

## **Let's Play Shakespeare: I Shall Be the King, Thou Art the Lion**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

When talking about Shakespeare we usually hear that “Shakespeare is boring” or that “he is too difficult to read and understand.” In a way, this is true but we need to go back in time and remember that he wrote 400 years ago. At that time, life was very different from what we have now. His language was very different from today’s language usage. This is why many people think Shakespeare is boring and difficult to read or understand. But if we look closely around us, we see movies and shows taken from or based on Shakespeare, such as the award-winning movie *Shakespeare in Love* or the musical *Love’s Labour’s Lost* and *Kiss Me Kate*; they involve admired celebrities including actresses Judi Dench and Emma Thompson and director/actor, Kenneth Branagh.

### **SCHOOL BACKGROUND**

That’s why I am here. I will teach Shakespeare to a very specific audience: teachers and students from elementary schools. The school in which I work is Windsor Village Elementary located southwest of downtown Houston. It provides educational services for 815 pre-kindergarten through fifth grade students. It consists mostly of African American students and a large number of Hispanic students; 62% of the students is African American, 1% is Asian, 35% is Hispanic, 1% is Other and 1% is Caucasian. My school is a Vanguard Magnet that attracts students from outside the community. This educational program serves 174 students (18%). There has been a marked increase in Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students and economically disadvantaged students. The LEP students are served in English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms and the LEP population is 35%. Therefore, some of my classes are held in Spanish (for the native Spanish speakers) and some others are taught using English and Spanish. My intention with this unit is to present an approach to Shakespeare and explain why it is important that young people are exposed to Shakespeare.

### **WHY SHAKESPEARE?**

It is important for me to do this because first I have always liked Shakespeare; second, I have been interested in literature and theatre; and finally because Shakespeare is considered one of the best playwrights in the world. He earned this honor through the great quantity and quality of plays he wrote. It is important that children know some stories that are universal, such as the idea of the never-ending love in *Romeo and Juliet* or the importance of responsibility as seen in *Hamlet*. Thinking in terms of children, I believe that this is an important source of knowledge which can help them to develop

some ideas that will be very helpful in their lives—knowing importance of parents; respecting authority; and showing respect, honor and love).

## HOW TO TEACH SHAKESPEARE

People think that teaching or learning Shakespeare can be tough, especially if you do it on your own, but if you have someone by you who brings you some tales, cartoons, stories, and who makes you see that there is a funny way of learning Shakespeare, you've got it!

Bear in mind that the best way of doing this is using the four macro-skills when teaching a language:

- Reading: the action or skill of reading written or printed matter silently or aloud.
- Writing: the activity or skill of marking coherent words on paper and composing text.
- Listening: giving one's attention to a sound; an act of listening to something.
- Speaking: the action of conveying information or expressing one's thoughts and feelings in spoken language.

We will be using each macro-skill in all of the activities described in this unit.

### Shakespeare and *The Lion King*

The first thing I would do is to play Disney's *The Lion King*. The plot in the film was based on the plot found in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. So the first thing will be to relate both stories. It's a way of introducing Shakespeare without having read or taught any Shakespeare. I will play the video in class before starting any other activity. Students will find out about lions in Africa, kings in Denmark, and animals thinking and behaving like humans. Once the video is done, I will have some exercises that relate to the film and that help me to develop several ideas from Shakespeare (using, of course, the skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing). One activity is retelling the story with the children as my assistants. We are going to work on geography, history and learn where and how to set actions. The following is an example. (Text in bold type is examples of what teachers might say in class.)

