

## **Enjoying Shakespeare Using Bilingual Versions: English and Spanish for High School Students**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Through this work I will try to demonstrate to all students, both native and non-native English speakers (in this case students from the Hispanic community) that Shakespeare can be taught in Spanish as well as in English. I hope to transmit my passion for literature as well as a new vision and dimension that can be received through the Spanish translation. I prefer to use this type of theater because a student connects with it quickly. It's easier for a bilingual student to understand a comedy rather than a political drama of Shakespeare. Many students are not rich and not familiar with our theatrical language, and most of them have a very poor knowledge of drama and poetry.

My class preference includes bilingual students of English in grades eleven and twelve and who are in the second level of Spanish. The texts have to be given in Spanish and in English. We are going to use and read the Spanish translated version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* called in Spanish *El sueño de una noche de verano*, done by Angel Luis Pujante, and also published by him, in 1989. In English we are going to use *A Midsummer Night's Dream* from Peter Holland (1994).

For some authors and critics as well as criticizers, this is the best romantic comedy play that Shakespeare has written. It is one of the most popular plays with a lot of scenic possibilities for the actors and also for the drama play directors. The author composed a story in which all the different and uneven elements found, let's say, a certain harmony. These are: desire and reason, change and permanence, madness and good sense.

### **Aspects of This Comedy: Traditions, and Meanings**

Shakespeare likes to make clear to us the existence of two worlds, the supernatural and the natural; the lovers are the step that shows the spectators how to live in both worlds, as they are being loved in one of them. The older people are the rational part, and the artisans live together in both worlds but deeply belong also to the natural one.

The title draws on the summer solstice, a midsummer eve, occurring June 23 and marked by holiday partying and tales of fairies and temporary insanity. Shakespeare cleverly weaves together not only fairies and lovers, but also social hierarchies with the aristocratic Theseus, the artisans and working men. This allows the play to become infinitely more lyrical, since it is able to draw on the more brutal rigid language of the lower classes as well as the poetry of the noblemen.

After reading his play, I was looking for some Germanic folk traditions that were used in literature and saw that the fairies we have in this play belong to the Nordic folklore. The name of Oberon belongs to a French medieval play, and Titania, the queen of fairies to Ovidio's *Metamorphosis*. The Latin writer had a lot of influence in this play. In addition, Shakespeare also caricatures the artisans playing Pyramus and Thisbe.

The play's action takes place in Athens. The forest, the fairies and the artisans belong more to the English tradition than to that of the Mediterranean. In fact, the forest is the main element in the setting of this love story. It is interesting that the transformation of a man turning into an ass comes probably from Apuleio's *Metamorphosis*. Regarding the fairies, it's important that we keep in mind the popular tradition involved in this fantastic and supernatural world typical of Shakespeare. Those creatures have magical powers, an attitude of friendship but also a hedonistic tinge, a taste of music, and dancing, always surrounded by a colorful world; the magic forest is the framework. In the original text we can see that they are nominated as "elves" or "fairies," but the curious point is that the author endows those creatures with the very human concept of a "king" and a "queen."

The couple Oberon and Titania goes a parallel way with the couple Theseus and Hippolyta, the first more in an earthly social aspect, the second more in a natural aspect. We can see this come and go between love and soul, likes and dislikes, the earth and the heaven. An important character is Robin, a heritage from the English folklore. He is Oberon's goblin and page. We have to say that in the English editions and also in the different work translations, this character appears with the name of "Puck" because the first modern publishers gave to a common noun the function of a proper noun.

During Shakespeare's time, this picturesque character was something like a national comedic spirit associated with the rural traditions and popular customs. The author highlights Robin's clumsiness and pranks, so he has through his wits and his childish soul, a better communication with the world of fairies. Certainly, Robin is not less childish and playful than the fairies.

The main theme in this romantic comedy is the love that moves a couple to get married after overcoming a succession of obstacles. What wins is the spirit of harmony instead of the law's strictness. Shakespeare tries to show how life is winning against death.

The action requires the presence of both worlds, a real one and an alternate, a green, fantastic, and exciting scenario - the forest - which is a place of magic, fantasy, illusion and spiritual freedom where a happy ending is reachable and where you can be transformed and regenerated. In connection with the forest are also the 'May Day' parties from England. They were a celebration expressing happiness because the spring season was arriving, so a new period, a new power of love was created, conceived and imagined.

