DramaWorks Teacher's Guide for A Midsummer Night's Dream

the play by William Shakespeare

Guide by
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Authors' Dedication

This guide is gratefully dedicated
to all the classroom teachers
without whom we would not be
the lifelong students we are today.
We thank you.
--*Marion & Bill*

Publisher's Dedication

Marion Hoffman was my teacher and friend
who had a passion for learning and teaching
and a love of literature and life
that was beyond measure.
Her spirited enthusiasm for teaching
and her classroom experience combined with
Bill's equally passionate love for and experience
with the world of theater combined to make
these DramaWorks guides invaluable resources.
I dedicate these updated editions to
Marion and Bill.
–*Mary Collins, Founder of Teacher's Pet Publications*

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Introduction to the DramaWorks Guide

What DramaWorks Is

DramaWorks has been created to meet the needs of classroom teachers. We have found that many teachers want resource materials directly related to presenting dramatic literature in their classrooms. They want information for themselves about specific plays, help in teaching the plays in the classroom, a large selection of in- and out-of-class activities geared to students working at different learning levels, and some practical guidance in putting all of that material together as quickly and as effortlessly as possible for applied use.

In response to those needs, we have created DramaWorks. It is designed, in a single guide, to give teachers a working understanding of a play, in this instance *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* a high level of comfort in making an interesting and informative presentation of the play to their students, and numerous activities of varying kinds that can be done in class or at home. All activities come with information for the teacher as well as directions for the students. The directions are so flexible that the teacher can copy them and hand them out to the students, can give them out orally, or can adapt them to a variety of different purposes.

The activities include vocabulary exercises that focus on application of the words; classroom presentations; close examination of specially chosen parts of the text; acting exercises; writing assignments for the personal, interview, and research paper; and improvisations. There are, in addition, many suggested extra activities that allow students to practice skills in gathering and thinking about information, presenting information verbally, working with various media, and writing information in a variety of forms. Students also are encouraged to try to learn new skills such as the elements of acting.

Accompanying those materials are very practical suggestions for ways to allot classroom time for direct teaching, interactive discussions, and assigned activities, as well as ways to use out-of-class activities to the best advantage in furthering students' understanding and enjoyment of the play. Everything is presented in ways that conserve the teacher's time and at the same time capitalize on every opportunity to make the classroom interesting and dynamic. Many opportunities are given to actually "act out" parts of the play in class.

What is unique about DramaWorks is that it places emphasis on classroom teaching, discussion, and activity. We hope it gives teachers the confidence to create a dynamic, interactive classroom environment. We know it will help them to introduce *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to their students with minimal preparation but maximal results.

Because DramaWorks actually teaches users about the play while coaching them in teaching their students, it requires relatively little additional preparation time. There is no need to put hours and hours into creating lengthy lesson plans from scratch. Teachers can simply pick and choose from among many pre-designed activities without having to create new ones or devise lengthy instructions for their students.

Who The DramaWorks Guide Is For

DramaWorks can be used by any busy teacher who wants to introduce drama into the classroom. The most obvious users are probably teaching English, although they might be in another of the humanities or in some area of language arts. Our teachers enjoy teaching and being with young people. They are likely to be relatively new teachers looking for some support while they gain experience, although they could easily be ten- or fifteen-year veterans looking for help in preparing to teach a new play or one they haven't taught for a while.

What we know for sure is that this guide will be used by teachers who believe it will enhance their teaching of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* while saving them some much-needed time in preparation. We hope our teachers see great value in teaching drama dramatically. Though they probably are teaching drama as part of an overall curriculum, we hope they want to go beyond acquainting students with the play in the same way that they would "read" a novel, poem, or short story. Good teachers know through experience that the only true way to understand drama is to see at least some of it acted out before our eyes. They know that hearing actors' voices, watching characters move, seeing costumes, and looking at sets--even in the imagination--will make more of an impression on students than a million words on a page.

Our teachers also want to introduce theatre into the classroom to acquaint their students with great works of drama and help them to understand their plots, language, characters, and ideas. Our teachers want to make their classroom presentations interesting. They want to keep the attention of their students and impress upon them some of the pleasure of learning that brought the teachers into the classroom in the first place. They know there is no better way to capture and keep students' attention than through the natural dynamics of drama.

