PLAN

1. Play the ClickView video, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* - 'Comedic Techniques'. As students watch the video, ask them to fill in the *Comedic Techniques* worksheet.
2. Discuss students' responses as a class.
3. Using the *Making Mischief* worksheet, ask students to work in pairs to write a short story following instructions on the worksheet. Allow students to use their laptops to document their scripts.
4. Using *The Funniest Mechanicals' Play* worksheet, ask students to work in groups to recreate their funniest version of the Mechanicals' Play following instructions on the worksheet.

Answers

LESSON PLAN

Worksheet: Comedic Techniques

- Q1)** The choice is to marry Demetrius or be put to death (modified by Theseus to becoming a nun).
- Q2)** Daughters were the legal property of their fathers.
- Q3)** Tricks/pranks, disguise/mistaken identity, muddle/misunderstanding, love stories, happy endings/marriages.
- Q4)** Oberon's first idea is to use it on Titania, so that when she wakes up she will fall in love with somebody or something inappropriate.
- Q5)** He suggests using the potion on Demetrius to make him love Helena.
- Q6)** Puck puts the potion on Lysander's eyes and he falls in love with Helena.
- Q7)** He puts the potion on Demetrius' eyes as well.
- Q8)** Both men are in love with Helena, so they quarrel.
Hermia is upset because Lysander no longer loves her.
Helena thinks that it is all a practical joke on her.
Hermia and Helena quarrel because they feel betrayed by each other.
- Q9)** He gives him ass' ears.
- Q10)** A love affair between an ugly, humble animal and a beautiful fairy queen seems ridiculous. They would look funny together.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Comedic Techniques

Answer the following questions to demonstrate your understanding of the content.

- What choice is Hermia given at the beginning of the play?

- Explain why daughters were expected to obey their fathers in 16th century England.

- List five key ingredients for a Shakespearean comedy.

- _____

- _____

- _____

- _____

- _____

- What is Oberon's first idea about using the potion?

- How does Oberon add to the plan in order to help the lovers?

- How does the additional plan go wrong?

- Explain how Puck tried to put things right.

- What problems do Puck's mistake cause?

- How does Puck transform Bottom?

- Explain why the relationship between Titania and Bottom is comical.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Making Mischief

Think, Pair, Share: Talk with a partner about some practical jokes you have heard about, or in which you have played a part.

You and your partner are to write a short story featuring a trick or a practical joke.

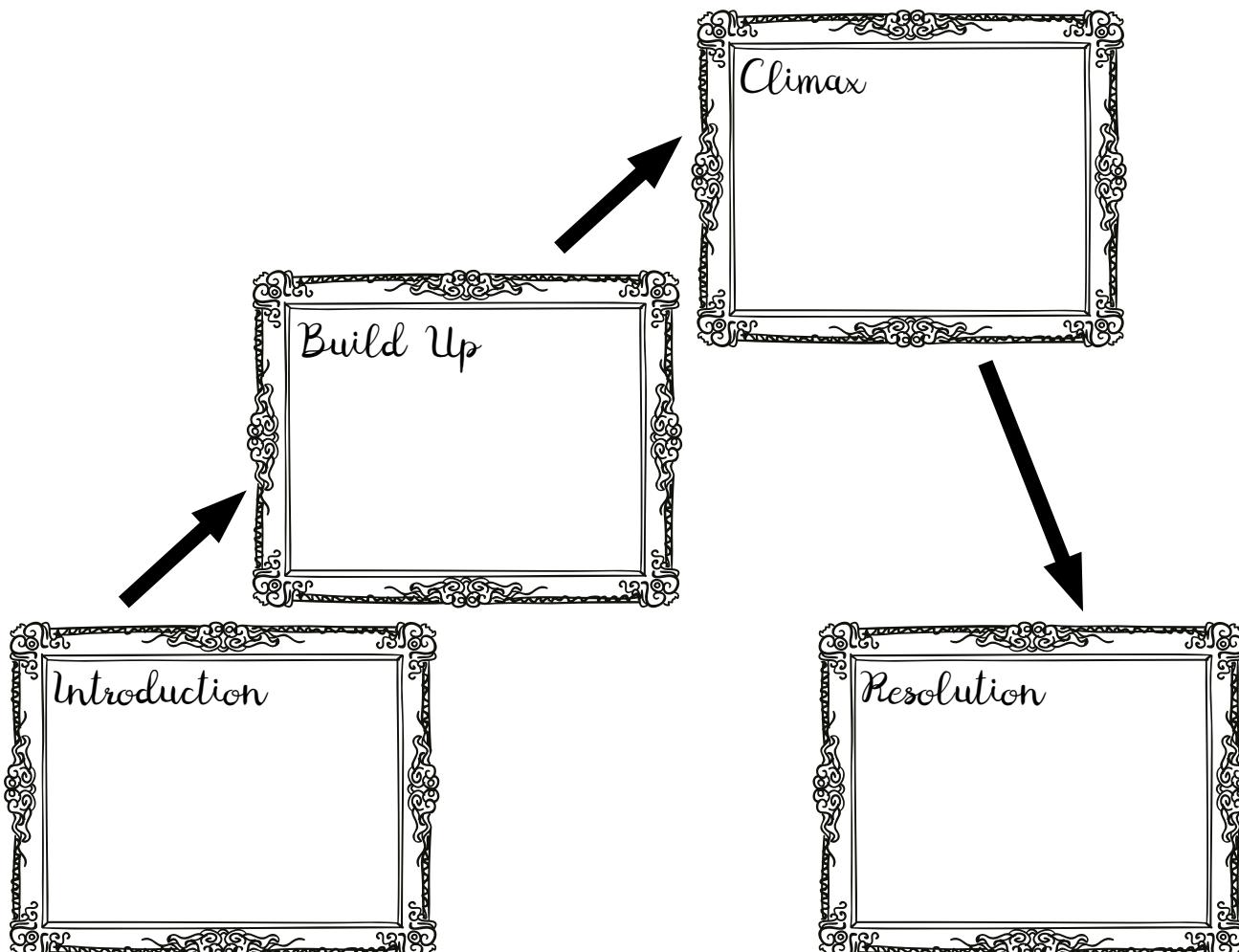
When planning your story, make sure you determine:

- the purpose of the trick, and
- its consequences.

The story can be told from the point of view of either the prankster or the victim. It can be invented or something that really happened. The prank could be realistic or it could even be magical/supernatural. For example, it can be played by a person or creature with special powers.

Plan your story in the space below before you begin.

Characters	
Point of view	
Setting	



A Midsummer Night's Dream

The Funniest Mechanicals' Play

The Comical Tragedy of Pyramus and Thisbe

In groups of at least five, produce your own version of the Mechanicals' Play.

Make it as funny as you can.

1. Read Act 5, Scene 1 from lines 166-330, omitting all the interruptions by Theseus, Hippolyta, and the lovers.
2. Allocate parts: Flute, Snout, Starveling, Bottom, and Snug. If you have enough people in your group, some students could be directors or the camera crew.

Note: Excluding the audience interruptions, your script is about 100 lines long.

3. Each actor should write or type his/her own script, including their own lines and cues from other actors.
4. Rehearse the scene, including as much comical action as you can. Make sure you know where your audience will be and what they will see.
5. Props and costumes: how could these enhance the comedic elements? Find or make items that will contribute to the impact of your show. They don't need to be elaborate or expensive.
6. You need to learn your lines so that you are free from the text and can add comic actions.
7. Rehearse and dress your scene.
8. Present your scene to an audience or make a film of it to show your class.



A Midsummer Night's Dream

Language Techniques

OBJECTIVE

To introduce students to the use of language techniques in the play, and in particular, to guide their deeper thinking about Shakespeare's use of metaphor and symbolism.

Key points explored are:

- What are the main language techniques Shakespeare draws upon in this play?
- How do the sub-plots reflect the plot?
- Why does Shakespeare engage with so many plots?

ACARA CONTENT DESCRIPTIONS

Recognise and analyse the ways that characterisation, events and settings are combined in narratives, and discuss the purposes and appeal of different approaches

(ACELT1622) Year 7 - Literature

Lesson Plans

RESOURCES

1. ClickView video:
[Shakespeare Uncovered - 'A Midsummer Night's Dream with Hugh Bonneville'](#)
2. Worksheet:
[Language Techniques](#)

LESSON PLAN

1. Return to the documentary video on ClickView Exchange: *Shakespeare Uncovered - 'A Midsummer Night's Dream with Hugh Bonneville'* to familiarise students with the language techniques in the play. Watch Chapter 6 where Hugh Bonneville discusses Helena's rhyming couplets. The purpose of this screening is to familiarise students with the idea that Shakespeare made deliberate language choices for effect.
2. Begin a class discussion about the following:
 - Why does Shakespeare have Helena speak in rhyming couplets? Is it deliberate? What does it symbolise?
 - What is a metaphor? What is a pun?
 - Do they exist in Shakespeare's play? What is their purpose?
 - What is intertextuality? Why is it an important technique in the construction of a Shakespearean play?
 - Does it simply add to our enjoyment when we recognise that the writer has referred to another story? Or does it have a deeper meaning?
3. Using dictionaries and the provided worksheets, ask students to write down a response to the technical questions drawing upon their classroom discussion, knowledge of the text, and viewing of the ClickView video.

Answers

LESSON PLAN

Worksheet: Language Techniques

- Q1)** Irony, puns, metaphor, simile, intertextuality, humour, rhyming couplets, scene changes, stage directions, blank verse.
- Q2)** The sub-plot of a warring married couple in the fairy world mirrors the chaos at the centre of the woods, as Hermia, Lysander, Demetrius, and Helena continually fight and argue. We remember too that Hippolyta's impending marriage to Theseus is strained and that some productions place emphasis on this strain. The plot and sub-plot of the fairies, young lovers, and royal couple collide to enhance the dramatic tension of the play, and to continue a theme that romantic love creates chaos.
- Q3)** In Shakespeare's time, the woods were a spiritually 'dark' and dangerous place where witches practised their craft and a setting where people commonly believed the supernatural existed (including fairies, elves and goblins). Shakespeare's decision to set the play in the woods and include devilish fairies conspiring to create adulterous acts (not to mention a Queen in love with a donkey) was a bold move - perhaps the equivalent of staging a play today about the royal family in the training-ground of terrorists. Shakespeare made references to Queen Elizabeth I that were more 'cheeky' than reverent about her rumoured love life. What makes the play special is the multi-layered plot which collapses reality with a dream-like imaginary world free of civilised constraint where the characters explore love as a way to unburden themselves of the rule of parents and the Athenian law. As we will explore later, the twin settings of the Athenian court and 'the wood' effectively symbolise the split between the civilised and imaginary worlds - the woods also suggest what Sigmund Freud would later refer to as the 'sub-conscious'.
- Q4)** Helena's rhyming couplets at once express her eloquence and education, but also her inner sense that civilised Athenian life revolves around marriage and forced partnerships. That is, on one level, the rhyming couplets express her anxiety about not being in a 'couple' and her pragmatic understanding of its necessity. On another level, the rhyming couplets show her capacity for love, joy, and exuberance, but also reflect her simplistic, child-like understanding and impatience with her frustrating predicament.
- Q5)** 'Intertextuality' refers to pointed references within the play to the narrative of other stories and plays. It also refers, less commonly, to humorous and ironic references within the play to the play itself (a technique otherwise known as 'irony'). For instance, we might say that Bottom is denied the role of Thisbe (wife to Pyramus) just as Hermia is denied the role of Lysander's wife. That the all-controlling Oberon determines who the young couples fall in love with as a comic mirror to Egeus and Theseus. We might say that the squabbling Theseus and Hippolyta (according to some productions) are a mirror of the squabbling Oberon and Titania. And in the story of Pyramus and Thisbe, we have an echo not only of the tragic fate of Hermia and Lysander (should Theseus condemn them to death), but also of Shakespeare's own play *Romeo and Juliet*, produced the same year as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. And in the story of the supernatural elements in the woods (where almost literally anything can happen), we have a reminder of the conceptually darker play, *Macbeth*. But we also remember that the source material for 'Pyramus and Thisbe' is Ovid, and the way that Shakespeare's intertextuality is perhaps nodding towards his ancient European sources as a way of celebrating the evolution of English drama.
- Q6)** Yes. The line is ironic in that Lysander presents his 'true love' as a river. That is, something real, natural, and permanent. It is an ironic image because on the one hand, we know that his 'true love' is transitory (or not real because it passes when he falls in love briefly with Helena in the woods). On the other hand, it is ironic because we know that later in the play, the 'true love' between Lysander and Hermia will suffer tremendous disruption and the image is therefore very much an understatement! In this way, the line is also a foreshadowing language device. It is also a pun, however. Look up the dictionary meaning of the word 'coarse'. Shakespeare would appear to be making a joke about the nature of young love and the way it is viewed unfavourably by parents. Don't forget, too, that Lysander has presented his love as a river. That is, the image is also a metaphor.
- Q7)** a) Yes. In the play within a play, 'Pyramus and Thisbe', we learn that the lovers are only able to speak to each other between a small hole in the wall.
b) The walls of family, the walls of society, the walls of social class and prejudice, the walls of understanding, the walls of the law.
c) Answers may vary.
- Q8)** Answers may vary.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Language Techniques



1. What are the main language techniques Shakespeare draws upon in this play?

2. How do the sub-plots reflect the plot itself?

3. Why does Shakespeare engage with so many plots? Is it effective?

4. Why does Shakespeare have Helena speak in rhyming couplets in Act 1, Scene 1? Is it deliberate? And if so, what does it symbolise?