Contrasting this beautiful and fantastic world in the forest that the lovers were showing us, also using a funny conventional and stylized language, is the atmosphere of the artisans, rude and coarse. However the magic power of a flower, a flower that symbolized love and dreams, can make the working imagination an unrealistic imagination strangely impregnated by a love and desire.

The message to the spectator or reader is that Shakespeare wants to transmit to us that we should live his poetic dream, a dream which consists of three basic elements: To be a poet, to be a madman, and to be a lover.

His characters, the lovers in this play, bring to reality what they had experienced in that other fantastic and imaginative world. What they show to us is that in things of love illusion is part of reality.

Maybe the iciest moment is when Puck (also called Robin Goodfellow) and Oberon are bewitching the other characters. For my students, these moments are the funniest of all the play. Here we can see how well Shakespeare is able to depict or describe some human behaviors using irony. Of course we should not forget that his mixture of poetry and drama are two tools that give this play an aesthetic union and a lot of diversity of actions as well as spoken expressions. This play has a jocular or humorous style, as well as ingenious and artistic expressions mixed with fantastic themes, which gives this play morality. We count on the fact that there will be a moral at the end of Shakespeare's comedies making ethics and entertainment two inseparable elements.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE UNIT**

### **Short Summary and Characters**

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* is first mentioned by Francis Meres in 1598; it's likely to have been written around the same period *Romeo and Juliet* was created. Indeed, many similarities exist between the two plays. The play was first printed in quarto in 1600, following its entry into the Stationer's Register on October 8, 1600. This quarto is almost surely taken directly from a manuscript written by Shakespeare. A second quarto was printed in 1619 (and falsely backdated to 1600) and attempted to correct some of the errors in the first printing, but also introduced several new errors. It is the second quarto, which served as the basis for the First Folio in 1623.

There is a myth that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was first performed for a private audience after an actual wedding had taken place. The play's three weddings and play-within-a-play *Pyramus and Thisbe* certainly would seem to fit the scene, with all the newlyweds retiring to their respective chambers at the end. Rather, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was definitely performed on the London stage by the Lord Chamberlain's Men, and the title page of the first Quarto indicates William Shakespeare wrote it.

One of the more interesting changes that Shakespeare introduces is the concept of small, kind fairies. Robin Goodfellow, the spirit known as Puck, is thought to have once

been feared by villagers. History indicates that prior to Elizabethan times, fairies were considered evil spirits who stole children and sacrificed them to the devil. Shakespeare, along with other writers, redefined fairies during this time period, turning them into gentle, albeit mischievous spirits.

The final act of the play brings to light a traditional fear of the Elizabethan theater, namely that of censorship. Throughout the play the lower artisans, who wish to perform *Pyramus and Thisbe*, try to corrupt the plot and assure the audience that the play is not real and that they need not fear the actions taking place. This culminates in the actual ending, in which Puck suggests that if we do not like the play, we should merely consider it to have been a dream. One of the most remarkable features of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is that at the end members of the audience are unsure whether what they have seen is real, or whether they have woken after having shared the same dream. This is of course precisely what Shakespeare wants to make clear, namely that the theater is nothing more than a shared dream. Hence, the constant interruption of that dream in the *Pyramus and Thisbe* production, which serves to highlight the artificial aspect of the theater. Bottom and his company offer us not only *Pyramus and Thisbe* as a product of our imagination, but the entire play as well.

Puck's suggestion hides a more serious aspect of the comic fun of the play. There is deep underlying sexual tension between the male and female characters, witnessed by Oberon's attempts to humiliate Titania and Theseus' conquest of Hippolyta. This tension is rapidly dissipated by the sure solution, which the play assumes, making it seem less real. However, the darker side of the play should not be ignored, nor the rapid mobility with which the actors transfer their amorous desires from one person to the other.

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* takes place in Athens. Theseus, the Duke of Athens, is planning his marriage with Hippolyta, and as a result he is planning a large festival. Egeus enters, followed by his daughter Hermia, her beloved Lysander, and her suitor Demetrius. Egeus tells Theseus that Hermia refuses to marry Demetrius, wanting instead to marry Lysander. He asks for the right to punish Hermia with death if she refuses to obey.