**Once upon a time there was a handsome prince called Hamlet who lived in a beautiful kingdom.** (The children should correct this sentence: "No, it's not Hamlet, the name is Simba.") **His father was a good man.** ("No, his father was not a man, he was a lion.") **The Queen's name was Gertrude.** ("No, her name was Sarabi.") **When the king died, his brother, Claudius became King.** ("No, his name is not Claudius, it's Scar.") **He became very sad when his father died. And he was also angry with Ophelia, who loved him.** ("No, it was not Ophelia, it was Nala.") **One day, he had a revelation and saw his father's ghost, and he found out that his own brother killed him. He was angry and decided to avenge his father's death.**

And we will rewrite *The Lion King* using Shakespeare's *Hamlet* plot. A good example to show students the real story of Hamlet would be playing the animated version of *Hamlet* which is only thirty minutes long. We will find the similarities between the original version and *The Lion King*. Once we are done with this, I will tell them that this is a story which was written by someone many years ago and whose name was William Shakespeare. Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon in England in 1564. There are lots of books about Shakespeare, his life, and his plays for children but I will use the following as I believe they are very good for giving the children a general idea of who Shakespeare was and what he did: *Shakespeare for Kids: His Life and Times: 21 Activities* by Colleen Aagesen and Margie Blumberg, *Bravo, Mr. William Shakespeare* by Marcia Williams, *William Shakespeare and the Globe* by Alik. The following is taken from Alik:

Will was born in Stratford-upon-Avon, England more than four hundred years ago. He lived with his big family, crowded in a house on Henley Street. He went to local grammar school, where he studied Latin, Greek, and subjects he would write about one day. When he was eighteen, Will married Anne Hathaway, who was eight years older ... Now, with a bulging house and a new family to support, young Will set off to find work in London ... In Elizabethan England plays were popular afternoon entertainment among nobility and ordinary folk.

This is a fantastic book which can help the children imagine London four hundred years ago. I will also need their help to make a book. I will give them the story for them to make the drawings and pictures.

The following brief summary for children is taken from <http://www.cps.ednet.ns.ca> (under "Our Award Winning Projects; Shakespeare is Elementary; We Recommend These Plays; Hamlet.") Students will make their own books about Hamlet.

Claudius has killed Hamlet's father, the king of Denmark. Hamlet's mother married Claudius two months later because she didn't know of his part in her husband's death.

The guards of the castle see the ghost of Hamlet's father. And the ghost tells Hamlet that his uncle, Claudius, killed him, so Hamlet became confused and distracted.

The King and Queen think that he is acting strange because he is in love with Ophelia. So they put him in a room with Ophelia to find out for sure. But Hamlet was cruel to her, so his uncle suspects Hamlet knows he killed his father and that's why his behavior is unpredictable.

Ophelia also is confused because Hamlet has changed so dramatically. She drowns herself, and her brother blames Hamlet and challenges him to a duel.

At the duel, Claudius puts poison in a glass of wine and on the swords because he wants to be rid of Hamlet. The Queen drinks the wine by mistake and she dies. Hamlet and Ophelia's brother stab one another with the poisoned swords and they both die, but Hamlet kills the king just before he dies.

Teachers should note that this is a very cruel story for young children so we need to be careful of how we handle it. We can refer to Nesbit's book, *The Children's Shakespeare*, where she simplifies the stories and makes Shakespeare's stories accessible to young readers. With only eight pages, we see a version of *Hamlet* which is really good for young readers and we find some other stories such as *The Winter's Tale*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Tempest*, or *The Taming of the Shrew*.

We will write a summary in Spanish and in English so teachers can use this as a perfect example to decorate the room with their story or just use it for a bulletin board so everyone can read the story of Hamlet.

After having made their own version of *Hamlet*, I'll bring some books for children based on Shakespeare's plays to show them and to work on. They will view photographs and try to figure out what each story is about.

### **“Translating” *The Lion King* into Other Shakespearean Plays**

As stated in the title of the curriculum unit, we are going to play in a funny way to get to know Shakespeare. The intention of this unit, as mentioned above, is to make Shakespeare interesting to children in elementary schools although our main audience is going to be other elementary teachers. As an elementary teacher I have always been interested in teaching Shakespeare in such a way that children be interested in him and his plays, no matter what version or “translation.”