Our teachers also know that drama is one way to open students' eyes to an understanding of real life. If students understand the motivations of a play's characters, they will be better armed to see the motivations of people they meet in their own lives. If they see models of both trustworthy and untrustworthy behavior, they will be able to make more informed decisions about how they view the behavior of others and about how they themselves behave If they understand more about language and other historical periods and have discussed some new ideas, students will perhaps be just a little more prepared to live their lives in ways that will give them satisfaction.

What The DramaWorks Guide Contains

The DramaWorks guide contains several sections.

The first section is **About the Playwright and His Art,** which contains a brief write-up on the life and art of William Shakespeare.

Next is **A Synopsis of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*** that both teachers and students may use to gain a quick and easy understanding of the overall plot of the play. Although some teachers may object to giving students notes on the plot of the play because doing so seems somehow like "cheating," we believe that it is very helpful to students to refer to. But, as with all of the parts of the Guide, teachers get to make the
decision as to which parts to use and which not.

In the section entitled **Learning and Teaching**, really the heart of the Guide, teachers will learn about *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the same time that they gain techniques for teaching the play to their students. There is information on choosing a good text, reading the play for enjoyment and for teaching preparation, considerable information about the play's characters, plot, thematic ideas, costuming, props, and set, and interesting and informative ways to present those aspects of drama to students. Throughout this section, we talk with teachers and share our thoughts on each part of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Also included in **Learning and Teaching** are ways to act out parts of the play in the classroom using the sketchiest of props, sets, and costumes or no props, sets, or costumes at all. If teachers want to use the acting portions of the Guide, then the ideas in props, sets, and costumes will be very beneficial.

Throughout the **Learning and Teaching** section, teachers will find many casual suggestions for activities that can be used with students at varying learning levels. What **Learning and Teaching** really is is a section of coaching for the teacher. As educators with many years of experience in a variety of settings with lots of different students, we try to give teachers as many ideas as possible for ways to learn about the play and to pass that learning along to their students in as dynamic and informative a way as possible. By combining their own ideas and methodology with ours, teachers will create a vast assortment of ideas, approaches, and teaching techniques.

And that brings us to an important note: we don't propose that our suggestions are the **only** way(s) to teach this or any other play. As teachers approach *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and other dramas, they will no doubt add notes, thoughts, and activities that will change their teaching over the years. What **Learning and Teaching** represents is a beginning, a variety of ways to approach *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that we believe will be successful in many classrooms.

Following the **Learning and Teaching** section are a series of more formally presented activities. Some may be done with students at varying learning levels while others require substantially capable and interested students.

Vocabulary Words from the Text is designed to make students more familiar with the meanings of over 60 words from the play's text. Each word is quoted as it is used in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and is accompanied by a clear dictionary definition. Students apply the words in interesting ways to assist them in understanding and becoming more familiar with them. Some of these activities may be done individually at home and some may be done in pairs and small groups in class.

The section called **Scenes for Modern Rewrites** is intended primarily to combat the accessibility problems presented by language that is over 400 years old. But what teachers will find about the **Rewrites** section is that focusing so narrowly on individual scenes will open ways for teachers and students to discuss the play's characters, plot, and major ideas. The **Rewrites** lend themselves to either individual or group work and should be approached as a fun activity, if at all possible.

The Written Word is included for teachers who are most comfortable with evaluating students through traditional writing assignments. There are multiple suggestions for writing based on personal experience, writing that evolves from investigation and research, and writing based on interviews. The writing itself is an individualized activity done by students either in or outside of the classroom, but in the interest of time, we assume that most of the writing will be completed at home.

The Exercises are of three types. Some ask for investigation followed by a classroom presentation. And because we are learning about drama, other exercises involve creating theatrical improvisations and presenting them in class while still others give students the opportunity to act out parts of the play in class with or without costumes, props, and sets. Some of the exercises can be done individually while some are group activities. The section was created to give teachers a wide choice of each type of activity.

Exercises is a section that can be used in its entirety, in part, or not at all. Although we hope that teachers will use some of the activities in the section, it is entirely possible to teach *A Midsummer Night's Dream* interestingly and successfully without doing the exercises at all. Regardless of how they are used, it is unlikely that any classroom teacher will have the luxury of enough class periods to use the entire **Exercises** section.

One of the last sections is called **More and More Activities**, which includes a list of extra activities that teachers might want to consider. There are fifty activities listed. Many of them have multiple parts. All told, there probably are more than seventy-five activities in the section.