5. What is intertextuality? Does Shakespeare engage with intertextuality in this play?
Is there an example of intertextuality within the play itself?

Hint: Who does the control-freak Oberon remind you of in the play? Egeus or Theseus?

6. What are the definitions of ‘irony’ and ‘pun’? Are there examples of irony and puns in the play?
Can a line contain both irony and a pun? And even more techniques?
Can one line contain multiple literary and dramatic techniques?

“The course of true love never did run smooth...” (Lysander to Hermia, Act 1, Scene 1)

What are other examples of puns in the play?



Shakespeare: “Slow down, you hack-sawed fool! Thou will confuse thy students who should simply be enjoying my verse!”

7. a) What is a ‘metaphor’? Are there examples of metaphors in the play?

- b) What are the symbolic or metaphorical ‘walls’ in the play that separate Lysander and Hermia?

- c) What are other examples of metaphors in the play? And importantly, are they effective?
Make an argument in the space beneath for your opinion.

8. What are the connotations of the title of the play itself? What are the connotations of 'dream'? Circle the explanations that you most agree with, then explain why in the space provided below.

- a) The 'dream' in the title suggests a literal sleep dream.
- b) The 'dream' in the title suggests a daydream.
- c) The 'dream' in the title is a reference to the long nights of an English midsummer where the light lingers and therefore the dream world collides with the real world.
- d) The 'dream' in the title suggests the way that love, nature, and beauty are illusions (like a dream itself), figuratively made up of transitional seasons. We each fall in love and out of love as though we exist in the confusing structure of a dream.



Shakespeare: "The language of my play is straightforward and simple. Yes, I pun a little, but keep it simple when explaining my language to students. It's meant to be funny! The language of love is to be enjoyed, not 'analysed', thou poppin-headed, sun-burnt, clay-brained whoreson! You will never know what I meant to say as the author."



Barthes: "Actually, I don't care what you intended to write. I'll interpret it the way I read it. Death to the author!"



Referee: "Time out!"



Trump: "I'm with the dead bald guy. Leave the kids alone and let them enjoy the play! On second thoughts, make them join the army!"



Referee: "You stay out of this, sir. Aren't you busy enough already?"

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Close Reading Analysis

OBJECTIVE

To introduce students to the close reading of textual passages. To have students appreciate, enjoy and engage with the play. The various passages and their questions cater for a range of students. The questions are designed so that students may build upon the previous lesson centred on language techniques.

Key points explored are:

- What does a close reading of the play show us about Shakespeare's literary and dramatic purpose?
- What does it show us about Shakespeare's intention to create a fun and humorous play?

ACARA CONTENT DESCRIPTIONS

Apply increasing knowledge of vocabulary, text structures and language features to understand the content of texts

(ACELY1733) Year 8 - Literacy

Lesson Plans

RESOURCES

1. ClickView Exchange video:
[A Midsummer Night's Dream \(1999\)](#) directed by Michael Hoffman
2. Worksheet:
[Close Reading Analysis](#)

LESSON PLAN

1. Watch this video on the Exchange: [A Midsummer Night's Dream \(1999\)](#) directed by Michael Hoffman. Following a complete viewing of this Hollywood production, have students return to the text and re-familiarise themselves with Shakespeare's verse.
2. Draw upon the worksheets to have students study a passage of the play suitable to their ability level. Ask students to write down a response to the questions on the worksheets provided - drawing upon their classroom discussion, knowledge of the text, and viewing of the Hollywood production.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Close Reading Studies

EGEUS

Full of vexation come I, with complaint
Against my child, my daughter Hermia.
Stand forth, Demetrius. My noble lord,
This man hath my consent to marry her.
Stand forth, Lysander; and my gracious duke,
This man hath bewitch'd the bosom of my child;
Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes,
And interchanged love-tokens with my child:
Thou hast by moonlight at her window sung,
With feigning voice verses of feigning love,
And stolen the impression of her fantasy
With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gawds, conceits,
Knacks, trifles, nosegays, sweetmeats, messengers
Of strong prevailment in unharden'd youth:
With cunning hast thou filch'd my daughter's heart,
Turn'd her obedience, which is due to me,
To stubborn harshness: and, my gracious duke,
Be it so she; will not here before your grace
Consent to marry with Demetrius,
I beg the ancient privilege of Athens,
As she is mine, I may dispose of her:
Which shall be either to this gentleman
Or to her death, according to our law
Immediately provided in that case.

(Act 1, Scene 1)

- 1) What is Egeus exactly accusing Lysander of doing to his daughter Hermia? Is he subtly accusing him of performing magic upon her? Of stealing her heart? Does it sound likely? Without referring to a study guide translation, attempt to write in modern English what Egeus says to the Duke.

Rewatch the opening scene of the film, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1999) to gain a sense of whether Shakespeare regards this a comic scene.

Is it meant to be funny? Is it the rant of a crazy, jealous father?

Write your translation down.

(Extension Activity: Identify the language techniques of this passage).

DEMETRIUS

Relent, sweet Hermia: and, Lysander, yield
Thy crazed title to my certain right

LYSANDER

You have her father's love, Demetrius;
Let me have Hermia's: do you marry him.

EGEUS

Scornful Lysander! true, he hath my love,
And what is mine my love shall render him.
And she is mine, and all my right of her
I do estate unto Demetrius.

(Act 1, Scene 1)

- 2) What is Lysander telling Demetrius in response to his demand that Hermia marry him? Does Egeus' response make the situation even more ridiculous still? What does Egeus say in response to the claim that Demetrius has his love? Is Egeus effectively claiming to 'own' Hermia?

Rewatch the same scene in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1999) to gain a better understanding of your own belief.

Write your answer down.

(Extension Activity: Identify the language techniques of this passage)

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Theatre and Film Productions

OBJECTIVE

To have students experience a range of productions of the play. To have students consider the way that the cinematic medium alters and transforms our expectations of the text.

Key points explored are:

- A consideration of costumes, staging, and set design in the play, and how the play is usually performed and staged.
- Questioning if directors always aim for humour in the play and what exactly is 'physical acting'? Why is it so important?

ACARA CONTENT DESCRIPTIONS

Explore and explain the ways authors combine different modes and media in creating texts, and the impact of these choices on the viewer/listener

(ACELY1735) Year 8 - Literacy

Lesson Plans

RESOURCES

1. ClickView video:
[A Midsummer Night's Dream \(Globe Theatre version\)](#)
[A Midsummer Night's Dream \(2016\) directed by Russell T Davies](#)
2. Worksheet:
[Theatre and Film Productions](#)

LESSON PLAN

1. Watch the various ClickView Exchange versions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, including the Globe Theatre production and adaptation of the play by Russell T. Davis with allusions to fascist-era set design.
2. Begin a class discussion using the following questions:
 - How would you stage the play to demonstrate your best ideas about its meaning?
 - Would you even stage it as a play in a theatre or would you instead stage the play as a ballet? Or a mime?
 - Would the play be better represented outdoors in a wood or in a theatrical environment where you could control the lighting and props?
 - Would you leave the play in its same order or would you cut out particular scenes and characters?
 - In your opinion, who are the most expendable characters? What scenes add little to the meaning of the play?
 - Would you stage the play in a modern and abstract setting as Peter Brook did in 1970, or would you costume your characters in Elizabethan clothing? Why would you make this decision?
 - Do you believe that the play teaches us anything about modern life in the 21st century? How would you stage the play to reflect these ideas?
3. Draw upon the worksheets to have students study a passage of the play suitable to their ability. Ask students to write down a response to the questions on the worksheets provided - drawing upon their classroom discussion, knowledge of the text, and viewing of the BBC production.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Theatre and Film Productions

1. Which theatrical or cinematic production did you most enjoy? Give reasons for your choice.

2. In Russell T Davies' 2016 production, the opening scene evokes the fascist-era of the 1930's. Is this an effective way to present the power and control that Egeus and Theseus possess over Hermia? Or is it 'over the top'? Give reasons for your answer.

3. Imagine you are staging the play for a 21st century London audience. Create your own adaptation or appropriation. What are the current world issues you would allude to in your staging of the play? Make some quick notes and bullet points about how you would like your play to appear on stage.

4. Now begin to sketch a scene from your play onto a blank piece of paper. Draw one or two of your costumes, set design, and props.



Class discussion:

Shakespeare deliberately skips and jumps between scenes in the play to mimic the effects of a dream; everything is disordered and nothing makes any sense. That is, the form of the play perfectly mirrors its concept - 'reality' as being unstable and not to be trusted.

– Writing a Letter –



Activity

Some academics and scholars argue that in the representation of the Mechanicals, Shakespeare is making comedy out of non-professional (or ‘bad’) actors that Shakespeare might have known when he was younger. *Disagree* with those who argue that the play is either making fun of the lower classes or bad actors.

Write a letter to these academics explaining your counter-argument.

Thinking points:

Could the 'bad actors' who continually interpret and misinterpret 'Pyramus and Thisbe' be a reference to the way that we ourselves continually misinterpret our own dreams? Or the idea that we are all 'bad actors' in the 'dream' of life? Is the play and its treatment of the Mechanicals really as literal as the academic would have us believe? Or is there another interpretation possible?

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Writing and Dramatic Activities

OBJECTIVE

To finish this unit of work by having students write detailed compositions about their deeper ideas about the play. Furthermore, to have students perform sections of the play in a class performance.

- Students will write detailed extended (and short) compositions demonstrating their understanding and interpretation of the play. Furthermore, they will draw upon the previous lesson to experiment dramatically by staging part-scenes, and where possible with iPads (or video recording devices), creating short films in which they manipulate sound and images to create their illustrated vision and set design.

ACARA CONTENT DESCRIPTIONS

Use interaction skills for identified purposes, using voice and language conventions to suit different situations, selecting vocabulary, modulating voice and using elements such as music, images and sound for specific effects

(ACELY1804, ACELY1808) Year 7, 8 - Literacy

Lesson Plans

RESOURCES

- ClickView video:
[A Midsummer Night's Dream \(Globe Theatre version\)](#)
[A Midsummer Night's Dream \(2016\) directed by Russell T Davies](#)
 - Worksheet:
[Writing and Dramatic Activities](#)
 - iPads or video recording devices
 - Video editing software of choice
-

LESSON PLAN

- Using the worksheets, ask students to select question/s that suit their level of understanding to draft a series of responses.
- Have students demonstrate their understanding of the play by staging part-scenes and/or filming their performances with sound effects and 'special effects' added in the editing.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Writing and Dramatic Activities



Choose ONE (1) or TWO (2) of the following questions and create an extended composition, drawing upon key quotes and techniques from the play to support your answer(s).

1. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a play which challenges a male way of thinking about the world.

Hint: That is, it asks the question: can men ever really hope to 'order' a world governed by the emotion of love?

2. Why does Shakespeare end a play about romantic love with poetry, song, and whimsy?

Hint: What is the comment Shakespeare ultimately makes about romantic love? Is it an antidote to the law, regulations, honour, status, and religion? Is love the magical agent which frees us from society and its 'civilised' expectations?

3. Is Shakespeare making fun of amateur drama or is he drawing upon the humour, comic tensions, and rivalries of amateur drama to mimic the squabbles of love?

4. To what extent is the play simply about dreaming itself? Give reasons for your answer.

5. What is the idea behind Titania falling in love with Bottom as an ass?

Hint: Is it a metaphor that her love is dominated by 'animal instincts'? Or is it a layered joke that her husband Oberon is an ass? "Methoughts my husband was an ass".

6. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a play that should simply be enjoyed as a fun experience of theatre.