Theseus agrees that Hermia's duty is to obey her father, and threatens her with either entering a nunnery or marrying the man her father chooses. Lysander protests, but is overruled by the law. He and Hermia then decide to flee by night into the woods surrounding Athens, where they can escape the law and get married. They tell their plan to Helena, a girl who is madly in love with Demetrius. Hoping to gain favor with Demetrius, Helena decides to tell him about the plan.

Some local artisans and workmen have decided to perform a play for Theseus as a way to celebrate his wedding. They choose *Pyramus and Thisbe* for their play, and meet to assign the roles. Nick Bottom gets the role of Pyramus, and Flute takes the part of Thisbe. They agree to meet the next night in the woods to rehearse the play.

Robin Goodfellow, or Puck, meets a fairy who serves Queen Titania. He tells the fairy that his King Oberon is in the woods, and that Titania should avoid Oberon because they will quarrel again. However, Titania and Oberon soon arrive and begin arguing about a young boy Titania has stolen and is caring for. Oberon demands that she give him the boy, but she refuses.

Oberon decides to play a trick on Titania and puts some pansy juice on her eyes. The magical juice will make her fall in love with the first person she sees upon waking up. Soon after Puck is sent away to fetch the juice, Oberon overhears Demetrius and Helena in the woods.

Demetrius deserts Helena in the forest, leaving her alone. Oberon decides that he will change this situation, and commands Robin to put the juice onto Demetrius's eyes when he is sleeping. He then finds Titania and drops the juice onto her eyelids. Robin goes to find Demetrius, but instead comes across Lysander and accidentally uses the juice on him.

By accident Helena comes across Lysander and wakes him up. He immediately falls in love with her and starts to chase her through the woods. Together they arrive where Oberon is watching, and he realizes the mistake. Oberon then puts the pansy juice onto Demetrius's eyelids, who upon waking also falls in love with Helena. She thinks that the two men are trying to torment her for being in love with Demetrius, and becomes furious at their protestations of love.

The workmen arrive in the woods and start to practice their play. They constantly ruin the lines of the play and mispronounce the words. Out of fear of censorship, they decide to make the play less realistic. Therefore the lion is supposed to announce that he is not a lion, but only a common man. Bottom also feels obliged to tell the audience that he is not really going to die, but will only pretend to do so. Puck, watching this silly scene, catches Bottom alone and puts an ass's head on him. When Bottom returns to his troupe, they run away out of fear. Bottom then comes across Titania, and succeeds in waking her up. She falls in love with him due to the juice on her eyes and takes him with her.

Lysander and Demetrius prepare to fight one another for Helena. Puck intervenes and leads them through the woods in circles until they collapse onto the ground in exhaustion. He then brings the two women to the same area and puts them to sleep as well.

Oberon finds Titania and releases her from the spell. He then tells the audience that Bottom will think it is all a dream when he wakes up. He further releases Lysander from the spell. Theseus arrives with a hunting party and finds the lovers stretched out on the ground. He orders the hunting horns blown in order to wake them up.

The lovers explain why they are in the woods, at which point Egeus demands that he be allowed to exercise the law on Hermia. However, Demetrius intervenes and tells them that he no longer loves Hermia, but rather only loves Helena. Theseus decides to overbear Egeus and let the lovers get married that day with him. Together they return to Athens.

Bottom wakes up and thinks that he has dreamed the entire episode. He swiftly returns to Athens where he meets his friends. Together they head over to Theseus's palace. Theseus looks over the list of possible entertainment for that evening and settles on the play of *Pyramus and Thisbe*. Bottom and the rest of his company perform the play, after which everyone retires to bed. Puck arrives and starts to sweep the house clean. Oberon and Titania briefly bless the couples and their future children.

After they leave Puck asks the audience to forgive the actors if they were offended. He then tells the audience that if anyone disliked the play, they should imagine that it was only a dream.

### **The Translated Version**

We are going to use and read the Spanish translation done by Angel Luis Pujante. This translation is based on the first edition text, but like the other modern editions, he takes in account other versions, but the main sense is based on the text that is at the “infolius.” A few stage directions are added and appear between square brackets. He translate the verses as free verses because that’s the way that permits the transfer of the original sense without neglecting the stylistic resources or the rhythm.