We conclude with **The Epilogue** and a note on the text.

Every activity section contains **Suggestions For The Teacher** which—depending on the type of activity--gives teachers ideas about how to work with the activities, information about why we chose the particular activity, what we hope it will accomplish with students, and things for teachers to think about as they assign the work. Although we make practical suggestions on ways to teach the activities, we always leave all final decisions to teachers because they know their particular students, classrooms, and schools better than anyone else can.

For every series of activities and most individual activities, we offer **Directions For The Students**, which gives guidance about how to complete the activity, how to approach it, and what we hope will be learned from it. We have tried to assure that the directions are very informative but always supportive of teachers. Our desire is that our directions never encroach upon teachers' freedom to use the activities in any way that they please. As teachers give directions for an activity, they will give students whatever information they think is needed. If they think in some cases that just giving students our directions and letting them get started on the activity is appropriate, that is fine. Students often will be able to do the work by just referring to Directions for Students. When teachers want additional information in making assignments, they will find the basis for it in the Suggestions for the Teacher sections.

How To Use The DramaWorks Guide

We want teachers to feel free to use the DramaWorks Guide however they choose. But we also understand that teachers are busy people who don't always have time to wade through pages of information and then make hundreds of choices about how to present the material to their students. We suggest, then, that teachers spend as much time as possible reading the play and the Guide. Then, if they want some practical applications of the material, they will find those under **Teaching Organizers**. In that section are a variety of ways to organize the actual teaching of *A Midsummer Night's Dream.* In the **Organizers,** we break the teaching of the play into relevant parts and suggest pedagogical methods.

All five methods require that the teacher start by giving an overview of what will be taught during the whole unit and how the teaching will be done. Generally, too, teachers will want to be sure that students understand their expectations. We suggest that copies of the synopsis of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* be given to students prior to the first class. Our pedagogical methods are all based on fifteen class periods of approximately 50 minutes each. If teachers have more or fewer than fifteen class periods to devote to the play, they will necessarily need to adapt the **Organizers** to their own purposes.

Teachers may find these **Organizers** helpful time savers, especially if they are preparing to teach *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for the first time. Some users of the Guide may even be teaching their first play ever. But if teachers know ways that help them to present the material more effectively, then they should do it in whatever way seems best to them. The **Organizers** are presented as a way to save the teachers time. They are meant to help teachers, not dictate to them.

What is special about the DramaWorks Guide is that it has been created to be used by a variety of teachers in a variety of ways. We assume that all teachers and all classes and all classrooms are different. We invite teachers to use all or parts of the Guide exactly as we present them. But we also urge teachers to modify the Guide in any way that they please whenever they see the need.

Every step we have taken in creating the DramaWorks Guide was chosen to make teachers' professional and personal lives easier. It's not, after all, as though teachers can't present dramatic literature without our help. But if we do some of the work for them, they will have more time to think about presenting information to their students, working with them in groups and individually, and seeing that the classroom experience is as valuable as possible for everyone.

What The DramaWorks Guide Is Not

We are not trying to give a synopsis of everything that has ever been written about *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. There is no way that anyone could do that. We are not writing an academic critique of the play. There are lots of journals available if that's what teachers want and need.

We aren't trying to compile the latest literary criticism on the play. Again, that information is readily available. We're not trying to make teachers instant experts on either *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or William Shakespeare. If teachers choose to spend a lot of time researching Shakespeare and his plays, there is sufficient information for them to choose from.

The DramaWorks Guide is not intended to be the final word on any aspect of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It is intended to provide help for teachers and their students. We hope it is viewed as a useful resource supportive of an informative, enjoyable, and enlightened teaching process. We hope that teachers enjoy using it as much as we enjoyed writing it.

The Characters in the Play

[CCSS: RL.9-10.1, RL.9-10.3, RL.9-10.9, SL.910.1 | RL.11-12.1, RL.11-12.10, SL.11-12.1

The notes below will help you discuss the characters in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with your class. There is a lot of information and there are several suggestions as to ways to get your students to understand the characters through discussions and exercises. Choose the timing and methods you feel are most appropriate for your own students.**]**

There are many ways to examine and get acquainted with the characters in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and to use them to better understand the play. One way to learn about a play's characters is by examining the names that the playwright assigns to each. This is especially true of Shakespearean drama. If you wanted to, you could trace various names through notes in your annotated copy of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. You would note, for instance, that earlier authors used the names Hippolyta and Theseus in their works. Shakespeare could have counted on immediate name recognition from the members of his audience. They would know how his characters had been used by other, earlier writers, and would respond to Shakespeare's use of them according to their previous knowledge of the characters.