One of the concepts I will deal with in this didactic unit is the idea of *translation*, not in the sense of translating a play into another language but more in the sense of decoding something. Instead of talking about versions in other languages or other media, like movies or several adaptations, I will refer to the concept of translation. That's easy: Shakespeare heard some stories that were told during his time; he “translated” them into specific strategies (writing his plays), his plays were transformed (people “translated,” decoded, interpreted them), and then these stories were told and retold again and again. They are “translated and re-translated” over and over again. We can see the theatre from two points of view but bearing in mind that theatre and translation are the same: the translation that the actor/actress makes from what he/she says and the translation we make from seeing them. It was Shakespeare who said that in his famous speech from *As You Like It* (Act II, scene vii):

All the world's a stage  
And all the men and women merely players:

They have their exits and their entrances,  
And one man in his time plays many parts.

The ideas of theatre and translation are very close to the idea of rhetoric, understanding it from Aristotle's definition of translation as "the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion." Conejero says, "We consider the text, any original text, to be the result of the translation that the author himself makes of his own thoughts." And our friend, William Shakespeare, said something that could be related to this in his famous Sonnet XVIII:

So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,  
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

He is talking about the idea of life: while men breathe or see, the poetry, his words, will live, and this is what it gives us life: the words of the poetry, the words of his plays. In a way, Shakespeare is all about life and psychology: his characters think, love, feel, suffer and live. Bloom says, "What the Bible and Shakespeare have in common ... is only a certain universalism, global and multicultural." And Conejero adds, "We are living so long as we can 'translate' our thoughts into specific strategies."

Once the concept of translation as decoding and interpreting used in this unit is clear, we get to the main point of this curriculum unit. How can we start teaching Shakespeare to elementary students in a way that doesn't make them yawn? The answer as we have seen before is very easy: with Disney's *The Lion King*. We all know that the main idea in the plot of the Disney movie was based in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*: the son who wants to avenge his father's death because his uncle killed him to become king. But if we go deeper into the film script we can find many similarities not just with *Hamlet* but with some other Shakespearean plays such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Romeo and Juliet* and some of his sonnets.

*Hamlet* and *The Lion King* share similarities in themes, characters and actions. Hamlet could be related to Simba, the prince in *The Lion King*. Both, Hamlet and Simba, are princes in different settings (one in Denmark, the other in Africa) but with similar responsibilities (the responsibilities that the hierarchy as future kings gives to them). Both feel they need to avenge their father's death: the moral duty of revenging a death. In *The Lion King*, Mufasa, Simba's father, is killed by his brother, Scar, and Scar becomes king; Claudius, Hamlet's uncle, kills his own brother to become King of Denmark. There are some other characters in *The Lion King* that have a parallel in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*: the father's ghost appears in both, the decision to avenge the father's death, the two fellows who go with Hamlet, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern could be Simba's fellows, Timon and Pumba, who help him to go back home; the two Queens, Gertrude in the original story, and Sarabi, the queen in the film, are not happy with the new king and know the new king is destroying the kingdom physically and morally and they behave according to the social hierarchy where the King is the "boss," owning everything and making all decisions. The

comparison between the prologue of *Romeo and Juliet* where the action is set in Verona (“In fair Verona, where we lay our scene”) together with the idea of the setting in *The Lion King II* (“In fair Africa, where we lay our scene”). Both are iambic pentameters and we must know that Shakespeare and his contemporaries often wrote their plays using the iambic pentameter, which consisted of one unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable. It was such a normal way of writing for the people of that time because it was similar to the rhythms of everyday speech.

We can also find some other similarities in *The Lion King’s* character, Rafiki, the funny monkey who helps Simba to go back and escape. Compare him to Friar Lawrence from *Romeo and Juliet*, who helps the lovers. Both are a kind of religious leader. Some other facts are found when looking more closely at the film such as the idea of “Hakuna Matata,” the new philosophy, which means “no worries for the rest of your days” and the sentence “What’s in a name?” also found in *Romeo and Juliet*. In *The Lion King*, Timon and Pumba sing:

And, oh, the shame (He was ashamed)  
Thoughta changin’ name (Oh, what’s in a name)  
And I got downhearted (How did you feel) ...