If humor consists in a non-threatening incongruity, the translation of humoristic texts can be carry out extracting from themselves the formula or the own jig in which the humor is based, in each concrete case, word or native expression. I think that humor can be divided in three types or classes: The one that depends on a universal phenomenon, the one that is originate in something specific and is intrinsic to a culture or society, and the one that is derived from a specific linguistic characteristic. The last two could be the most difficult for translating, so we need to bear in mind that when we translate foreign humor, what matters is not the semantic but the incongruity, what we should do is to try to look for other incongruity based in cultural aspects of the society or the language, so we could have the liberty of changing the semantic import. This permits us to find or to approximate us we can or to reincorporate the same formula which was used in the original text, not all times to translate it, but to generate a new text humorously analogous. The language is the starting point. It is the content for authors and dramaturges, but following me, in our modern times when authors recur to find inspiration or to make quotations, they don’t observe at all the original linguistic construction. It is necessary to know the popular language, the one that is spoken by the vulgar people, often personalized in characters that are almost clowns or buffoons. This means that we have to forget conservative instincts in our translation process, that’s why a dramaturgical text can exist, because of the combination of two metrics, the

grammatical with the one that is spoken. Sometimes we get confused when we read Shakespeare because what is he writing: Prosaic verses or Poetic prose?

### ***a) Translation Difficulties***

Let me say a little more about the translation and say something about the Spanish version. Of course, my students have received some notes from me trying to make clear that it's impossible to reproduce the same original senses, feelings, thoughts, ideas and language that Shakespeare had in that epoch. The following reasons are the difficulty in translation about Shakespeare's comedy *A Midsummer Night's Dream*:

1. The play was written, almost four hundred years ago, so words, idioms and expressions, are archaic and obsolete.
2. Shakespeare never participated in the edition of his plays, so all the transformations and linguistic mistakes can be translated also, but they are not from the original author.
3. Shakespeare is a genius in conciseness, which means that a lot of ideas are inside of short expressions.  
Each language has its own semantic way of expression. If we are not bilingual, those original ideas can be sometimes very difficult to understand, especially poetry. Here we have a little advantage; movements and gestures combine words.
4. *Midsummer Night's Dream* is written in verse, so sometimes the sense is not as clear as in prose.
5. Shakespeare used a big lexicon, not only in terms, but also in meanings.

So what happens is that many passages can be interpreted distinctly. Even for a native speaker a passage can be dubious.

### ***b) Why is the Translation in Verse?***

Philosophers and authors like Friedrich Nietzsche or Jakob Burckhardt have done some reflections: Poetry is the oldest spoken art that exists in the myths of the people; it's a vehicle of ethic, didactic, religion (we can see it in the hymns of glory), and as a lyric aspect. It expresses what the society thinks, through different ages; it doesn't matter if it is something good or bad, magnificent or horrible. What a verse expresses, with its metric and rhyme causes more impact and is easier to memorize for the listener.

The verse with eleven syllables, sometimes called heroic verse, is the easiest to memorize and vocalize between one inhalation and exhalation of air while the actor is speaking.

The other short kinds of verses are more appropriate to sing than to speak.

The translation into the Spanish version is done in the majority of the play in free verse or blank verse, without rhyme, and iambic with emphasis on paired syllables.

A. L. Pujante attempts to follow the original version as much as possible. Sometimes, we can observe that some verses have seven or nine syllables; the reason is that for the

Spanish comprehension and meaning this measure is required, because without it the sense would be completely different.

We should not forget that Shakespeare wrote *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to be represented on stage, but in Spanish it's better to read it, so one can make better pauses and have better comprehension of the play. Also one must remember that at the end of each verse, even without grammatical punctuation, a pause is required so one can reach the rhythm and the musical nature.

### **Puck or Robin Goodfellow?**

Now, we are going to see a paragraph about Puck, a relevant character that appears in the play, translated into the Spanish version following A. L. Pujante. The English paragraphs as well as the explanation are from Bulfinch's *Mythology: The Age of Fable or Stories of Gods and Heroes* by Thomas Bulfinch:

It is a generic term for a type of supernatural present in Celtic mythology and in English folklore. Commonly, the Puck was an amoral spirit or imp, which played arbitrary tricks on people. He is a representative of the Trickster figure, which appears in most Germanic folklore. Robin Goodfellow, Puck's other name, is derived from English folklore. The spirit was not actually good by nature, but was called Goodfellow as a sort of appeasement, meant to deflect the spirit's pranks towards other people. My students appreciate this character most.