As it happens, there was a long history of using the name Hippolyta to represent a strong, valiant Amazon warrior. Thus, her appearance in the first scene of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* brings with it the expectations of her strength and valor. Had many earlier writers portrayed a person of the same name as being weak and untrustworthy, then Shakespeare's audiences would have responded to that kind of character. It would be the equivalent today of naming a character after someone on a very popular television show or after a well-known politician.

Because few of us are steeped in a classical literature background, we often fail to recognize Shakespeare's characters when they first appear. We have to have time to observe their behavior, hear what they say, measure them against other characters—and only then do we feel that we understand the type of character Shakespeare portrays.

We have other means for identifying the type of character Shakespeare shows us. We could research a name by looking it up in the dictionary. **The Oxford English Dictionary**, for example, will tell you that Puck may be of Teutonic or Celtic origin and that the name refers to "An evil, malicious, or mischievous spirit or demon of popular superstition." Even a modern version of **The American Heritage Dictionary** will tell you that Puck was "A mischievous sprite in English folklore." So we shouldn't be very surprised by Puck's shenanigans in the play. The mischievous sprite is just the sort to pretend to be a stool only to slip out from under a woman as she prepares to sit—and laugh about her falling down.

Some members of Shakespeare's audience would also have knowledge of Shakespeare's sources, whether they be Plutarch, Chaucer, or some other earlier writer. But even the least educated member of Shakespeare's audience would have attended many plays and would have responded automatically to many of the characters in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. For the

Text has been omitted between the previous page and this one for the sample.]

Sometimes people can be altruistic and not worry much about what people will think of them. They just do what seems to them to be the right thing. Some political figures are that way although most seem motivated by the singular desire to be re-elected. Try to get students to think about local celebrities and what might motivate their actions.

Ask students to examine their own motivations. What, for example, would motivate them to read and think about a play like *A Midsummer Night's Dream*? Don't be surprised when they say they are doing it to pass your class. But don't let the conversation die there. What else would motivate students who don't normally read plays to spend a lot of time trying to understand *A Midsummer Night's Dream*?

If a student's goal were to get a another person to become interested in him, and if that person were especially interested in drama, then our student might read any amount of literature in order to be accepted. What if all of a student's friends suddenly became interested in poetry, would our student start to read poetry in order to fit in? How about the other way around? Would a student stop doing something she enjoyed simply because it wasn't the accepted thing to do?

Engage the students in as much discussion as seems profitable during class time. If they really get into the discussion about personal motivation, keep steering them back to the play's characters. What is motivating Theseus? What is his goal during the days depicted by the play? What is Robin trying to accomplish? What motivates him to keep trying to right the problem caused by putting the juice in the eyes of the wrong man? What is Robin's goal?

Students can also think about how they would describe their best friend's motivating forces to a person who doesn't know the friend. We're talking here about those characteristics that we scarcely notice in friends once we know them well. For example, there is the kind of person who, if you force her to do something, will **always** get her back up. If you tell her "no," she will always push too hard to get her way. If he thinks he's not making himself clear in a conversation, he will start saying "okay" all the time until he drives you crazy. He **always** grins in a funny way when he doesn't understand what you're saying. He always puts other people down when he himself is nervous.

People are motivated to remain in control, to be right, to please others, to be part of the crowd, to reach for the higher good—whatever, they are motivated to behave as they do. It can be a valuable insight for students to learn that figuring out a person's motivations can be extremely valuable in understanding that person. This holds almost equally true of teachers, bosses, friends, spouses, in-laws, politicians, community planners, business people, and next-door neighbors. You can guide the students' discussion back and forth between real life and the play. If students are talking about how people they know personally react in situations, steer them back to the play by asking what Lysander's best friend would say about Lysander's behavior. It's just a matter of training them to take the time to think about the behavior of others.