To what extent do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer.

Extension Activity

7. What is Shakespeare saying about the role of dreams and the 'subconscious' in our daily lives?



Freud: "Let me answer that! Tell the students to first research my ground-breaking work on the subconscious."

– Rehearsals! Which character are you? –



Activity

1. Choose a scene from the play (in consultation with your teacher) and aim to act out three 3 minutes of it.
2. Refer to the illustrations of set design and costume in the previous lesson to experiment with your staging.
3. Where possible, record your performance with iPads (or other video recording devices) to create a short film in which you manipulate sound and images to reflect your desired vision for the costumes and set design.



You might like to begin your rehearsals by experimenting with the humour of the following passage by the Rude Mechanicals:

FLUTE

Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE

Flute, you must take Thisby on you.

FLUTE

What is Thisby? a wandering knight?

QUINCE

It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

FLUTE

Nay, faith, let me not play a woman; I have a beard coming.

QUINCE

That's all one: you shall play it in a mask, and
you may speak as small as you will.

BOTTOM

An I may hide my face, let me play Thisby too, I'll
speak in a monstrous little voice. 'Thisne,
'Thisne;' 'Ah, Pyramus, lover dear! thy Thisby dear,
and lady dear!'

Macbeth

Introduction and Context

OBJECTIVE

To introduce/reintroduce the study of William Shakespeare and ask students to consider why we study his plays in a secondary context. To have students consider the literary and dramatic context of the play and the problem of staging witches in a Jacobean era play.

Key points explored are:

- Why should we read Shakespeare?
- What is the play about? Who are the central characters?
- Where is the play variously set?
- Why did Shakespeare set the play in Scotland?

ACARA CONTENT DESCRIPTIONS

Recognise and analyse the ways that characterisation, events and settings are combined in narratives, and discuss the purposes and appeal of different approaches
(ACELT1622) Year 7 - Literature

Lesson Plans

RESOURCES

1. ClickView video:
[Shakespeare: The Animated Tales - 'Macbeth'](#)
[Macbeth: The Tragic Pair](#)
2. Worksheet:
[Key Character Descriptions](#)
[The Tragic Pair's Fun Facts](#)
[Plot and Character Overview](#)

LESSON PLAN

1. Distribute the starter worksheet, *Key Character Descriptions*. Play the ClickView Exchange video, *Shakespeare: The Animated Tales - 'Macbeth'*, to acquaint students with the plot, characters, and setting of the play. Ask students to complete the worksheet whilst watching the video. The next programme which should be viewed to better acquaint students with the historical context and geography of the play is: '*Macbeth: The Tragic Pair*'. The programme intersperses actors performing part scenes and discussion about the Jacobean context. The benefit of the programme is that it provides an excellent overview of the play centred on a mixture of history, geography and drama, including a focus on language, imagery, and the role of soliloquies. Ask students to complete the *The Tragic Pair's Fun Facts* worksheet whilst watching the video.
2. **Begin a class discussion using the following questions:**
 - Why should we read Shakespeare? For fun and entertainment? Or to learn about life? Or is it because Shakespeare is a part of our literary and cultural inheritance?
 - Can we learn about life on a deeper level and simultaneously have fun?
 - Did Shakespeare's plays deliberately delve into thorny issues of love, power, and family problems to teach us a lesson about life?
 - Should we first consider whether Shakespeare actually meant to say what we commonly think, believe, and interpret in his plays?
 - What are the Shakespearean plays with which you are familiar?
3. Distribute the *Plot and Character Overview* worksheet and allow students to work through questions 1-7.
4. Discuss answers as a class.
5. Allow three minutes for students to complete the quiz on question 8 of the worksheet and then go through the answers as a class. The question tests students' knowledge about characters' names and events in the play.

Answers

LESSON PLAN

Worksheet: Key Character Descriptions

Lady Macbeth; Duncan; Lady Macduff; Malcolm; Banquo; Donalbain; Fleance; Macbeth; Macduff

Worksheet: The Tragic Pair's Fun Facts

King James I	The King's Men	Witches/cast spells
	soliloquies	He resembled her father as he slept
	Cleansing her hands with water	Macduff

Worksheet: Plot and Character Overview

- Q1)** The central characters: The Royal House of Scotland, including Duncan, King of Scotland, and his two sons Malcolm and Donalbain. The Thanes, including Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, Banquo and his son Fleance, Ross, Macduff, and Lady Macduff. The supernatural world of the Three Witches, Hecate and other apparitions and witches. The play is set in Scotland for a variety of possible reasons:
- to pay respect to his friend and new monarch, James I
 - to honour James I as a patron of his company, as was the practice in the 16th and 17th century
 - to honour James I via his ancestor Banquo - previously known in *Holinshed's Chronicles* as a murderer and villain (by repositioning Banquo as an honourable man who produces a long line of Scottish kings the play is actually less controversial than most think);
 - to publicly promote the philosophy of James I that kings ought to be virtuous, not ambitious and ruthless;
 - to place the taboo element of witchcraft on the stage in a foreign context at one remove from England;
 - once again, as with *Romeo and Juliet* and *Othello*, to set the play in a foreign country while making pointed comments about contemporary England.
- Q4)** What makes the play special is the rich poetry and dramatic action condensed into one of Shakespeare's briefest plays (2477 lines). The play's form is just as mysterious and elusive as its supernatural content - the plot appears on the one hand to be unfolding at breakneck speed (Macbeth learns of the witches' prophecy in Act 1, Scene 3 and is already on the way to Scone to be crowned king by Act 2, Scene 4), however, upon reflection we realise that the play contains numerous soliloquies and private musings and speculations within Dunsinane (including the wandering of Lady Macbeth) to make it appear that time has stood still.
- Q5)** (i) The similarities to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are obvious. Another play partially set at 'A desolate place' where the supernatural mingles with the real world. In Shakespeare's age witches were outcasts (mostly poor, single, elderly women), superstitiously blamed for all sorts of misfortunes suffered by the general public - especially outbreaks of the plague and the periodic lack of harvest. England under Elizabeth I was not as punitive towards witches as their European neighbours who would burn them at a stake for their crimes, however, the ascension of James I brought a different attitude towards the supernatural. James I had already written an 80-page book on witchcraft while he wasn't King of Scotland between 1590-1603 and regarded himself an expert. After coronation as the English monarch in 1603 he soon passed a law that permitted the torture of witches, but it seems that he may have been embarrassed by his former obsession in his new role as king in a land of intellectuals and philosophical conversation; witches were not as persecuted in England under his reign as they were in Scotland. Shakespeare references the topic of witchcraft to formally break a taboo topic and bring it out into the open.
(ii) Shakespeare subtly mocks the intellectual-pretensions of the new, non-English monarch and puts on stage the very topic he wishes to bury.
(iii) Shakespeare dares James I to punish him for exploring a topic that is officially banned.
(iv) Appears unlikely. Nonetheless, Shakespeare took considerable risk in placing witches on the stage, especially considering that in his own day, to have actors (or 'players') perform witchcraft on stage and conjure the devil was tantamount to the act itself.
- Q8)** a) F, b) T, c) F, d) T, e) F, f) T, g) F, h) T,
i) T, j) F, k) T, l) T, m) F, n) F, o) T, p) T, q) F,
r) T, s) T, t) F, u) T, v) T, w) T, x) F, y) T, z) F

Macbeth

Key Character Descriptions

Write down the name of the character next to their corresponding descriptions.



Description	Name of character
Urges Macbeth to kill the King and seize the crown	
King of Scotland who is murdered by Macbeth	
Innocent victim who is murdered together with her young son	
First son of the King of Scotland, next in line to the throne	
Murdered by Macbeth and appears as a ghost at a banquet	
Duncan's second son	
Banquo's son, who survives Macbeth's attempt to murder him	
Once a Scottish general who eventually commits many murders to fulfil his ambition for the throne	
Desires vengeance for Macbeth's murder of his family and ultimately attains his goal in the final battle	

Macbeth

The Tragic Pair's Fun Facts

Complete the questions on the worksheet with information from the video.



At the time when Macbeth was written, who ruled the kingdoms of both Scotland and England?

Although the play is believed to have first been performed at the Globe in 1606, the first folio was not printed until 1623, seven years after Shakespeare died. It was thanks to his fellow actors publishing the play that it became so famous and well regarded.



_____ was the acting company that which William Shakespeare belonged to, acted, and wrote for.

Macbeth is the shortest Shakespearean tragedy.



King James was the victim of a failed plot against his power, where some noblemen had hired _____ to _____ against the King.



In 1605, a year before the play Macbeth was first thought to be performed, a plot to assassinate King James by a group of English Catholics was revealed. The rebellious group had planned to blow up the House of Lords with explosives! 36 barrels of gunpowder were discovered hidden in the House of Lords, guarded by Guy Fawkes. The narrow escape is commemorated each year, and the reason why people in England have Bonfire Night and fireworks on the 5th November.



Shakespeare's use of

_____ are often believed to be a way to connect the audience to the characters' innermost selves.



What reason does Lady Macbeth give for not killing the King herself?



The Queen in Disney's Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs similarity to Lady Macbeth is no coincidence. Walt Disney purposely drew inspiration from Lady Macbeth's various interpretations on stage and screen. He was quoted as envisioning the Evil Queen as "a mixture of Lady Macbeth and the Big Bad Wolf...her beauty is sinister, mature, and has plenty of curves..."



Lady Macbeth initially believes herself and Macbeth can repent their sins by performing what action?



Macbeth is finally killed by

_____ who becomes the new King.

It is regarded as deeply unlucky for an actor to call the play by its title 'Macbeth' during a production or inside a theatre. Most actors do not even call it 'Macbeth' even if they are not performing the play. They refer to it as 'The Scottish Play'.

Macbeth

Plot and Character Overview

- What is the story about? Who are the central characters? Why is the play set in Scotland?

- What did Macbeth actually do to the Norwegian soldier?

Work with your teacher to translate this passage:

Sergeant

*For brave Macbeth--well he deserves that name--
Disdaining fortune, with his brandish'd steel,
Which smoked with bloody execution,
Like valour's minion carved out his passage
Till he faced the slave;
Which ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him,
Till he unseam'd him from the nave to the chaps,
And fix'd his head upon our battlements.*

- What does the passage tell us about the historical context of Scotland?

Hint: Is Macbeth admired for his loyalty to Scotland or simply his pure physical strength to rip a sword through a man's torso? What does this tell us about the value placed upon soldiers in the age of James I?



What would Donald Trump tweet about the plot of 'Macbeth'?

*"Play about a soldier who tells the king 'you're fired!' and takes his job. I said it first!
And I had better television ratings than any production of Shakespeare!"*

Write your own tweet about the play beneath:

140 Characters

Tweet

- What makes this play so special?

5. What would contemporary audiences have understood that modern audiences do not? Why could the play have been considered offensive to a Scottish monarch? Why was it bold for Shakespeare to have put witches on the stage? Could he have been arrested under the Jacobean law?



6. What do students usually find difficult and enjoyable about this text?

I'll answer that one!

The bloodthirsty nature of the Macbeths. The sheer evil of their plan to murder their way to power. Macbeth's transformation from valiant soldier and nervous dinner party host to resolved murderer and paranoid king. Lady Macbeth's alternate transformation from logical thinker and criminal mastermind to a ghost-like, suicidal queen washing blood that isn't there from her hands.

Some students find it difficult to understand what Malcolm and Macduff talk about in England, and it is genuinely difficult because Malcolm speaks ironically to the crest-fallen Macduff whose family has just been murdered. And don't forget the supernatural world! How do the witches know what is in Macbeth's heart, mind, and future? Why do the witches appear to both Macbeth and Banquo in Act 1 but then only to Macbeth later in the play? Why does Macbeth see the knife and Banquo's ghost? And what is that epileptic fit about at the dinner party? If Macbeth *dreamt* up seeing the knife and Banquo, has he also earlier dreamt up seeing the witches? But then how did Banquo see the witches too? Or is it just that Macbeth 'sold his soul' to the witches in Act 1 and evil forces are thereafter playing tricks on him?

7. Research five (5) more interesting facts about *Macbeth* and write these in the space below.

Hint! Research the scene with the Porter in Act 2, Scene 3. His monologue inspires a modern joke. What is that joke? The answer might surprise you!

8. True or False?

A quick quiz to be answered in less than 3 minutes to test your knowledge. Set your timers... and go!