Puck's refers to this reputation in Act II scene I:

Thou speak'st aright;  
I am that merry wanderer of the night.  
I jest to Oberon and make him smile  
When I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile,  
Neighing in likeness of a filly foal:  
And sometime lurk I in a gossip's bowl,  
In very likeness of a roasted crab  
And when she drinks, against her lips I bob  
And on her wither'd dewlap pour the ale.  
The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,  
Sometime for three-foot stool mistaken me;  
Then slip I from her bum, down topples she.



## **CURRICULUM, TIME, PROCEDURE**

### **Theoretical Hours**

The theoretical hours could be composed between 6-8 hours. Moreover we could have in addition 2 hours designated to be used as tutorial hours. During this time, the teacher should help the students with all the questions and troubles they may have.

- 1) Introduction to Shakespeare's comedy in his context  
The Elizabethan theatre / Situation inside the European theater / Shakespeare's contribution to the comedic tradition, classical and contemporary (3 hours).
- 2) Introduction to the analytical theater  
Presence of different codes / models of the dramatic structure / particularities of the theatrical communication / meaning and significance of Shakespeare's comedy in current criticism. (3 hours).

The theoretical explanation will be complemented for the students through the bibliographical materials that will be offered in those classes.

### **Practical Hours**

10.5 hours (7 days / 1.5 each).

Starting from the theoretical sessions sustained and from the readings of that comedy, the students, in groups, will present a topic for debate related to a specific theme on which they will have worked previously, related to each comedy.

Aforementioned themes may be:

- The role of the comical characters > professional jester, idiot or innocent ignorant?
- The use of the language in association with the nature > natural or sophisticated?
- The conflict about the urban and rural scenarios > civilization or Arcadia?
- The opposition between the sublime and the grotesque.
- The personal impression about the present reading of Shakespeare's comedy now: classical or modern?

### **General Objectives**

- The student has to take part, individually or in groups, actively in these sessions or classes and they have to be able to come to their own conclusions.
- The student must be familiar with the theatrical genre of the comedy; he should know some codes and signs of the theatre that have to deal with the explanations given during the theoretical portion of the class (for example, the interpretation of the concept of the dream or the symbolic world, as in relation to the moon).

- The student has to acquire and to increase his/her theatrical vocabulary by means of the reading and groups' debates.
- The student has to acquire a lexical richness by means of an analysis of the texts and the rhetoric, and he also has to try to analyze the position of Shakespeare to the language.
- The student has to analyze the structure of the play; he/she has to talk and know about the plays irony, the pacing of the drama, characterization, the fable and the intrigue or plot.
- The student has to acquire a certain theatrical and critical sensibility.

The evaluation, the active participation in all the classes or sessions and the opinions, individual as well as collective, will show a grade of reflection and previous working. Also, the students have to propose other aspects or points in which they are interested. There will also be opportunities to watch a film version about the analyzed plays.

### **Instructor's presentations:**

#### a) The scenic space

1. Miracle and Mystery Plays, Moralities: the round scenarios, the carts.
2. Interludes: the intern lounges.
3. Tudor and Elizabethan theatre: public and private.

#### b) The Tudor and Elizabethan drama: (1485-1616)

1. The drama's secularization.
2. The development of the comedy.
3. The characters.
4. The audience.

#### c) Introduction to the theatrical analysis

1. The theatrical communication; the generic contextualization, (dramatic text and theatrical text).
2. Types of codes and scenic signs.
3. The dramatic structure and their more usual procedures (the irony).
4. Elements of the dramatic discourse: references, information and deixis.

#### d) Significance of Shakespeare's comedy in the current criticism

1. Fleeting vision from the critical previous the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War: from Johnson to Bradley, going through Romanticism.
2. After the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War: *Shakespeare our Contemporary, Alternative Shakespeare's*, etc. Postmodernism, Feminism, etc. Revision of the ideals or canons.

3. The Congress - *Four centuries of Shakespeare in Europe* - (Murcia, Spain, November, 1999), present and future projects.