We find this in Shakespeare’s *Henry IV, Part I*, act V, scene iii, lines 133-134, talking about honor, which was one of the main themes and conventions used in Elizabethan Theatre:

What is honour? A word. What is in that word?  
Honour. What is that honour?

And, of course in the famous dialogue between Romeo and his lover, Juliet, in act II, scene ii, lines 44-45:

What’s in a name? That which we call a rose  
By any other name would smell as sweet.

There is also the idea of the interludes—a play within a play—used to entertain the audience in the Elizabethan Age (most of the time kings and noble people). In *Hamlet* they perform a play for the new King and we find the same in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, where a group of craftsmen are rehearsing a play for the Duke’s wedding. The parallel of this scene is the one in which Timon and Pumba sing the *Hula, Hula* song in *The Lion King*.

All these ideas are developed in a series of didactic units, exercises and several lesson plans where teachers will have to talk about animals, about literature, about Shakespeare and try to relate all these ideas. All the activities are written and some others oral but I have tried to use the five program goals from Houston ISD when talking about

Languages Other Than English: communication, cultures, connections, comparisons and communities.

## LESSON PLANS

### Lesson Plan One: Comparing Shakespeare with *The Lion King*

#### *Aim and objectives*

- The main goal is to get conclusions through comparison. (We are going to work on both stories *The Lion King* and *Hamlet*. Through the videos (the Disney version and the animated version of *Hamlet*) and the text (script and tale for children) we are going to practice the four macro-skills: reading, listening, writing and speaking.
- Distinguish between what is real and imaginary through the analysis of a text (before, during and after reading).

#### *Procedure*

##### *Step One*

The first thing we need to do is to see the video: *The Lion King*. The students need to know that they need to pay attention to the plot because we are going to be working on it later. They have no idea of the relationship between the Disney film and Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Just prepare them to talk about the characters and the action in the film: "Who is the king? Who is the main character?" They all probably know the story of *The Lion King* but to make sure we get to the main point, we will have a chart with some questions. This chart is the standard with the main narrative topics:

Before they see the film, show them the film's cover:

1. What does the title ( <i>The Lion King</i> ) tell me about this story?	1. <i>There's a lion, a king, and lions are where? In Africa.</i>
2. What do the pictures tell me?	2. <i>There's a mum, a dad, a cub, and a "bad guy" under the rock (so, we have good and bad people in the film). There are lots of animals.</i>
3. What do I already know about the story of <i>The Lion King</i> ?	

During the film, stop and answer the following questions:

4. Who is the main character?	
5. What happens?	
6. When does it happen?	
7. Where does it happen?	
8. Why does it happen?	
9. How does it happen?	
10. What do I think will happen next?	

After viewing the film:

11. Who were the characters?	
12. What was the setting?	
13. What was the problem?	
14. How was the problem solved?	
15. Why did...?	

*Step Two*

Once they have seen the video and they have answered these 15 questions, the result is like a “summary” of the action and the plot in *The Lion King*. Now we are going to see another video. It is not a Disney production but it is about a guy called Hamlet who was Prince of Denmark. It’s just 30 minutes long, so in a class of 45 minutes they can watch the video and then answer the following 15 questions (narrative points of *Hamlet*).

Before we see the animated version of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, I will show them the video cover and the story which appears on *Stories from Shakespeare* (pages 19-30). So they can answer the questions in another chart (it’s a way to warm up):

1. What does the title ( <i>Hamlet, Prince of Denmark</i> ) tell me about the story?	1. It’s a story about someone called Hamlet and who lives in Denmark (do they know where Denmark is?)
2. What do the pictures tell me?	2. He is a young prince and he’s wearing black clothes (so do you think he’s happy or sad)
3. What do I already know about the story?	