T / F

a	Macbeth is married to Lady Macduff.	
b	Fleance is the son of Banquo.	
c	The witches prophesise that Banquo will be King of Scotland.	
d	The witches prophesise that Macbeth will be Thane of Cawdor and then King of Scotland.	
e	Lady Macbeth personally murders King Duncan.	
f	Lady Macbeth cannot murder King Duncan because he looks like her own father.	
g	Macbeth murders Duncan with hemlock in a glass of wine.	
h	Macbeth murders Duncan off-stage.	
i	Lady Macbeth drugs the two men guarding Duncan.	
j	Lady Macbeth initially panics about murdering Duncan but her husband convinces her otherwise.	
k	Macbeth initially panics but Lady Macbeth encourages him to go ahead with the murder of Duncan.	
l	Macduff arrives very soon after the murder of Duncan.	
m	Macduff sees Duncan's ghost wandering around in a state of panic after his murder by Macbeth and this raises his suspicions.	
n	Macduff immediately accuses Macbeth of murdering Duncan.	
o	Macbeth admits to Macduff that he murdered the guards in a fit of rage after finding the king dead.	
p	Malcolm and Donaldbain escape to England and Ireland after their father's murder.	
q	Macbeth is anointed King of Scotland on the night of Duncan's murder, then and there in his own castle.	
r	Macbeth fears the prophesy of the three witches and has two murderers kill Banquo.	
s	The two murderers are unsuccessful in killing Banquo's son, Fleance.	
t	Macbeth personally kills Macduff's family.	
u	Malcolm and Macduff meet in England and Malcolm discusses how he will rule Scotland after Macbeth's reign has ended.	
v	The first prophesy of the witches which proves false is that the Birnam Wood appears to actually move towards Macbeth's castle at Dunsinane.	
w	Lady Macbeth rubs away blood on her hands towards the end of the play and cries to herself: 'Out, damned spot!'	
x	Macbeth meets with Macduff in Act 5 and agrees to abdicate the Scottish throne.	
y	Macbeth learns that the witches' prophesies have misled and deceived him but decides to fight Macduff anyway.	
z	At the end of the play, Banquo's son Fleance is made king, just as the witches prophesised.	



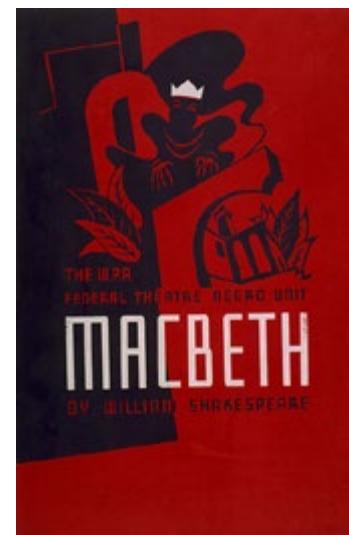
Shakespeare: If you're going to intellectualise my play, why not consider that *Macbeth* is set north of Hadrian's Wall? What does that mean? Thou simpering, pig-bellied, spectacle-lolling, stamp-licker!



FUN FACTS - Did You Know?

(Points to help you better understand the play or else to simply inform and amuse)

- The traditional English literature murder mystery where someone is murdered at a dinner party (and overnight house-stay) and the suspected murderers all stand around the morning after is taken from *Macbeth*. For example: Agatha Christie's novels and television shows in the same genre.
- Macbeth's father's name is Sinel.
- Two key narrative aspects of *The Lord of the Rings* were borrowed from *Macbeth*: namely, the 'man not born of woman' line which results in Tolkien's witch-king killed by a woman, and the idea of the forest moving when the Ents destroy Isengard.
- The first all black cast of *Macbeth* was staged in 1936 in Harlem, New York by the legendary Orson Welles.



- When we learn that Macbeth has ripped through the torso of a Norwegian soldier "from the nave to the chaps" we recognise that this makes Macbeth exceedingly strong. The sword would normally get stuck in the soldier's abdomen.
- The play refers to the real life Scottish king who lived in the 11th century but largely only as a character outline and even then, Shakespeare makes a well-liked king an evil tyrant.
- The name of the original, real life Macbeth was *Mac Bethad mac Findláich*.
- The play refers to war between Norway and Scotland. Historically this war occurred after Macbeth's era, between 1262-1266.

Class discussion:

Is Shakespeare asking us to question how a man such as Macbeth comes to be regarded so highly for acts of butchery performed in war? Is Shakespeare asking us to consider the difference between killing in the context of war and murder in the context of civil society? Macbeth does both. Only the latter is considered morally wrong in Shakespeare's time however. What is your opinion? Is it always wrong to kill?

Macbeth

Themes and Concepts

OBJECTIVE

To introduce/reintroduce the study of William Shakespeare and ask students to consider why we study his plays in a secondary context. To have students consider the literary and dramatic context of the play and the problem of staging witches in a Jacobean era play.

Key points explored are:

- What ideas or themes is the play exploring?
- What are the concepts which arise from these themes?

ACARA CONTENT DESCRIPTIONS

Recognise and analyse the ways that characterisation, events and settings are combined in narratives, and discuss the purposes and appeal of different approaches

(ACELT1622) Year 7 - Literature

Lesson Plans

RESOURCES

1. ClickView video:
Shakespeare Uncovered - 'Ethan Hawke on Macbeth'
2. Worksheet:
Themes and Concepts

LESSON PLAN

1. Play the ClickView Exchange video: *Shakespeare Uncovered - 'Ethan Hawke on Macbeth'* to refamiliarise students with the ideas, themes and concepts of the play.
2. **Begin a class discussion on the following topic:**
 - Is Shakespeare presenting the idea that we commonly value traits such as ambition, honour, and even revenge until we see them practised in real life? And that these virtues are taught to us as children without any thought to how they manifest when we attempt to enact them? Or is Shakespeare presenting us with a play in which revenge is held up as a noble value (Macduff's revenge upon Macbeth)?
 - In your opinion, where does Shakespeare stand on the issue of ambition, honour, and revenge?
 - Does Shakespeare show us the problem of over-weaning ambition? Or is ambition treated as a natural human trait which inevitably leads to murder and treason?
 - What about guilt and 'karma'? Does Shakespeare show us that a guilty conscience over our crimes will eventually destroy us?
 - In Shakespeare's world, is there a natural justice which 'evens out' our wrongdoing? (Remembering Macbeth's soliloquy in Act 1, Scene 7).
3. Using the provided worksheets, ask students to write down a response to the thematic questions on the worksheets - ('Ambition and Power', 'Guilty Consciences and Natural Justice') drawing upon their classroom discussion, knowledge of the text, and viewing of productions and documentaries.

Macbeth

Themes and Concepts



1. What are the major ideas or themes of this play?

2. In the space beneath, write down a ONE paragraph response in which you argue the main idea or theme in the play, building upon one of the ideas above.

As a starting point, consider which of the following statements you *agree with* in regards to the play's ideas and themes:

The play is about...

- a) The power of ambition to make us commit terrible crimes.
- b) The importance of honour and trust in society.
- c) The way that childless couples have sad and empty lives.
- d) The proper way to revenge crime through the example of Macduff.
- e) The natural justice of the world.
- f) The way that a guilty conscience will follow us around when we have committed a serious crime.
- g) The way that killing in war is fundamentally different to murdering a civilian.
- h) The way that the supernatural world commonly affects our lives without us recognising the problem.
- i) The way that we should never trust those in power in society.

Class discussion:

The play's form is just as mysterious and elusive as its supernatural content - the plot appears, on the one hand, to be unfolding at breakneck speed (Macbeth learns of the witches' prophecy in Act 1, Scene 3 and is already on the way to Scone to be crowned king by Act 2, Scene 4), however, upon reflection, we realise that the play contains numerous soliloquies and private musings and speculations within Dunsinane (including the wandering of Lady Macbeth) to make it appear that time has stood still. One of Shakespeare's themes appears to be that 'time stands still' for those with a guilty conscience, forever obsessed by the consequence and impending justice of their crimes. Do you agree with this idea?

– Ambition and Power –

3. **Thinking point prior to writing about themes:** *Macbeth* is a play about the consequences of ambition and the lust for power. In Shakespeare's play, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's desire for power is driven by a fierce ambition that they cannot stop. Ambition is commonly seen in the 21st century as a desirable trait that 'drives' us towards our goals, but what is the value of ambition if what we seek is not fulfilling, against the law, and destined to create a life of guilt and remorse?

 - a) Write TWO paragraphs in which you make an argument that Macbeth is justified in killing Duncan to fulfil his ambition of becoming the king. What are your reasons for arguing this way?
 - b) Now write TWO paragraphs in which you make an argument that Macbeth's ambitions were driven by the witches and his wife, and that deep down, Macbeth had little ambition to be king of Scotland. What are your reasons for arguing this way?

Points you might consider include:

- Should an old and ineffective king be allowed to continue in their reign if better candidates for his role exist?
 - Doesn't someone who loves their country have a duty to volunteer their services for their nation?
 - Don't we encourage men and women to volunteer their services to their country as soldiers when their nation is at war?
 - Why should that same spirit of volunteerism be any different when the king is old, weak, and ineffective?
 - Does conventional morality apply in a situation where a king is weak, or should we simply do what is right for the country and topple that monarch? Or is it the case that the ambition is plain and simple greed?
 - Who should determine when the king is too weak and old to fulfill his role? Strong men like Macbeth acting alone? Or should we distrust men and women who would use physical force and even murder to become our all-powerful rulers?
 - Who should be the guardians of our society? What are the consequences of ambition in such a society?
 - Should we always value ambition for ambition's sake? Or should we be led by moral principles in how we conduct ourselves in the public world?



Shakespeare: "Don't forget that without ambition and the desire for power I wouldn't have written this play in the first place, nor forced my players to move around the stage speaking my lines. Malcolm is also ambitious to be the king, and Banquo ambitious for his sons to be kings. It was only Macbeth's murder of Duncan which made any of their own ambitions possible. It's not a simple answer! Think deeply, thou loathsome, whey-faced, detestable kite!"

– Guilty Consciences and Natural Justice –

4. **Thinking point prior to writing about themes:** *Macbeth* is a play about the guilty conscience we live with in the aftermath of committing a serious crime. It is about the way that Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are deceived into believing that fate and destiny will disguise their horrible, bloody acts. The married couple believe that it is Macbeth's destiny to be king (owing to the witches' prophesies), but Shakespeare shows us the gut-wrenching guilt that they both live with in the aftermath of the death of Duncan, Banquo, Lady Macduff, and her children.

Is Shakespeare attempting to show his audience that the imaginary world is not so much illusory as dangerous? That his era's obsession with the supernatural world and their arguments over whether or not it was real overlooked the main fault with any such debate: it ignored the question of *why* people engage with the supernatural world.

Do people engage with prophesies and potions and the spirit world for any other reason but to advance their own selfish ends? Is there a type of natural justice or ‘karma’ in the world which punishes those whose greed and lust for power interferes with the lives of others? Thinking ahead to the technical aspect of the play, does the ‘blood’ on Lady Macbeth’s hands symbolise the way that her imaginary world has overtaken her ordinary senses?

- c) Write TWO paragraphs in which you make an argument that Shakespeare warns his audience against the evils of the supernatural world and shows the forces of 'natural justice' at work. Draw from examples in the play to prove your point. What are your reasons for arguing this way?
 - d) Now write TWO paragraphs in which you make an argument that Shakespeare conversely shows us that the supernatural world is not to be feared - as long as we live good lives dominated by concern for others. Draw from examples in the play to prove your point. What are your reasons for arguing this way?

Points you might consider include:

- Banquo also sights the witches in Act 1, and while initially tempted by their words, does not entertain their prophesies, knowing them to be inherently dangerous.
 - While Banquo is murdered, his son Fleance survives (is natural justice at play here or just fate?) Macduff's family is murdered, however, he eventually revenges himself against Macbeth and is the instrument of 'natural justice' against Scotland's evil tyrant.
 - Malcolm also suffers at the hands of Macbeth's greedy ambition, but eventually regains his father's stolen crown.
 - It is arguable that Shakespeare sides with those who would argue against witches and the supernatural world, but if he did so, then why did he make the witches such fascinating and entertaining characters?

Macbeth

Language Techniques

OBJECTIVE

To introduce students to the use of language techniques in the play, and in particular, to guide their deeper thinking about Shakespeare's use of metaphor and symbolism.

Key points explored are:

- What are the main language techniques Shakespeare draws upon in this play?
- Can you spot language techniques in the play?