## LESSON PLANS

### Lesson Plan One: Puck's "Dramatis personae"

#### *Students' Activities*

After explaining and giving my students a synopsis of the play, Shakespeare's sources, Shakespeare's staging, and also information about Shakespeare's life, we are going to talk about the "Dramatis personae" of Puck. We will work with several paragraphs with both versions, in English and in Spanish, this one from Pujante:

Puck says: (Act II, scene I)

Thou speak'st aright;  
I am that merry wanderer of the night.  
I jest to Oberon and make him smile  
When I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile,  
Neighing in likeness of a filly foal:  
And sometime lurk I in a gossip's bowl,  
In very likeness of a roasted crab  
And when she drinks, against her lips I bob  
And on her wither'd dewlap pour the ale.  
The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,  
Sometime for three-foot stool mistaken me;  
Then slip I from her bum, down topples she.

#### *Translation:*

Muy bien me conoces;  
yo soy ese alegre andarín de la noche.  
Divierto a Oberó, que ríe de gozo  
Si burlo a un caballo potente y brioso  
Relinchando a modo de joven potrilla.  
Acecho en el vaso de vieja cuentista  
En forma y aspecto de manzana asada;  
Asomo ante el labio y, por la papada,  
Cuando va a beber, vierto la cerveza.  
Al contar sus cuentos, esta pobre vieja  
A veces me toma por un taburete;  
Le esquivo el trasero, al suelo se viene, ...

In Act I, scene I, a fairy says to Puck:

Over hill, over dale,  
Thorough bush, thorough briar,  
Over park, over pale,  
Thorough flood, thorough fire,  
I do wander everywhere,  
Swifter than the moon's sphere;  
And I serve the fairy queen,  
To dew her orbs upon the green.  
The cowslips tall her pensioners be:  
In their gold coats spots you see;  
Those be rubies, fairy favours,  
In those freckles live their savours:  
I must go seek some dewdrops here  
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.  
Farewell, thou lo' of spirits; I'll be gone:  
Our queen and all our elves come here anon.

*Translation:*

Por Colinas y por valles,  
Por matorrales y por zarzas,  
Por parques y cercados,  
Cruzando inundaciones y fuegos,  
Recorro por todas partes,  
Mas veloz que la esfera lunar;  
Y sirvo a la Reina de las hadas,  
Para colocar rocío en sus dominios sobre lo verde.  
Las primulas son sus subditas muy estimadas:  
En sus cubiertas de oro tu ves manchas;  
Esos son rubies, favores de las hadas,  
En esas pequitas viven sus perfumes:  
Tengo que buscar unas goticas de rocío aqui  
Y colgar una perla en cada oreja de una primula.  
Adios, espíritu burdo y burlon; me tengo que ir.  
Nuestra Reina y todos sus elfos vienen aqui muy pronto.

Oberon says to Puck:

I know a bank where on the wild thyme blows,  
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows  
Quite over canopied with luscious woodbine,  
With sweet musk-rose, and with eglantine:  
There sleeps Titania some time of the night,  
Lulled in these flowers with dances and delight;  
And there the snake throws her enameled skin,  
Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in.

*Translation:*

Conozco una colina con aroma de menta salvaje,  
Donde crecen las primulas y se mecen las violetas  
A la sombra de lujuriosas enredaderas  
Con dulce perfume de almizcle y eglantines:  
Allí duerme Titania una parte de la noche,  
Adormecida en estas flores con bailes y delicias;  
Y allí la serpiente arroja su piel diamantine,  
Ancha lo suficiente para abrigar un hada.

### ***Stage Terms***

Character = a person, an animal or sometimes an object.

Play = a story performed on stage.

Scene = a part of a play.

Props = an object an actor uses a play to help tell the play's story.

Set pieces = objects used in a play to help create different locations.

Setting = the location or locations of the play.

Stage directions = instructions in a play for the director, performers, and the stage crew that are usually printed in italics or enclosed in parentheses.

### ***Geography***

- Students should be familiar with the geography of Europe, especially Greece and England. Students should understand something of each city's characteristics, also the one to which Shakespeare belongs. (Population, major industries, etc.)

### ***History***

- Discuss with students the status of England in the 1500s. Who was the queen? Did this have an effect on Shakespeare's writing? Discuss the class structure of England at that time. Was it acceptable to go against an arranged marriage in that society?. What were the consequences? Does it exist today? Where? Why?
- Have the students compare Shakespeare's career with that of a modern day playwright? What would an average day have been for Shakespeare? What mechanics would he have used to write and promote his play?