During the video:

4. Who is the main character?	
5. What happens?	
6. When does it happen?	
7. Where does it happen?	
8. Why does it happen?	
9. How does it happen?	
10. What do I think will happen next?	

After the video:

11. Who were the characters?	
12. What was the setting?	
13. What was the problem?	
14. How was the problem solved?	
15. Why did...?	

*Step Three*

After having seen both videos and answered both charts, we need to ask them if they see any similarities between the two videos. Just try to make them talk, give their opinions and make them guess that *The Lion King* is based on *Hamlet*. (Cooperative learning, in pairs or groups of three or four).

*Step Four*

What are the similarities between both stories? And their differences? Let's find out what they have in common with another chart:

<b>SIMILARITIES</b>	<b>SIMILARITIES</b>
<i>The Lion King</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>

We can use the information provided in the didactic unit about characters and actions and what similarities and differences there are:

DIFFERENCES	DIFFERENCES
<i>The Lion King</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>

*Step Five*

After having found some differences and similarities, let’s read the original text on which Disney based the main plot of *The Lion King*. Get the book *Stories for Shakespeare* retold by Nicola Baxter. Children can read the story but the lines from the original text which are more difficult to read and they are *written in italics*, can be read by the teacher.

For example, one student can read from the beginning on page 20,

**Student:** “Something is rotten in the state of Denmark ...  
His mother begs him to put on a happier face.

**Teacher:** Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off...  
*Thou know’st ‘tis common; all that lives must die...*”

With these activities we get to the point that after comparing both videos, both stories, we find out that *The Lion King’s* plot was based on *Hamlet*.

***Evaluation***

The teacher needs to evaluate the accuracy in answering the questions on both charts, the accuracy of the filling information, and their participation when asked about the questions.

**Lesson Plan Two: Bulletin Boards**

***Aims and objectives***

- Students will work in cooperative groups.
- Students understand narrative text structure.
- Students demonstrate comprehension after a selection is read.
- Students read to increase knowledge of his/her own culture, the culture of others and the common elements of cultures.

### ***Procedure***

1. Take a look at the summary of *Hamlet* mentioned in this didactic unit. Teachers can ask questions about where Greece or Denmark are, and bring a map to show them. Teacher can use the map to talk about England and Stratford at the time Shakespeare was writing his plays.
2. Go for one of them or why not, the two stories. Tell the students they are going to show the other students their own version of a Shakespearean play. So the only thing they need to do is draw and color the pictures for a given text. Tell the students that this is important and it is one of the main points in using rhetoric. That is, for example, people who work in advertising use rhetoric and one of their main points is the one which says: *Text + Image= Power & Persuasion*. They are going to “persuade” other people with their own “version” of Shakespeare.
3. Give them the clues: the text in Spanish and English, so we can have two bulletin boards with the same stories. One color paper for one story, another color paper for the other, so they can identify which one is each story.

### ***Evaluation***

Teachers evaluate the accuracy of the drawings, their interest when they are drawing, the way of working in cooperative learning groups, and the final result of the bulletin boards.

## Lesson Plan Three: Matching Characters

### *Aims and objectives*

- Students demonstrate the comprehension after a selection is read.
- Students identify through the words which one is each story, and who is who in each story. Identify characters and actions.

### *Procedure*

#### *Step One*

Let's give the students a chart to fill in with some adjectives and some nouns.

Once upon a time there was a beautiful kingdom in a place called \_\_\_\_\_.  
(They can answer Africa or Denmark). There was a \_\_\_\_\_ (good, nice great, handsome...) king. There was also a prince. The prince was a \_\_\_\_\_ (handsome, nice...) \_\_\_\_\_ (man, lion, guy, cub). The King, the father's \_\_\_\_\_ (prince, lion, cub, boy...), was a \_\_\_\_\_ (they add their own adjective) \_\_\_\_\_ (man, lion, king) but unfortunately \_\_\_\_\_ (he died, somebody killed him). The Queen's name was \_\_\_\_\_ (Gertrude, Sarabi). When the king died, his brother \_\_\_\_\_ (Scar, Claudius) became king. The prince was \_\_\_\_\_ (angry, sad...). The prince had also a girlfriend who loved him very much called \_\_\_\_\_ (Ophelia, Nala). One day the prince, had a revelation and he saw his father's \_\_\_\_\_ (ghost). He found out that his father was killed by his own brother. He was angry and decided to avenge his father's death.