ACARA CONTENT DESCRIPTIONS

Recognise and analyse the ways that characterisation, events and settings are combined in narratives, and discuss the purposes and appeal of different approaches
(ACELT1622) Year 7 - Literature

Lesson Plans

RESOURCES

1. ClickView video:
[This Is Shakespeare! in Macbeth - 'Minor Characters'](#)
[Shakespeare in Perspective - 'Macbeth'](#)
[This Is Shakespeare! in Macbeth - 'Dramatic Techniques'](#)
2. Worksheet:
[Language Techniques](#)

LESSON PLAN

1. Play the ClickView production: *This Is Shakespeare! in Macbeth* - 'Minor Characters', and on the Exchange: *Shakespeare in Perspective* - 'Macbeth' to familiarise students with some of the language techniques in the play. The purpose of these screenings is to familiarise students with the idea that Shakespeare made deliberate language choices for effect. Another worthwhile (and humorous) ClickView production is: *This Is Shakespeare! in Macbeth* - 'Dramatic Techniques'.
2. Begin a class discussion using the following questions:
 - Why does Shakespeare draw upon the Porter for humour at such a critical part of the play? Is there a deeper meaning here?
 - What is the role of comedy in Shakespeare? What is the symbolic purpose of blood in the play? Is it effective?
 - What clues does Shakespeare give us in Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's soliloquies that inform us about how they should be delivered?
 - How does Shakespeare draw upon irony as a technique? Is it effective?
 - Was Shakespeare's writing so animated and visceral that it is arguable he was expressing an almost cinematic vision of the play? We draw upon Act 1, Scene 7 to explore this phenomenon in the Close Reading Analysis section of these resources.
3. Using dictionaries, have students work through the *Language Techniques* worksheet.

Answers

LESSON PLAN

Worksheet: Language Techniques

- Q1)** Soliloquy, metaphor, humour, scene changes, stage directions, rhyming couplets, blank verse.
- Q2)** In Act 1, Scene 5, Lady Macbeth reads a letter from her husband Macbeth that informs her of the witches' prophecy. She then launches into a soliloquy that reveals she is determined to make Macbeth fulfil his prophecy but afraid that her husband is "too full of the milk of human kindness" to seize the crown.
- Q3)** b
- Q4)** Arguably Shakespeare does NOT show us the murder of King Duncan to heighten the horror of what Macduff has witnessed and to grant his language power. Or else to complement the fact that we also do not view Macbeth's coronation. That is, we are drawn into slight doubt about the events of Macbeth's ascension, or else the speed with which it has occurred. Or else - it was simply too gruesome to show the murder of a king on a Jacobean stage.
- Q5)** Yes. We note the way that Duncan draws upon an agricultural metaphor to promise to 'plant' Banquo and the way that his Thane responds in kind by promising to bring his king a 'good harvest'. We also recognise that Macbeth is symbolised or metaphorised by the uprooted trees of Birnam Wood. That is, Macbeth figuratively 'uprooted' his human nature in murdering to become the king.
- Q6)** d

Macbeth

Language Techniques



1. What are the main language techniques Shakespeare draws upon in this play?

2. How do we learn in the plot that Lady Macbeth is driven by ambition? What happens? What is the Act and Scene? What is the dramatic technique called when an actor speaks to the audience and we hear what is in their mind?

3. Read the following passage and answer the multiple choice question beneath:

Macbeth

*Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
To feeling as to sight? or art thou but
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?*

What is the most correct answer?

- a) Macbeth sees a dagger in front of him and it leads him to Duncan's room. He wonders whether his 'heat-oppressed brain' has deceived him, grips the dagger between his hands, and feels its blade.
- b) Macbeth sees a dagger before him and it leads him to Duncan's room. He questions how one of his senses (eyesight) has allowed him to see the dagger but yet another sense (his tactile sense) has not allowed him to grip it.
- c) Macbeth sees a dagger before his eyes and it leads him to the wrong room. He questions how his eyesight can so deceive him or else whether it is by reason of his 'heat-oppressed brain'.
- d) Macbeth is determined to murder Duncan but suddenly loses his sight and laments that his 'heat-oppressed brain' has given him blindness at the very moment he has decided to kill the king.

4. In your opinion, why does Shakespeare NOT show us the murder of King Duncan?

5. What is a 'metaphor'? Are there examples of *metaphors* in the play? Provide some examples.

6. What does the following passage mean? What is the most correct answer in the multiple choice?

Duncan

There's no art

To find the mind's construction in the face:

He was a gentleman on whom I built

An absolute trust

- a) Duncan complains that his paintings and other visual arts have not taught him to read faces.
- b) Duncan announces that he will later paint the Thane of Cawdor's face to better understand his 'mind's construction'.
- c) Duncan announces that he is disappointed his builder has not constructed a better castle with art on the walls.
- d) Duncan declares that there is no way to know what someone is thinking by looking at their face.



Shakespeare: What makes you think that the shift between blank verse and prose in *Macbeth* is akin to a 'car stalling'? What's a 'car'?

What is 'blank verse'? What is 'iambic pentameter'?

Blank verse describes the construction of Elizabethan drama with its rhythm of ten beats per line. Or as another way of looking at it: five sets of two beats within each line.

For example:

LADY MACBETH

*When you durst do it, then you were a man.
And to be more than what you were, you would
Be so much more the man. Nor time, nor place
Did then adhere, and yet you would make both.*

Count the beats on your hands as you say the lines. Notice how there are ten beats per line?

We talk about these ten beats
as 'five feet' of verse.

(Da dum, Da dum, Da dum, Da dum, Da dum = 5 feet)

These 'five feet' of verse give us the poetic term "pentameter" (from the Greek).

Iambic vs. Trochaic Pentameter

The 'iamb' component of 'iambic pentameter' is the soft sound followed by the **hard sound** within the foot of verse.

For example, consider the first line of the above passage:

*When you durst do it,
then you were a man.*

We recognise that the stress on every second word in this line informs us of Lady Macbeth's purpose (to tell Macbeth that he is not a man if he refuses to kill Duncan) and simultaneously tells the actor where to place the emphasis in their speech.

But if we change the stress to make it fall on the first word, not the second, the blank verse is no longer in 'iambic pentameter' - it is rather in 'trochaic pentameter' and we have a 'trochaic substitution' of the 'iambic pentameter'.

Remember that a 'trochee' is a **hard sound** followed by a soft sound.

Shakespeare deliberately breaks the iambic pentameter in his plays to vary the rhythm of his dramatic verse.

We witness this in Act 1, Scene 7, Line 27 when Macbeth (in soliloquy) wrestles with the question of whether or not to murder Duncan.

When he decides to do so, the iambic pentameter shifts into a trochaic substitution.

That is, he declares:

"I have no spur / To prick the sides of my intent, but only / Vaulting ambition which o'erleaps itself / And falls on th'other"

Notice how the hard sound falls on 'Vaulting'?

Why would Shakespeare do this?

Because firstly 'vaulting' means to leap (and the word has leapt into the line), but also because this is the crucial moment of the play when Macbeth has resolved to murder Duncan, and so the *trochaic substitution* places emphasis on his new way of thinking to murder Duncan.

Prose

And then Shakespeare occasionally abandons blank verse altogether and has the characters speak in plain, everyday language.

There is a definite shift between blank verse and prose in the lines where Malcolm is informed by Macduff that his father had been murdered.

MACDUFF: *Your royal father's murdered.*

MALCOLM: *O, by whom?*

The dramatic shift in the speaking from blank verse to prose is akin to a motor car driver screaming down a straight and suddenly shifting gears into neutral and stalling (or 'kangaroo-hopping').

But!

The poetic shift also represents a grander dramatic and philosophical shift - the shock of recognition that the king has just been murdered.

Macbeth

Close Reading Analysis

OBJECTIVE

To introduce students to the close reading of textual passages. To have students appreciate, enjoy and engage with the play. The various passages and their questions cater for a range of students. The questions are designed so that students may build upon the previous lesson centred on language techniques.

Key points explored are:

- What does a close reading of the play show us about Shakespeare's literary and dramatic purpose?
- What does it show us about Shakespeare's intention to create a dark and brooding play?

ACARA CONTENT DESCRIPTIONS

Apply increasing knowledge of vocabulary, text structures and language features to understand the content of texts

(ACELY1733) Year 8 - Literacy

Lesson Plans

RESOURCES

1. ClickView Exchange videos:
[Macbeth \(1971\) directed by Roman Polanski](#)
[Macbeth \(2005\) directed by Mark Brozel](#)
2. Worksheet:
[Close Reading Analysis](#)

LESSON PLAN

1. Watch the Polanski, 1971 adaptation and also the Mark Brozel, 2005 Shakespeare-told adaptation on ClickView before having students return to the written text and re-familiarise themselves with Shakespeare's verse.
2. Draw upon the worksheets to have students study a passage of the play suitable to their ability level. Ask students to write down a response to the questions on the worksheets provided drawing upon their classroom discussion, knowledge of the text, and viewing of the films.

Macbeth

Close Reading Analysis

ACT 1, SCENE 7. Macbeth's castle.

MACBETH

If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly: if the assassination
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch
With his surcease success; that but this blow
Might be the be-all and the end-all here,
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
We'd jump the life to come. But in these cases
We still have judgment here; that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
To plague the inventor: this even-handed justice
Commends the ingredients of our poison'd chalice
To our own lips. He's here in double trust;
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,
Who should against his murderer shut the door,
Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against
The deep damnation of his taking-off;
And pity, like a naked new-born babe,
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubim, horsed
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
That tears shall drown the wind. I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
And falls on the other.

- 1) What is Macbeth actually declaring in this passage? Is he resolved (or 'determined') to kill Duncan from the outset, or does the soliloquy express his extreme doubt?

What is Macbeth's major concern about killing Duncan? In your opinion, does his language become almost cinematic in the final part of the soliloquy where he imagines that the wind will blow his "horrid deed" to all parts of the world?

How would you film this scene if you were a director?

(Extension Activity: Identify the language techniques of this passage)

- 2) 'The horses ate each other' (Act 2, Scene 4)

What does this image mean beyond the literal? What does it mean in a symbolic sense about the way that Macbeth's murder of Duncan has transformed the natural order of the world?

ACT 1, SCENE 5. Inverness. Macbeth's castle.

Enter LADY MACBETH, reading a letter

LADY MACBETH

'They met me in the day of success: and I have learned by the perfectest report, they have more in them than mortal knowledge. When I burned in desire to question them further, they made themselves air, into which they vanished. Whilst I stood rapt in the wonder of it, came missives from the king, who all-hailed me 'Thane of Cawdor;' by which title, before, these weird sisters saluted me, and referred me to the coming on of time, with 'Hail, king that shalt be!' This have I thought good to deliver thee, my dearest partner of greatness, that thou mightst not lose the dues of rejoicing, by being ignorant of what greatness is promised thee. Lay it to thy heart, and farewell.'

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor; and shalt be
What thou art promised: yet do I fear thy nature;
It is too full o' the milk of human kindness
To catch the nearest way: thou wouldst be great;
Art not without ambition, but without
The illness should attend it: what thou wouldst highly,
That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not play false,
And yet wouldst wrongly win: thou'ldst have, great Glamis,
That which cries 'Thus thou must do, if thou have it;
And that which rather thou dost fear to do
Than wishest should be undone.' Hie thee hither,
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear;
And chastise with the valour of my tongue
All that impedes thee from the golden round,
Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem
To have thee crown'd withal.

- 3) What is Lady Macbeth declaring in this passage? Is she offering her soul to the 'devil' or is she simply steeling herself for the battle ahead?

What is Lady Macbeth's major concern about whether or not her husband can carry out his task and kill the king?

(Extension Activity: Identify the language techniques of this passage)

Macbeth

Theatre and Film Productions

OBJECTIVE

To have students experience a range of productions of the play. To have students consider the way that the cinematic medium alters and transforms our expectations of the text.

Key points explored are:

- A consideration of costumes, staging and set design in the play.
- How is the play usually performed and staged?
- Study ClickView Exchange productions including 'Foxtel Arts: Macbeth' and 'Macbeth - Series: Shakespeare Uncovered'. Do directors always aim for a grim and dire setting in the play?

ACARA CONTENT DESCRIPTIONS

Explore and explain the ways authors combine different modes and media in creating texts, and the impact of these choices on the viewer/listener

(ACELY1735) Year 8 - Literacy

Lesson Plans

RESOURCES

1. ClickView video:
[Macbeth \(1971\) directed by Roman Polanski](#)
[Macbeth \(2015\) directed by Justin Kurzel](#)
[Macbeth \(Globe Theatre version\)](#)
2. Worksheet:
[Theatre and Film Productions](#)

LESSON PLAN

1. Watch different adaptations of Macbeth with the class, either those listed above available on ClickView, or others of your choosing.
2. Draw upon the worksheets to have students consider the effect of the cinematic productions upon their understanding of the play (where appropriate according to the classification rating). Then ask them to consider how they would stage their own version of the play. Ask students to sketch their own stage production.