### *Reading*

- Students should read and be familiar with the comedy. Discuss with them the use of language that Shakespeare used. Most of his lines are written in poetry, sometimes they rhyme and sometimes they don't but they have a set rhythm called meter; try to explain to your students why Shakespeare uses five iambic feet to a line, this pattern is known as iambic pentameter.
- Because Shakespeare wrote over 400 years ago, he used words that are not common today (thou=you, thine=your, your, thee=you, thyself=yourself). He also uses verb endings that are no longer in use (hath=has, art=are).
- Students should read the translation in Spanish and compare both versions, the English and the Spanish.

### *Literature*

Have your students done a character analysis? Have them spend fifteen minutes reflecting and citing who the characters are, their background, what makes them choose to make certain decisions, why they prefer one instead of other or others?

- Discuss with your students the relevant themes in *Midsummer Night's Dream* and compare them to current events. How many stories of hate, love, war, etc. appear in the newspaper and on television? Do they know one? Are they agreeing with? How is the modern Literature working on these troubles today?

### *Comprehension*

- After each scene or paragraph that you read with your students do journal entries summarizing what they have read in their own words. This will help them to decipher the language better.

### *Art*

- The Globe Theatre was built in London during Shakespeare's time. Encourage students to create a replica or scale model of the Globe to further enhance comprehension of the stages in the 1500s.

### *Drama*

- Re-create the story in modern day language. Encourage your students to improvise. Discuss with students differences they want to introduce in this comedy. Explain them drama characteristics and try to encourage them to read and understand drama.

### ***Tying in the Essential Elements*** (Guidelines provided by HISD)

After the performance the student shall be provided the opportunities to:

- Recognize the major differences among poems, short stories, novels, plays and nonfiction.
- Recognize the development of an overall theme in a literary work.
- Use basic literary terminology.

- Recognize relevant details.
- Differentiate between fact and fiction.
- Make inferences and draw conclusions.
- Evaluate and make judgments.
- Perceive cause and effect relationships.

## **Lesson Plan Two: A Love Story**

### ***Objectives***

Using both versions (English-Spanish) the main objectives are:

To allow students to connect the lovers' relationships with their own personal experiences.

To allow students to jump into a role.

To allow also ESL students to participate in the activity.

### ***Materials***

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* text. *El sueño de una noche de verano*. (Act I, scene 1, lines 128-200).

### ***Activities***

1. Divide students into pairs.
2. Assign couples to your students.
3. Ask couples to create a history of their relationship imitating the comedy.
  - How and when did you meet?
  - What do you like about each other?
  - What do you do together?
4. Role Plays, students may remain in their original pairs or perform their scene with another classmate.
5. In groups of six, enact (Act I, scene 1, lines 128-200) three people will feed in the scene to the three actors.
6. Questions for discussion/homework:
  - What were the similarities/differences between the role-play and the scene?
  - How do the characters handle the situation?
  - How would you handle it?
  - How would Helena be different if she were alive today? Hermia? Lysander? Demetrius?
  - Choose a character and write an entry in his or her journal/diary about this specific situation, try to write it as a comedy.

### ***Class Periods***

This lesson will take two class periods, approximately 180 minutes.

### ***Evaluation***

The students' participation and involvement in the performance and writing process will be important for the assessment.

### **Lesson Plan Three: Imitating characters**

#### ***Objectives***

Use both versions (English-Spanish). The main objectives are:

- Students understand the characters they select and make connections between the text they are performing and the larger context of the play.
- Students will first act out scenes in small groups; then the students will participate and discuss about the character they imitated.
- Students read literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions, philosophical, ethical, aesthetic of human experience and to have an idea about fiction and nonfiction texts and also classic and contemporary works.
- Students find out strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts.
- Students are able to express their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features.
- Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.
- Students are able to convey the motivations for their character's behavior clearly to the rest of the class.

#### ***Materials***

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* text. *El sueño de una noche de verano*. (1.1.128-225).

#### ***Activities***

1. Divide students into groups of two and four. Distribute the handouts, scripts of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *El sueño de una noche de verano*. (1.1.128-225) to students to spend the class period casting, rehearsing, and preparing to present their scene in class the next day. In the process of preparing the scene, the students need to make specific choices about how the character acts and speaks, how they feel about themselves and the other characters, and how they will behave towards other characters.