*Step Two*

What's the result of having different nouns and different adjectives on a same text? The result is two different stories based on the same plot. Let's find the definition of some of the nouns and adjectives used in our story:

<b><i>HAMLET and THE LION KING</i></b>	
<b>Defining words</b>	
Noun	PRINCE:
Noun	GHOST:
Noun	CUB:
Noun	LION:
Noun	GUY:
Adjective	SAD:
Adjective	ANGRY:
Adjective	HANDSOME:
Adjective	GREAT:
Adjective	NICE:

*Step Three*

Why not writing a sentence with each word?

- Prince: \_\_\_\_\_
- Ghost: \_\_\_\_\_
- Cub: \_\_\_\_\_
- Lion: \_\_\_\_\_
- Guy: \_\_\_\_\_
- Sad: \_\_\_\_\_
- Angry: \_\_\_\_\_
- Handsome: \_\_\_\_\_
- Great: \_\_\_\_\_
- Nice: \_\_\_\_\_

***Evaluation***

Teachers evaluate the logic of both stories (one with human nouns and adjectives and the other with animal ones); the appropriate meaning of the words and the logical meaning of the sentences. Creativity and participation will be rewarded too.

In these activities we can find the main objectives from TEA concerning fourth grade reading and writing. These objectives are found in these lesson plans bearing in mind that they change to TAKS.

<b>WRITING OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>FOURTH GRADE</b>
<b>Objective 1:</b>	The student will respond appropriately in a written composition to the purpose/audience specified in a given topic.
<b>Objective 2:</b>	The student will organize ideas in a written composition on a given topic.
<b>Objective 3:</b>	The student will demonstrate control of the English Language in a written composition on a given topic.
<b>Objective 4:</b>	The student will generate a written composition that develops/supports/elaborates the central idea stated in a given topic.
<b>Objective 5:</b>	The student will recognize appropriate sentence construction within the context of a written passage.
<b>Objective 6:</b>	The student will recognize appropriate English usage within the context of a written passage.
<b>Objective 7:</b>	The student will recognize appropriate spelling, capitalization, and punctuation within the context of a written passage.

<b>READING OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>FOURTH GRADE</b>
<b>Objective 1:</b>	The student will determine the meaning of words in a variety of written texts.
<b>Objective 2:</b>	The student will identify supporting ideas in a variety of written texts.
<b>Objective 3:</b>	The student will summarize a variety of written texts.
<b>Objective 4:</b>	The student will perceive relationships and recognize outcomes in a variety of written texts.
<b>Objective 5:</b>	The student will analyze information in a variety of written texts in order to make inferences and generalizations.
<b>Objective 7:</b>	The student will recognize points of view, propaganda, and/or statements of fact and opinion in a variety of written texts.

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In the year 1285, eleven-year-old Toby Burgess is sent to be a page in his uncle's castle. While there, he keeps a detailed journal of everything that happens, from boar hunts and tournaments to baking bread and cleaning out toilets! Triumphs and tribulations of life in a medieval castle.

Shakespeare, William. *Complete Sonnets*. New York: Dover Thrift Editions, 1991.



The Sonnets have engendered reams of scholarly disputation debate as to the identity of “the dark lady” and the “lovely boy” to whom the vast majority are addressed. Controversy has also long simmered over the full name of “W.H.” of the dedication. What is not in dispute is the superior quality of these lyrics, which rank among the finest sonnets ever written-in any language.