Macbeth

Theatre and Film Productions

1. Which theatrical or cinematic production did you most enjoy? Give reasons for your choice.

2. Imagine you are staging the play for a 21st century London audience. Create your own adaptation or appropriation. What are the current world issues you would allude to in your staging of the play? Make some quick notes and bullet points about how you would like your play to appear on stage.

3. Now begin to sketch a scene from your play into the space beneath. Draw one or two of your costumes, set design and props.

Class discussion:

Shakespeare presents a nightmarish reality of hallucinations, false sounds and animals eating each other to mimic the effects of Macbeth's sleepless world. That is, a world where the supernatural has 'slipped' into the real world. Macbeth cannot trust his senses just as nobody in his royal court can trust his intentions.

Macbeth

Writing and Dramatic Activities

OBJECTIVE

To finish this unit of work by having students write detailed compositions about their deeper level ideas about the play. Furthermore, to have students perform sections of the play in class performance.

Key points explored are:

- Students will write detailed extended (and short) compositions demonstrating their understanding and interpretation of the play. Furthermore, they will draw upon the previous lesson to experiment dramatically by staging part-scenes, and where possible with iPads (or similar video recording devices, creating short films in which they manipulate sound and images to create their illustrated vision and set design.

ACARA CONTENT DESCRIPTIONS

Use interaction skills for identified purposes, using voice and language conventions to suit different situations, selecting vocabulary, modulating voice and using elements such as music, images and sound for specific effects

(ACELY1804, ACELY1808) Year 7, 8 - Literacy

Lesson Plans

RESOURCES

1. Worksheet:
[Writing and Dramatic Activities](#)
2. Costumes/Props
3. iPads or similar digital video technology

LESSON PLAN

1. Distribute the *Writing and Dramatic Activities* worksheet. Ask students to select one or two question/s to draft an extended composition.
2. Choose a scene of the play suitable for the class to act out and divide up the class accordingly. Under the 'Rehearsals! Which Character Are You?' section of the worksheet, have students demonstrate their understanding of the play by staging part-scenes and/or filming their performances with sound effects and 'special effects' added in the editing.

Macbeth

Writing and Dramatic Activities



(Illustration of Macbeth Act 5, Scene 8)

Choose ONE (1) or TWO (2) of the following questions and compose an extended composition, drawing upon key quotes and techniques from the play to support your answer.

1. "The key to understanding *Macbeth* is that men are strong in war but weak in matters of the mind." To what extent do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer.
2. Who is more evil? Macbeth or Lady Macbeth? Support your answer with evidence from the text.
3. Discuss the relationship between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. How does it change and why does it change? What are the key events in the play which transform their relationship?
4. What is the image of manhood that Macbeth presents? What questions does the play raise about the notion of a soldier as a hero?
5. In *Macbeth*, the women are presented as strong characters who dominate the male characters. To what extent do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer.
6. To what extent does Shakespeare present the play as a tragedy about a childless couple?
7. Act out the "smote with bloody execution" line from Act 1, Scene 2 and determine how it would have looked on a Jacobean stage to see Macbeth kill a "passage" of soldiers on the way to killing Macdonwald (It can be interpreted that he shook his dead hand in bitter humour afterwards).
8. To what extent is the play simply about 'ambition gone wrong'? Give reasons for your answer.
9. "*Macbeth* is a play so dark and unrelenting that it is practically unsuitable to study in a school context." To what extent do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer.

Extention Activity

10. What is Shakespeare saying about the role of politicians in our daily lives? According to Shakespeare, are they to be trusted? What are the current parallels in world politics between Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, and our international leaders? What traits do these world leaders share with the Macbeths?

..... How would Sigmund Freud have psychoanalysed Lady Macbeth?



Freud: "Let me answer that! I'm undecided about Lady Macbeth. It would be too simple to say that she was hysterical, because her character is more complicated than it first seems. And it would appear that her childless state is Shakespeare's subtle reference to the childless state of Queen Elizabeth, who also did not produce an heir. In short, I don't have a psychoanalytic diagnosis for Lady Macbeth. It's in the 'too-hard basket' - even for me..."

– Rehearsals! Which Character Are You? –

Choose a scene from the play (in consultation with your teacher) and aim to act out 3 minutes of that scene. Refer to the illustrations of set design and costume in your previous lesson to experiment with your staging. Where possible, record your performance with iPads (or video recording devices) to create a short film in which you manipulate sound and images to reflect your desired vision for the costumes and set design. You might like to begin your rehearsals by experimenting with the following passage by the Three Weird Sisters:



(Illustration of the three *Macbeth* witches)

ACT I SCENE I. A desert place.

Thunder and lightning. Enter three Witches

FIRST WITCH

When shall we three meet again
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

SECOND WITCH

When the hurlyburly's done,
When the battle's lost and won.

THIRD WITCH

That will be ere the set of sun.

FIRST WITCH

Where the place?

SECOND WITCH

Upon the heath.

THIRD WITCH

There to meet with Macbeth.

FIRST WITCH

I come, Graymalkin!

SECOND WITCH

Paddock calls.

THIRD WITCH

Anon.

ALL

Fair is foul, and foul is fair:

Hover through the fog and filthy air. EXEUNT.

Romeo and Juliet

Introduction and Context

OBJECTIVE

To introduce the context of the play and to have students consider the symbolism and significance of the Italian setting.

Key points explored are:

- Why should we read Shakespeare?
- What is the play about?
- Who are the central characters?
- Where is the play variously set?
- Why did Shakespeare set the play in Italy?
- What is the symbolic function of the two warring families?

ACARA CONTENT DESCRIPTIONS

Recognise and analyse the ways that characterisation, events and settings are combined in narratives, and discuss the purposes and appeal of different approaches
(ACELT1622) Year 7 - Literature

Lesson Plans

RESOURCES

1. ClickView Exchange video:
Shakespeare: The Animated Tales - 'Romeo and Juliet'
2. Worksheet:
Plot and Character Overview

LESSON PLAN

1. Play the ClickView Exchange video of *Shakespeare: The Animated Tales* - 'Romeo and Juliet' to acquaint students with the plot, characters, and setting of the play.
2. Begin a class discussion on the following topic:
 - Why should we read Shakespeare? For fun and entertainment? Or to learn about life? Or is it because Shakespeare is a part of our literary and cultural inheritance?
 - Can we learn about life on a deeper level and simultaneously have fun?
 - Did Shakespeare's plays deliberately delve into thorny issues of love, power, and family problems to teach us a lesson about life?
 - Should we first consider whether Shakespeare actually meant to say what we commonly think, believe, and interpret in his plays?
 - What are the Shakespearean plays with which you are familiar?
3. Distribute the *Plot and Character Overview* worksheet. Drawing upon the provided worksheets, ask students to work through questions 1-7 to write a rough plot outline of the play from their viewing of the animation, including its three sets of main characters.
4. Go through students' answers as a class then begin the class discussion (on the back page of the worksheet).
5. 'True or False?' tests your students' knowledge about characters' names and events in the play.

Answers

LESSON PLAN

Worksheet: Plot and Character Overview

Q1) Answers may vary.

Q2) d

Q3) The play is set in Italy because Shakespeare tended to set his plays in Italy! But also because the original story about the Montagues and Capulets is initially referenced in the writings of Dante. Furthermore, the play's two warring families may or may not have been a subtle reference to the two warring 'families' of Christian religion in England post-Reformation - and so therefore safer to set the play in a foreign country. In any event, the story of the feuding Montagues and Capulets was an old tale based down through several existing narratives.

Q4) A technical response to the question of what makes this play so special (beyond its obvious world-wide popularity) is that Shakespeare engages in multiple sonnet forms in the play which capture the inner character of each of his players - a virtuoso performance from the then young playwright circa 1591

Q7) a) F, b) F, c) T, d) T, e) T, f) F, g) T, h) F,

Romeo and Juliet

Plot and Character Overview



1. What is the play about in a nutshell?

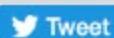


What would Donald Trump tweet about the plot of 'Romeo and Juliet'?

"Play about two young punks who tragically die after escaping New York on the weekend. They shoulda stayed in the City! Sad!"

Write your own tweet about the play beneath:

140 Characters



2. Who are the three sets of main characters in the play?

- a) The Verona Court and its citizens, including Escalus the Prince, and Friar Laurence
- b) The House of Montague, including Montague, Lady Montague, and Romeo
- c) The House of Capulet, including Capulet, Lady Capulet, and Juliet
- d) The Verona Court, the House of Capulet, and the House of Montague

3. Why do you think Shakespeare set the play in Italy?

4. In your opinion, what makes this play so special?

Class discussion:

Is Shakespeare asking us to question the obedience that young people commonly display towards their parents? Or is the great playwright showing us the tragic consequences of disobeying our parents and breaking the law?

5. What do students usually find difficult and enjoyable about this text?

I'll answer that one!

The love story of two young characters who dare to defy their parents and disobey the law to satisfy their hearts. Then there is the element of partying and illicit substances (which Baz Luhrmann plays upon in his famous 1996 cinematic version). Students often ask: 'How old exactly was Juliet?' What students find most enjoyable about the play is the swordplay, drama of the ending, and the sweet passages of poetry spoken between Romeo and Juliet as they declare their love for each other.



FUN FACTS - Did You Know?

(Points to make you better understand the play or else to simply inform and amuse.)

- The common modern film technique (popularised by in the late 20th century by Quentin Tarantino) of shifting between moments of comic levity and tragedy began in *Romeo and Juliet*.
- In Shakespeare's day, it is unlikely that there were balconies in England, and so the famous balcony scene between Romeo and Juliet might well have been performed from a window.
- *Romeo and Juliet* was an extremely popular play even in Shakespeare's day - so popular in fact, that it was satirised (made fun of) on stage not once, but twice during Shakespeare's own lifetime.
- The play was so popular in Shakespeare's day that it was even performed as an abridged version in Germany in 1604.
- *Romeo and Juliet* is possibly the earliest play that made love the basis for tragedy.
- The Italian film-maker Zeffirelli filmed the play in 1968 with a Juliet (Olivia Hussey) who was only fifteen years old.
- The play was considered to be risqué for almost a hundred years dating from the mid-1700's. The David Garrick 'alternate' version in 1748 cut out the character of Rosaline (and directed Romeo's lines about her to Juliet) so that Romeo did not fall instantly in-love with Juliet.
- Romeo actually refers to the modern weapon of the gun in the play: "As if that name / Shot from the deadly level of a gun, / Did murder her."

6. Research five (5) more interesting facts about *Romeo and Juliet* and write these in the space below.

Hint! It is commonly known that men performed the stage parts of women in Elizabethan times, but do some research on whether the characters of Romeo and Juliet were ever played by two female actors. When did it happen? The year might surprise you!

7. True or False?

A quick quiz to be answered in less than 3 minutes to test your knowledge. Set your timers... and go!

T / F

a	The play begins with an argument between Friar Laurence and the nurse.	
b	The play begins with a fight between the House of Montague and House of Capulet.	
c	The play begins with a prologue about 'two households, both alike in dignity'.	
d	Samson tells Gregory that he will insult a passing Montague by the action of biting his thumb.	
e	Benvolio, of the House of Montague, tries to break up a fight between the Capulets and Montague but is drawn to fight by Tybalt, of the House of Capulet.	
f	The fight escalates and Capulet and Montague get involved, until the Prince hits them both over the head with his sword.	
g	Romeo initially declares his love for Rosaline, not Juliet.	
h	Romeo decides to throw a party and invites Juliet from the House of Capulet.	
i	Romeo is mistakenly told of a Capulet party by a near-illiterate servant.	
j	Romeo agrees to attend the Capulet party in order to see Rosaline.	
k	Romeo attends the Capulet party in disguise because he is a Montague.	
l	Lady Capulet and Nurse discuss that Juliet is sixteen years old.	
m	Tybalt discovers Romeo in disguise at the Capulet party and immediately falls in love with him.	
n	Tybalt discovers Romeo in disguise at the Capulet party and immediately tells Old Man Capulet, who advises him to let Romeo be.	
o	Romeo spies Juliet at the Capulet party and falls instantly in love.	
p	Juliet is engaged to be married to Tybalt, but falls in love with Romeo.	
q	Juliet is engaged to be married to Paris, but falls in love with Romeo.	
r	Romeo confides in Friar Laurence that he loves Juliet.	
s	Friar Laurence advises Romeo to openly declare his love for Juliet and marry in a Verona church.	
t	Juliet agrees with the Friar's plan to take a drug and pretend she is dead and elope with Romeo to Mantua.	
u	Juliet's body is discovered and she is instantly cremated.	
v	Romeo learns that Juliet is dead and vows to take poison and lie beside her in her crypt.	
w	Friar John is not successful in reaching Romeo with the news that Juliet is alive.	
x	Romeo meets Paris at Juliet's grave and together they resuscitate her.	
y	Romeo kills Paris at Juliet's grave and then kills himself, before Juliet awakes and also kills herself.	
z	Upon discovering the dead bodies of Romeo, Juliet and Paris, the Houses of Montague and Capulet commence a full-scale battle for revenge against each other.	