Once they know they can isolate these traits in real people, students often improve in their ability to size up a play's characters. Again, just give them a chance to practice. Think again, for example, about Hermia's actions at the beginning of the play. Faced with a father who would rather see her dead or in a nunnery than allow her to marry a man not of his choosing, she stands

Some Thematic Ideas for Discussion

CCSS: RL.9-10.1, RL.9-10.2, RL.9-10.3, RL.9-10.10, SL.9-10.1
RL.11-12.1, RL.11-12.2, RL.11-12.5, RL.11-12.10, SL.11-12.1

One of the best ways to learn about an idea is to discuss it with others. Thus we encourage you to stimulate classroom discussions as often as possible. We have tried to give you suggestions throughout the Guide that will encourage the type of discussions that you might like to have in class. We continue that process now with some specific thematic ideas for discussion.

As is always the case with Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* presents many ideas, some major and some minor ones. Together they help us tounderstand the play. These are just some of the play's ideas that we think might prove most fruitful for classroom discussion
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The Effects of Being in Love

This is one of the ideas that seems most likely to capture the attention of students. There is room here for lively discussion of topics such as what it is like to be in love, how being in love affects people and their behavior, how other people react to our being in love, what the consequences are of being in love, what the pleasures are of being in love, and how we change when we are no longer in love.

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, it is interesting to discuss the young lovers, Demetrius, Lysander, Helena, and Hermia. It is profitable to examine how they behave at the beginning of the play and how their behavior changes dramatically during the scenes in the woods. The lovers behave in sillier and sillier fashion as they fall into and out of love.

As the play progresses, Demetrius and Lysander are both in love with Hermia. Later Lysander loves Helena but hates Hermia; then Demetrius also loves Helena. If what we see presented is true, there are no shades of color in being in love. We are either deeply in love or out of love completely. By the play's end, everyone's affection is back where it began even before the play opened. Demetrius, who once was betrothed to Helena, loves her once more. Lysander, who spoke so poetically to Hermia early in the play, loves her again. Both sets of lovers are married.

Perhaps students can be encouraged to discuss their own conceptions of being in love. Is it possible to be in love and still behave rationally? Do people in love really behave in silly ways? Is there a difference between **being in love** and **loving** someone? Ask students if they know anyone who is behaving in funny ways since falling in love? See if they know people who claim to have fallen in love suddenly and been changed by it. Ask them what happens when people fall in love, act silly for a while, and then seem to settle into a different kind of love.

If students are reluctant to share their personal experiences, we encourage you to share an experience or two that you have had. The experiences may not have happened to you personally but instead to a friend of yours. Even if the experiences are yours, you may be more comfortable attributing them to someone else. The point, though, is to share some of your thoughts in order to encourage the students to be forthcoming with theirs.

Vocabulary Words from the Text: Act II

Directions for Students

This assignment may be done in groups of two. If so, your teacher will assign the pairs. You will do one part of the assignment with one partner and then switch and work with a second partner. The point of this assignment is to have you become more familiar with many of the words in the text of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. You will achieve this familiarity through actually using the words.

The following words are from the second act of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. All of the words are accompanied by the appropriate quote from the play. All of the words have been defined for you.

Your first job is to read carefully over all of the words and definitions and make sure that you understand them. Then you will use at least 20 words from the Act II list to create two different dialogues between any two people. You should use at least 10 of the words for each dialogue. It is not fair to use any dialogue taken directly from the play. Tell who the two people are and what your subject is.

Here is a possible dialogue between two good friends:

Joe: **Forsooth**, I have **forsworn** the company of the my **dissembling** girlfriend.
Ken: **Good sooth**, that is hard to believe. Have you been **rash**?
Joe: Do not **impeach** my decision. I have **quenched** my **clamorous** love and left that **vile** woman.
Ken: **Good troth**, I hope you do not **languish** over this sad decision.

You may feel free to use a different form of one of the words on the list. **Quenching, languished**, **impeachable**, and **rashness** would all be acceptable, for example. Just make sure that you continue to use the same base words. It obviously is not acceptable to use any of the sample dialogue. Don't worry if your sentences seem contrived. Just be sure they make sense and that the words are all used correctly. Your teacher may want to add additional directions to this assignment.

Act II Vocabulary Words

1. What, jealous Oberon?--Fairies, **skip hence**.
   I have **forsworn** his bed and company.

   Forsworn means to reject or disown seriously under oath. **Skip hence** here means to move away.

