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A Midsummer Night's Dream
BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE


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All references come from the Dover Thrift Edition of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, copyright 1992.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Pre-Reading**Research I****Objective:** Researching the author**Activity**

William Shakespeare was a prodigious dramatist who maintained a private life despite his notoriety. Use the library or the Internet to gather facts about Shakespeare's life. Use this information to write a four-paragraph biography of Shakespeare.

The biography should include the following information:

- Dates relevant to Shakespeare's life
- Facts about Shakespeare's personal life
- Facts about Shakespeare's professional life
- Descriptions about Shakespeare's environment (his time, place, etc.)
- Examples of Shakespeare's most significant works

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act II

Alliteration

Objective: Recognizing alliteration

Activity

Shakespeare's drama often includes the poetic device of alliteration. It occurs in different forms, but in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, it usually occurs in successive words separated by one or two words; for example, "he hath turn'd a heaven unto a hell" and "this hail some heat from Hermia felt." (Act I, Scene I) Some lines may even contain alliteration of two different consonants: "Fair love, you faint with wandering in the wood." (Act II, Scene II)

Read through Act II carefully and identify at least ten instances of alliteration. Write each instance and cite the scene in which it appears. When you finish, create ten of your own alliterative phrases.

Examples:

- Act II, Scene II "Love and languish"
- Act II, Scene II "dank and dirty"

Alliteration	Scene
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____
7. _____	_____
8. _____	_____
9. _____	_____
10. _____	_____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act III**Letter Writing****Objective:** Writing to characters in the play**Activity**

Oberon's love spell on Demetrius and Lysander seems to be as invulnerable as Egeus' intent to punish Hermia for her defiance; perhaps, though, the characters only need to hear the proper words of reason.

You now have the opportunity to communicate with the characters of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. To complete this activity, assume that you now have access to a message service that can reach any of the major characters in the play.

Choose two characters that you believe require attention in Act III. Write letters that will help both of them to overcome their problems. In your letters, include anything that you know about the characters (beliefs, longings, past behavior, etc.) that might help to guide their actions.

Remember, you may write to any characters, and you may advise them on what to do or what not to do. Try to keep your language similar to Shakespeare's Elizabethan English.

Example:

Lysander!

Fie, thy destructive voice upon thy dove, Hermia! Govern thyself a gentleman, and heed thy love lost but by one eve. You are not but Goodfellow's puppet, letting thy strings guide thy hands to strike at thy love's soul and thy teeth gnash at thy waiting Venus. Hold thy hands, diminish thy passion, and wait until thy sight is thus repair'd.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Acts I – V**Theme****Objective:** Identifying themes in drama**Activity**

A Midsummer Night's Dream contains three major themes:

- The unpredictable and irrational nature of love

Explanation: Love follows no logical pattern or set of rules. It drives people to do things that others may not understand.

- The danger and confusion between rational thought and irrational thought

Explanation: Inventions that people believe are logical, such as law, can be as disruptive as irrational beliefs, such as magic or love.

- The relationship between dreams and perception

Explanation: People perceive their own realities; what is real is what they observe, and when they are not sure of what they see, they are unsure of their existence. A dream can seem just as real as reality.

One side of the **Theme Chart** lists the three major themes. The other side of the theme chart contains a list of events, quotations, and conditions that portray the themes. Complete the **Theme Chart** by identifying the theme supported by each entry.

The first three examples are completed for you.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Acts I – V

Understanding Shakespeare's Language

Objective: Understanding Elizabethan English

Activity

Rewrite the following script in an approximation of Shakespeare's language so that it would make sense to characters in the play.

(The grocery store in the hours preceding a hurricane. The tension is making shoppers edgy as they heap food in their carts, and occasionally they fight over the last remaining products. Carmen has just picked up the last eight cans of instant ravioli, and Erica is arguing with her.)

Erica: Hey, you! Why don't you leave a couple of those for someone else?

Carmen: First come, first serve. Find your own ravioli. I can't help it if you do things at the last minute.

Erica: Wow, I can't believe your nerve. You've just got to have all eight cans, huh? You couldn't just let two of them go, please?

Carmen: No. I've got two kids who need to eat. Now please leave me be; the storm is coming and I've got to drive across town and prepare for the wind.

Erica: Oh, don't give me that. I've got kids, too. Three. So come on, I only need two of those cans. I'll pay you for them, even.

Carmen: I already told you—no. You're too late. Go down the street to Buy and Save. They've probably got some more.

Erica: Buy and Save closed an hour ago! They've sold out of everything! Come on, lady—I just need two.

Carmen: Get lost! They're mine. Now go outside, get in your car, and find some elsewhere.

Erica: *[attempts to take two cans of ravioli]* Give me those—

Carmen: *[struggling]* Hey! Take your hands off those! Thief! Help!

Store Employee: What's going on over here? Are you two crazy?