Shakespeare: "What does that 'Trump' rogue know that I do not?
How does he get as much attention as me in a book about my plays?"

Romeo and Juliet

Themes and Concepts

OBJECTIVE

To introduce students to the significant underlying ideas, themes, and concepts of the play.
To consider the way that Shakespeare challenged the received ideas of his own time and develop students' explanations of this phenomena.

Key points explored are:

- What ideas or themes is the play exploring?
- What are the concepts which arise from these themes?

ACARA CONTENT DESCRIPTIONS

Explore the ways that ideas and viewpoints in literary texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts may reflect or challenge the values of individuals and groups
(ACELT1626) Year 8 - Literature

Lesson Plans

RESOURCES

1. ClickView video:
Bitesize Shakespeare - 'Romeo and Juliet'
2. Worksheet:
Themes and Concepts

LESSON PLAN

1. Play the video on ClickView: *Bitesize Shakespeare - 'Romeo and Juliet'* to familiarise students with the ideas, themes, and concepts of the play.
2. **Begin a class discussion on the following topic:**
 - Is Shakespeare presenting the idea that we commonly value the notion of young romantic love as long as it is regarded as a 'safe' vehicle in the context of an approved marriage - but that when young people fall in love (without their parents' best wishes) it is viewed as a rebellious and subversive act?
 - To what extent is Shakespeare calling upon young people to follow their heart and to express what they truly feel?
 - To what extent is the play about the way that parents are often the last people who genuinely understand their children?
 - Friar Laurence and Nurse would seem to convey this idea. But what of the tension that this creates in parents? And the lack of control that it represents? It is worth highlighting to students the implicit tension between Nurse and Lady Capulet in Act 1 as an example of this tension. Shakespeare does not present any easy solutions however. Romeo and Juliet's trust in their substitute parents ultimately leads to emotionally-based decisions and tragedy. We remember too, that it is their parents' generational warfare which has brought about the tragedy of their suicide. Where may children turn in such a case?
 - The play would seem to present the idea of a central irony, which students the same age as Romeo and Juliet may readily understand: the so-called 'tragedy' of the play is arguably the love between its two central characters, and their willingness to sacrifice themselves in honour of that love - not the hatred between the two rival families.
3. Using the provided worksheets, ask students to write down a response to the thematic questions on the worksheets - ('Romantic Love', 'Parents and the Issue of Trust') drawing upon their classroom discussion, knowledge of the text, and viewing of productions and documentaries.

Romeo and Juliet

Themes and Concepts



- ### **1. What are the major ideas or themes of this play?**

2. In the space beneath, write down a ONE paragraph response in which you argue the main idea or theme in the play, building upon one of the ideas above.

Use one the following statements that you agree with as a starting point regarding the play's ideas and themes:

- a) The play is about the power of love to transform young lives.
 - b) The play is about the power of hate to adversely affect families.
 - c) The play is about how young people cannot trust their parents.
 - d) The play is about the proper way to fall in love and marry, and how we should always obey our parents.
 - e) The play is about how bad parenting drives children into the arms of substitute parents.
 - f) The play is about the value of rebellion to young people.
 - g) The play is about the value of love to overcome hate.
 - h) The play is about how religious figures are not to be trusted.
 - i) The play is about how families should always accept whoever their children love and wish to marry.

– Romantic Love –

3. **Thinking point prior to writing about themes:** *Romeo and Juliet* is a play about the consequences of following our hearts and making life and death decisions over romantic love. However, can romantic love be trusted? How do we know that it is real? Is Shakespeare putting forward the case through the example of the two young lovers that romantic love is a dangerous feeling which makes us feel invincible at first, but then very dependent and vulnerable? Is it preferable to base a marriage on the grounds of social compatibility and considerations of finance, rather than love?

 - a) Write TWO paragraphs in which you make an argument that it is important that young people follow their hearts and marry who they love. What are your reasons for arguing this way?
 - b) Now write TWO paragraphs in which you make an argument that love is fickle and easily transforms, and not the ideal grounds upon which to base a marriage. What are your reasons for arguing this way?

– Parents and the Issue of Trust –

3. **Thinking point prior to writing about themes:** *Romeo and Juliet* is arguably a play about the way that wealthy families often leave their children to be raised by servants, or else neglect their children to the degree that their children develop close relationships with substitute parents. Parents, however, typically still wish to exercise control over their children when they reach adulthood and prepare to marry. Is Shakespeare putting forward the case, through the disastrous example of the two 'substitute' parents, Nurse and Friar Laurence, that such 'parents' may not be trusted?

 - a) Write TWO paragraphs in which you make an argument that Shakespeare warns his audience against young people trusting their parents in matters of marriage. Draw from examples in the play to prove your point. What are your reasons for arguing this way?
 - b) Now write TWO paragraphs in which you make an argument that Shakespeare conversely shows us that substitute parents are opportunistic - guide us to make emotional decisions about love and marriage - and ultimately cannot be trusted. Draw from examples in the play to prove your point. What are your reasons for arguing this way?



Shakespeare: "Don't make too big a deal of the fact that I borrowed an existing source for my narrative. I did add the characters of Paris and Mercutio to the old story, thou fretting, wig-headed bore!"

Romeo and Juliet

Language Techniques

OBJECTIVE

To introduce students to the use of language techniques in the play, and in particular, to guide their deeper thinking about Shakespeare's use of metaphor and symbolism.

Key points explored are:

- What are the main language techniques Shakespeare draws upon in this play?

ACARA CONTENT DESCRIPTIONS

Recognise and analyse the ways that characterisation, events and settings are combined in narratives, and discuss the purposes and appeal of different approaches
(ACELT1622) Year 7 - Literature

Lesson Plans

RESOURCES

1. ClickView video:
[Before the Play - 'Romeo and Juliet'](#)
2. Worksheet:
[Comprehension Questions](#)
[Language Techniques](#)

LESSON PLAN

1. Distribute the *Comprehension Questions* worksheet to students. Show students Chapters 11-19 from the ClickView video: *Before the Play - 'Romeo and Juliet'* to familiarise students with some of the language techniques in the play. Students should fill out the worksheet while watching the video. The purpose of these screenings is to familiarise students with the idea that Shakespeare made deliberate language choices for effect.
2. Go through the answers as a class.
3. **Begin a class discussion using the following questions:**
 - Why does Shakespeare draw upon oxymoron to express an idea?
 - Is it merely witty and made to make the audience laugh? Or is it for a deeper purpose? If we say it is for a deeper purpose, what is that deeper purpose and intention?
 - Could it be to symbolise the contradictory (or 'paradoxical') nature of the Montague and Capulet world (i.e. a world where hate is seen as 'normal' and love is viewed as 'dangerous and subversive')?
 - What about the various metaphors that Romeo and Juliet draw upon to describe their love? Light, flowers, and books?
 - What is the purpose of these metaphors? To simply amuse the audience or to show the depth of their mutual feeling?
 - Is Shakespeare's purpose to show us the way that romantic love makes us appreciate the world and 'open' our eyes to the way that it is interconnected?
3. Using dictionaries and the *Language Techniques* worksheet, ask students to write down a response to the technical questions drawing upon their classroom discussion, knowledge of the text, and viewing of the ClickView productions.

Answers

LESSON PLAN

Worksheet: Comprehension Questions

- Q1)** a) Shakespeare's plays were usually performed where the cast had to double up and perform with minimal sets. To ensure people did not get confused with who was on stage and where they were at that time, language was hence very important to discuss emotions and how the characters were feeling.
b) It is visually descriptive language.
c) It describes something as being something else.
d) It is written or spoken in its ordinary form without any set meter or rhythm.
e) It is a collection of lines that are iambic pentameters but their last words do not rhyme.
f) It is a speech made by a character which tells the audience what goes inside the character's head.

Class discussion hint!

In Elizabethan times, it was customary for a man attracted to a woman to approach her with a type of riddle in the form of a metaphor. If she was not attracted to the male suitor and did not wish to interact, she could pretend not to understand the metaphor and walk away. In the play, Juliet actively engages with Romeo on his metaphor of saints and hands in their initial meeting at the Capulet party.

Worksheet: Language Techniques

- Q1)** Oxymorons, metaphor, humour, scene changes, stage directions, rhyming couplets, blank verse.
- Q2)** The Prologue
- Q3)** c) The image ironically foreshadows her death.
- Q4)** Perhaps by not showing us the wedding, it enhances its illegality or by not showing us the wedding, it places more emphasis in the play on the words of love privately declared by the two young lovers or, it was common for Shakespeare not to show us the key events of his plays and to leave the audience guessing and wondering (remember too that we also do not see Macbeth crowned at Scone).
- Q5)** Yes. The play variously engages in metaphors of light, saints, poison, and books. Each metaphor serves a symbolic purpose. For instance, the metaphor of light conveys the notion that 'Juliet is the sun' and the light of Romeo's world, the metaphor of saints to symbolically project Romeo as a 'pilgrim' in the Capulet world, poison to symbolically express the 'poisonous hatred' between the two families, and books to symbolically convey that lovers may read each other 'like a book' but are ultimately bound by statutes in books which prevent them from marrying whom they please.
- Q6)** Commonly thought to be the phrase: 'Where are you, Romeo?' as Juliet calls from the dark, but actually the more anguished cry: 'Why do you have to be a Montague? Why you?' given that Juliet is not permitted to marry a Montague, and now she has fallen in love with one.
- Q7)** The range of oxymorons (or self-contradictory statements) in the play are numerous and a deliberate technique on behalf of the playwright. Arguably, the extensive array of oxymorons mirror the inherently contradictory world in which the two young Montague and Capulet lovers find themselves, and deftly captures the mixture of confusing feelings and 'sweet and sour' ending of the play, when following the tragic suicide of the two young lovers, the families unite in their grief and lay down their 'ancient grudge' and enmity.
- Q8)** Extension Activity: Shakespeare drew upon various sonnet forms to express the inner character of his players (e.g. Romeo begins by speaking of Rosaline in a Petrarchan sonnet form - to express the idea to the audience that his love is abstract and distant - but then reverts to the practice of speaking in metaphors when he meets Juliet, Nurse speaks in a type of colloquial English, and Juliet continually interrupts Romeo's blank verse with prose in Act 2, Scene 2 to say among other heartfelt statements: "Do not swear at all," and the more plaintive: "Dost thou love me?".

Romeo and Juliet

Comprehension Questions

Language

1. Answer the following questions about the language used by William Shakespeare in his play, *Romeo and Juliet*.

a) Give three reasons why language was so important.

b) Define 'imagery'.

c) Define 'metaphor'.

d) Define 'prose'.

e) Define 'blank verse'.

f) Define 'soliloquy'.



Romeo and Juliet

Language Techniques

- What are the main language techniques Shakespeare draws upon in this play?

- Where do we learn in the plot that two rival families have broken from 'ancient grudge to new mutiny'?

- Read the following passage and answer the multiple choice question beneath about the technique that Shakespeare draws upon in this passage (given we know that Juliet will later share a grave with Romeo):

Juliet

Go ask his name: if he be married.

My grave is like to be my wedding bed.

Nurse

His name is Romeo, and a Montague;

The only son of your great enemy.

What is the *most correct* answer?

- Juliet tells Nurse that her grave is 'like to be her wedding bed' because it was a custom in Elizabethan times that young women would marry in crypts.
 - Juliet tells Nurse that her grave is 'like to be her wedding bed' because it made an Elizabethan audience laugh that a young woman would confuse her wedding bed with a grave.
 - Juliet tells Nurse that her grave is 'like to be her wedding bed' because it ironically foreshadows her later death in a crypt with Romeo.
 - Juliet tells Nurse that her grave is 'like to be her wedding bed' because she has a bad feeling that she will die before she gets married.
- In your opinion, why does Shakespeare NOT show us the full ceremonial wedding of Romeo and Juliet?