2. The next day those student groups will perform their scenes while the other students that represent the audience take notes. The audience should focus their questions and comments on choices and interpretation.
3. Arrange a set of desks in the front of the room. Ask all of the character selected to come forward and sit in these desks. The character or characters should then be "interviewed" by both, the teacher and the students as to why they chose to play the character in the way that they did.
4. Repeat step 3 with all the other different characters chose.
5. Finally, ask all students to choose a character other than the one they portrayed, and write an essay in which they argue how the character should be played in this scene. Remind the students to provide specific lines from the play to support their ideas.

### ***Class Periods***

This lesson will take three class periods, approximately 270 minutes.

### ***Evaluation***

Students' participation and involvement in the debate, character role and writing process will be important for the assessment. Also will be graded their clarity of points of view selected and defended.

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The Oxford Shakespeare. Peter Holland. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. 1994.

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Introduction and little commentary on the plays.

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Graham, Rob. *Shakespeare, A Crash course*. New York: Watson-Guption, 2000.

A picture book with photographs and drawings, there is also a humorous vision.

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A magic world in Shakespeare.

Quennell, Peter and Hamish Johnson. *Who's Who in Shakespeare*. Oxford, 1995.

Comments and Characters in Shakespeare's work.

Swinde, P. *An Introduction to Shakespeare's Comedies*. London, 1973.

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Pujante, Angel Luis. *El Sueño de una Noche de Verano*. Traducción y edición en español, 1989.  
Spanish translated version.

Perez Gállego, C. *Las comedias de Shakespeare, en Depart. De Ingles U.N.E.D., Encuentros con Shakespeare*. Madrid, 1985.  
Spanish comments about Shakespeare's comedies.

### **Internet Resources**

<http://www.barbweb.net>  
Shakespeare's Resource Center

<http://www.shakespeare.com>  
Hypermedia environment about Shakespeare.

[http://www.shakespeare\\_monologues.org](http://www.shakespeare_monologues.org)  
Shakespeare's forum, works, actors, teachers, students, and literary buffs.

<http://shakespeare.palomar.edu/>  
Tales, canon, life, genealogy, festivals and other aspects about Shakespeare.

<http://www.SparkNotes.com>  
Seaside Music Theater

### **Filmography**

*Shakespeare: The Animated Tales. A Midsummer Night's Dream*. HBO Productions.  
Animated. 30 min.

*A Midsummer Nights Dream*. Benny Hill as Bottom; BBC TV version.

Coronado, Celestino (director). *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. mid-1970s.  
30s MND--Mickey Rooney as Puck, Jimmy Cagney as Bottom.

Hoffman, Michael (director). *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. 1999.  
An uneven version that tries to use current stardom to replace experience in Shakespearean performance. Michelle Pfeiffer is a wonderful Titania and Roger Rees is a pleasant surprise among the tradesmen. Useful for classroom viewing. Important is that a video tape is available with Spanish subtitles (VHS).

**To buy Videos about *A Midsummer Night's Dream***

Social Studies School Service in Culver City, CA.

Phone: (800) 421-4246.

You can Email Social Studies School Service, [access@WritingCo.com](mailto:access@WritingCo.com) or check their [Web site](#)

<http://www.socialstudies.com/c/@qXQTW6PvIOtnQ/Pages/shakespeareindex.html>

Poor Yorick - CD & Video Emporium

89A Downie Street

Stratford, Ontario, Canada N5A 1W8

voice: (519) 272-1999

fax: (519) 272-0979

You can email Poor Yorick, [yorick@cyg.net](mailto:yorick@cyg.net)

The Scholar's Bookshelf

110 Melrich Road

Cranbury, NJ 08512.

I am told that The Scholar's Bookshelf carries the HBO series *Shakespeare: The Animated Tales*

**Shakespeare in Costume:**

Costuming Shakespeare's Characters for Schools:

*A Midsummer's Night's Dream* adaptation with costumes for late Elementary and Middle grades. Also available for High Schools at:

833 South Lincoln Avenue

Springfield, IL 62704

[costumes@shakespeareincostume.com](mailto:costumes@shakespeareincostume.com)