———. *Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. Harper Collins, 1994.

This edition edited by the late Professor Peter Alexander, has long been established as one of the most authoritative editions of Shakespeare’s works and was chosen by the BBC as the basis for its televised cycle of the plays. Introductions to the plays and poems, significance of the Alexander text, glossary of 2500 entries explaining the meaning of obsolete words and phrases.

———. *El Sueno de Una Noche de Verano, Noche de Reyes*. Translated by Angel-Luis Pujante. Madrid: Austral, 2000.

Spanish translation of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *Twelfth Night*. The translator, Angel-Luis Pujante, has written a broad introduction about the study of these two plays and talks about the fidelity of the translation.

———. *Stories from Shakespeare*. Retold by Nicola Baxter. Leicester: Bookmart Limited, 2001.

Six of Shakespeare’s most famous plays are beautifully illustrated in this collection of dramatic retellings, offering an enticing introduction to the tragedies of *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, the intricate comedies of *Twelfth Night* and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *Antony and Cleopatra*.

Stanley, Diane. *Bard of Avon. The Story of William Shakespeare*. New York: Morrow Junior Books, 1992.

There will always be unsolved mysteries about Shakespeare, but what we do know of his life, his times and his theatre makes a dramatic and exciting story.

## **Filmography**

*The Lion King*. Walt Disney Video.

It tells of the love between a proud lion ruler, Mufasa, and his own son, Simba. Its plot is based on Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*.

Edwards, Dave (director). *The Animated Tales. Hamlet*. Random House, 1993. VHS.

Adaptation animated by leading Russian artists and feature brilliant performances by world-renowned actors, including members of England’s Royal Shakespeare Company.

*A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Fox Searchlight Pictures, 1999. DVD.

A stellar cast headed by Michelle Pfeiffer and Kevin Kline, bring this romantic comedy to life. When two pairs of star-crossed lovers, a troop of inept amateur actors, a feuding pair of supernatural sprites and a love potion gone astray all come together in an enchanted moonlit forest, the result is an unequalled mixture of merriment and magic. Also starring Calista Flockhart, Stanley Tucci and Rupert Everett.

*Hamlet*. Hallmark Entertainment, 2000. DVD.

Youthful innocence and passionate love are lost to greed, deceit and murder in Shakespeare's immortal *Hamlet*. Superb direction and acting by Campbell Scott who portrays the tortured Danish prince, who is visited one dark night in a dream by the spirit of his dead father, proclaiming his untimely death at the hand of his own brother, Claudius. Greed is the motive. The prize is the throne and his beloved wife, Gertrude. The truth must be told through a play, if Hamlet is to enact his revenge. It's a story of the ages which never grows old.

*Henry V*. The Samuel Goldwyn Company and BBC, 1989. DVD.

Having recently been crowned King of England, Henry commands a massive invasion to assert what he believes is his legal right to the throne of France. But a mighty army stands in his way... and the young monarch must rely on untested reserves of courage and cunning as he personally leads his outnumbered forces into a desperate battle for the honor and glory of the British Empire.

*Romeo and Juliet*. Twentieth Century Fox, 1997. DVD.

Leonardo di Caprio and Claire Danes portray Romeo and Juliet, the youthful star-crossed lovers of the past. But the setting has been moved from its Elizabethan origins to the futuristic urban backdrop of Verona Beach.

## Internet Resources

<http://www.sparknotes.com/shakespeare/hamlet>

Phillips, Brian. *SparkNotes on Hamlet*. 1 March 2002

This is a good and complete study of *Hamlet* (with an introduction, context, plot overview, character list, analysis of major characters, summary and analysis act by act, quotations, study questions and essay topics).

[www.lionking.org/scripts](http://www.lionking.org/scripts)

Pollard, Phil. *Disney's The Lion King's script (semi-official MS Word Version)*. Edited by Brian Tiemann.

MS Word version of *The Lion King* script, rewritten from viewing the movie and various printed resources.