- Are there examples of *metaphors* in the play? Provide some examples.

- What does the following phrase actually mean?

Juliet

Romeo, Romeo. Wherfore art thou, Romeo?

7. Why does Shakespeare engage in so many oxymorons ("O brawling love! O loving hate!")? What does this language technique attempt to show? In your opinion, is it effective?

Extension Activity:

8. Why does Shakespeare shift between various sonnet forms in his play? What is he attempting to show?

Puns in 'Romeo and Juliet'

Shakespeare engages in a range of clever puns and wordplays right from the outset of the play.

Consider the following scene:

SCENE I. Verona. A public place.

Enter SAMPSON and GREGORY, of the house of Capulet, armed with swords and bucklers

SAMPSON

Gregory, o' my word, we'll not carry coals.

GREGORY

No, for then we should be colliers.

SAMPSON

I mean, an we be in choler, we'll draw.

GREGORY

Ay, while you live, draw your neck out o' the collar.

Note the pun on coals, colliers, choler and collar.

It initially appears to be a simple misunderstanding between Sampson and Gregory, but in fact, the wordplay is witty, and demonstrates two overarching themes of the text:

- (i) language as a weapon and
- (ii) the similarity of the two houses of Montague and Capulet.

How so?

Translated, Sampson has just told Gregory that he will not carry coal - Gregory responds by saying that to do so would make them both coal-carriers (colliers) - Sampson responds that to do so would send them both into anger (choler) - Gregory replies that if they are angry they will draw their neck out of the shirt collar to fight (collar).

On the surface, it is a simple play on words and joke about the way that similar-sounding words (homophones) may create confusion.

However, the wordplay between the two swordsmen is technically known as 'stichomythia' - or word play where people argue back (or 'retort') with the words of their opponent to escalate the tension of an argument.

And so, even from the outset, we have a perfect demonstration of the way that language is a type of weapon of sword-playing and duelling, even between two members of the same house.

But the wordplay and confusion over similar-sounding words is also a clever way of foreshadowing the impending confusion when two separate members of wholly-similar houses shall cross paths (remembering that Romeo and Juliet are from 'two families both alike in dignity').

Romeo and Juliet

Close Reading Analysis

OBJECTIVE

To introduce students to the close reading of textual passages. To have students appreciate, enjoy and engage with the play. The various passages and their questions cater for a range of students. The questions are designed so that students may build upon the previous lesson centred on language techniques.

Key points explored are:

- What does a close reading of the play show us about Shakespeare's literary and dramatic purpose?
- What does it show us about Shakespeare's intention to create a dark and brooding play?

ACARA CONTENT DESCRIPTIONS

Apply increasing knowledge of vocabulary, text structures and language features to understand the content of texts

(ACELY1733) Year 8 - Literacy

Lesson Plans

RESOURCES

1. ClickView video:
[Romeo and Juliet \(1968\) directed by Franco Zeffirelli](#)
[Romeo and Juliet \(1996\) directed by Baz Luhrmann](#)
 2. Worksheet:
[Close Reading Analysis](#)
-

LESSON PLAN

1. Watch various productions of *Romeo and Juliet* on ClickView, perhaps focusing on Franco Zeffirelli and Baz Luhrmann's full-length cinematic versions. Following a viewing of the complete length play in one of these productions, have students return to the written text and re-familiarise themselves with Shakespeare's verse.
2. Draw upon the worksheets to have students study a passage of the play suitable to their ability level. Ask students to write down a response to the questions on the worksheets provided drawing upon their classroom discussion, knowledge of the text, and viewing of the productions.

Romeo and Juliet

Close Reading Analysis

ACT II, SCENE II

JULIET

Go ask his name: if he be married.
My grave is like to be my wedding bed.

NURSE

His name is Romeo, and a Montague;
The only son of your great enemy.

JULIET

My only love sprung from my only hate!
Too early seen unknown, and known too late!
Prodigious birth of love it is to me,
That I must love a loathed enemy.

ROMEO

He jests at scars that never felt a wound.

JULIET appears above at a window

ROMEO

But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks?
It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.
Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,
Who is already sick and pale with grief,
That thou her maid art far more fair than she:
Be not her maid, since she is envious;
Her vestal livery is but sick and green
And none but fools do wear it; cast it off.
It is my lady, O, it is my love!
O, that she knew she were!

- 1) What are Romeo and Juliet separately declaring in this passage? In your opinion, is Juliet secure in her love for Romeo, or does she doubt that the relationship will turn out well? What is the evidence for your opinion? What is the metaphor that Romeo draws upon to describe Juliet and what does it mean? How would you film this scene if you were a director?

(Extension Activity: Identify the full range of language techniques in this passage, including irony, foreshadowing, paradox, metaphor)

TYBALT

What wouldst thou have with me?

MERCUTIO

Good king of cats, nothing but one of your nine lives; that I mean to make bold withal, and as you shall use me hereafter, drybeat the rest of the eight. Will you pluck your sword out of his pitcher by the ears? make haste, lest mine be about your ears ere it be out.

TYBALT

I am for you.

Drawing

ROMEO

Gentle Mercutio, put thy rapier up.

MERCUTIO

Come, sir, your passado.

They fight

ROMEO

Draw, Benvolio; beat down their weapons.
Gentlemen, for shame, forbear this outrage!
Tybalt, Mercutio, the prince expressly hath
Forbidden bandying in Verona streets:
Hold, Tybalt! good Mercutio!

TYBALT under ROMEO's arm stabs MERCUTIO, and flies with his followers

MERCUTIO

I am hurt.

A plague o' both your houses! I am sped.
Is he gone, and hath nothing?

BENVOLIO

What, art thou hurt?

MERCUTIO

Ay, ay, a scratch, a scratch; marry, 'tis enough.
Where is my page? Go, villain, fetch a surgeon.

ROMEO

Courage, man; the hurt cannot be much.

MERCUTIO

No, 'tis not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church-door; but 'tis enough, 'twill serve: ask for me to-morrow, and you shall find me a grave man. I am peppered, I warrant, for this world. A plague o' both your houses! 'Zounds, a dog, a rat, a mouse, a cat, to scratch a man to death! a braggart, a rogue, a villain, that fights by the book of arithmetic! Why the devil came you between us? I was hurt under your arm.

- 2) What exactly is happening in this famous passage of the play? What is being argued or debated? Who fights each other and what is the result of the fight? What is the ironic pun that Mercutio draws upon when describing his impending death?

(Extension Activity: Write a new set of lines for Mercutio had he killed Tybalt)

Romeo and Juliet

Theatre and Film Productions

OBJECTIVE

To have students experience a range of productions of the play. To have students consider the way that the cinematic medium alters and transforms our expectations of the text.

Key points explored are:

- To consider the costumes, staging and set design in various productions of the play.
- Discover how the play is usually performed and staged.
- Study different productions of the play on ClickView Exchange.
- To consider whether directors always aim for an Italian setting and how students would envision their own stage production.

ACARA CONTENT DESCRIPTIONS

Explore and explain the ways authors combine different modes and media in creating texts, and the impact of these choices on the viewer/listener

(ACELY1735) Year 8 - Literacy

Lesson Plans

RESOURCES

1. ClickView video:
[Romeo and Juliet \(1968\) directed by Franco Zeffirelli](#)
[Romeo and Juliet \(1996\) directed by Baz Luhrmann](#)
2. Worksheet:
[Theatre and Film Production](#)

LESSON PLAN

1. Watch the various ClickView Exchange versions of the play, including Zeffirelli and Luhrmann's cinematic productions and adaptations of the play.
2. Begin a class discussion on the following topic:
 - How would you stage the play to demonstrate what you think it means? Would you even stage it as a play in a theatre or would you opt for an alternative such as a ballet? Or a mime?
 - Do you believe that the play teaches us anything about modern life in the 21st century?
 - How would you stage the play to reflect these ideas? Special effects? Are they necessary in *Romeo and Juliet*?
 - How would you stage the play to reflect the problems of modern love? Is there humour in this play which could be conveyed in film?
3. Draw upon the worksheet to have students consider the effect of the cinematic productions upon their understanding of the play (where appropriate according to the classification rating). Initiate the class discussion, and then ask them to consider how they would stage their own version of the play. Ask students to sketch their own stage production.

Romeo and Juliet

Theatre and Film Productions

1. Which theatrical or cinematic production did you most enjoy? Give reasons for your choice.

2. Imagine you are staging the play for a 21st century London audience. Create your own adaptation or appropriation. What are the current world issues you would allude to in your staging of the play? Make some quick notes and bullet points about how you would like your play to appear on stage.

3. Now begin to sketch a scene from your play into the space beneath. Draw one or two of your costumes, set design and props.

Class discussion:

Consider two different versions of the Mercutio/Tybalt skirmish, comparing the Zeffirelli and Luhrmann film productions. Which one is more effective in carrying the emotional weight of the scene? Give reasons for your response.



Activity

In the space beneath, storyboard (*illustrate in various drawings*) the same fight scene drawing upon your own imagination. In the corner of each illustration, nominate the camera angle (e.g. *close-up*, *long-shot*, *mid-shot*, etc.)

Romeo and Juliet

Writing and Dramatic Activities

OBJECTIVE

To finish this unit of work by having students write detailed compositions about their deeper level ideas about the play. Furthermore, to have students perform sections of the play in class performance.

Key points explored are:

- Students will write detailed extended (and short) compositions demonstrating their understanding and interpretation of the play. Furthermore, they will draw upon the previous lesson to experiment dramatically by staging part-scenes, and where possible with iPads (or similar video recording devices), creating short films in which they manipulate sound and images to create their illustrated vision and set design.

ACARA CONTENT DESCRIPTIONS

Use interaction skills for identified purposes, using voice and language conventions to suit different situations, selecting vocabulary, modulating voice and using elements such as music, images and sound for specific effects

(ACELY1804, ACELY1808) Year 7, 8 - Literacy

Lesson Plans

RESOURCES

1. Worksheet:
Writing and Dramatic Activities
-

LESSON PLAN

1. Using the worksheets, ask students to select question/s that suit their level of understanding to draft a series of responses.
2. Have students demonstrate their understanding of the play by staging part-scenes and/or filming their performances with sound effects and 'special effects' added in the editing.

Romeo and Juliet

Writing and Dramatic Activities



Choose ONE (1) or TWO (2) of the following questions and compose an extended composition, drawing upon key quotes and techniques from the play to support your answer.

1. The key to understanding *Romeo and Juliet* is that it is a play about the need to disobey our parents and love whoever we please, regardless of the consequences.
To what extent do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer.
2. To what extent can we regard *Romeo and Juliet* as a comedy? What aspects of the play are genuinely comedic?
3. In Shakespeare's play, *Romeo and Juliet*, he makes a pointed comment against the rule of the church in his characterisation of the irresponsible Friar Laurence.
4. Shakespeare makes the point in *Romeo and Juliet* that unless children trust their parents, children will make poor decisions based upon emotion that will ultimately lead them to disaster.
To what extent do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer.
5. In Shakespeare's play, Lady Capulet, Lady Montague, Nurse, and Juliet are presented as strong characters who nonetheless cannot overcome what is essentially a male world.
To what extent do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer.
6. To what extent does Shakespeare present the play as a tragedy about the long-lasting consequences of hate?

– Rehearsals! Which Character Are You? –

Choose a scene from the play (in consultation with your teacher) and aim to act out three (3) minutes of that scene. Refer to the illustrations of set design and costume in your previous lesson to experiment with your staging. Where possible, record your performance with iPads (or similar digital video technology) to create a short film in which you manipulate sound and images to reflect your desired vision for the costumes and set design. You might like to begin your rehearsals by experimenting with the following passage by:



(Scene from the 1936 film *Romeo and Juliet*)

BENVOLIO

Why, what is Tybalt?

MERCUTIO

More than prince of cats, I can tell you. O, he is
the courageous captain of compliments. He fights as
you sing prick-song, keeps time, distance, and
proportion; rests me his minim rest, one, two, and
the third in your bosom: the very butcher of a silk
button, a duellist, a duellist; a gentleman of the
very first house, of the first and second cause:
ah, the immortal passado! the punto reverso! the
hai!

BENVOLIO

The what?

MERCUTIO

The pox of such antic, lisping, affecting
fantasticoes; these new tuners of accents! 'By Jesu,
a very good blade! a very tall man! a very good
whore!' Why, is not this a lamentable thing,
grandsire, that we should be thus afflicted with
these strange flies, these fashion-mongers, these
perdona-mi's, who stand so much on the new form,
that they cannot at ease on the old bench? O, their
bones, their bones!

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