Scenes for Modern Rewrites

CCSS: RL.9-10.4, RL.9-10.10, W.9-10.3, W.9-10.4, W.9-10.10, SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.6, L.9-10.1, L.9-10.3, L.9-10.5,
RL.11-12.4, RL.11-12.10, W.11-12.3, W.11-12.4, W.11-12.5, W.11-12.10, SL.11-12.1, L.11-12.1, L.11-12.3, L.11-12.5

Suggestions for the Teacher
In the **Scenes for Modern Rewrites** section, we have given you a series of eight writing activities that involve rewriting Shakespearean scenes into modern language. This rewriting obviously helps students to become more comfortable with and more knowledgeable about the language of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. However, it has another benefit: by focusing closely on relatively short scenes, students have an opportunity to pay special attention to plot turns, character development, and thematic ideas.

In the **Vocabulary Words from the Text** section, students were asked to use Shakespeare's words and apply them to their own sentences and descriptions. In the **Modern Rewrites**, students will actually rewrite and modernize Shakespeare's words.

It is, of course, up to you, the teacher, to decide how much groundwork you need to do with any given class before the students are able to confront the rewrites. You might like to use one of the examples that we gave you in the section entitled **The Language of the Play** or simply pick any short scene and rewrite it together as a class prior to turning students loose on the revisions we have chosen. You will be the best judge of when your class is ready to tackle these revisions.

We suggest that you have students break into groups of perhaps 6 for these activities. If possible, try to balance the groups in terms of abilities. Try not to have too many shy students in any one group; avoid having too many of your more advanced students together. Give the students ample time to work on their scenes. As they work together, you might like to circulate around the room to keep a check on their progress and to assist any group that becomes completely stalled or is totally off track.

Toward the end of the rewriting time, remind the students to choose a spokesperson to read their revision to the class, or, if more than one person is speaking in the scene, perhaps they would like to choose more than one spokesperson.

These activities are like the ones on vocabulary in that there is almost no way that students can completely fail in their work. In the rewrites, as long as they can demonstrate an understanding of a scene, we would tend to accept their rewrites. In fact, insofar as you can, try to encourage the students to have fun with these activities. They represent their chance to say how Shakespeare **ought** to have written *A Midsummer Night's Dream.* At least they won't have to deal with 400- year-old language once they have applied themselves to the rewrites.

The Written Word

Suggestions for the Teacher

We have tried in this section to offer a variety of writing activities that give you ample opportunity to evaluate your students' writing abilities. We have refrained from labeling the writing "essays" or "research papers" because we would like to give students a lot of leeway in how they present their writing. We also have tried to give you plenty of room to define the assignments more stringently if doing so meets your purposes.

The types of activities offered are Writing from Personal Experience, Writing from Research, and Writing from Interviews. We hope that the assignments will prove to be interesting to both you and your students.

Writing From Personal Experience

CCSS: RL.9-10.10, W.9-10.1, W.9-10.2, W.9-10.3, W.9-10.4, W.9-10.5, W.9-10.10, L.9-10.1, L.9-10.3,
RL.11-12.10, W.11-12.1, W.11-12.2, W.11-12.3, W.11-12.4, W.11-12.5, W.11-12.10, L.11-12.1, L.11-12.3

The assignments in Writing From Personal Experience ask students to tell what they think or feel about a topic. It is more imaginative than writing done as a result of research or interviews. Most topics also make students think about some aspect of the play, to further analyze or process information learned. Students consider a topic and reflect on ways to present their ideas.

Writing From Research

CCSS: RI.9-10.10, W.9-10.2, W.9-10.4, W.9-10.5, W.9-10.7, W.9-10.8, W.9-10.9, W.9-10.10, L.9-10.1
RI.11-12.10, W.11-12.2, W.11-12.4, W.11-12.5, W.11-12.7, W.11-12.8, W.11-12.9, W.11-12.10, L.11-12.1

The assignments in Writing From Research require that students investigate a topic and then report on the results of that research. The writing should be more than a restatement of the material researched but should instead pull information together and draw conclusions for the reader.

Writing From Interviews

CCSS: RL.9-10.10, W.9-10.4, W.9-10.5, W.9-10.10, SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.2, SL.9-10.3, SL.9-10.6, L.9-10.1
RL.11-12.10, W.11-12.4, W.11-12.5, W.11-12.10, SL.11-12.1, SL.11-12.3, SL.11-12.3, SL.11-12.6, L.11-12.1

Writing From Interviews is closely related to writing from personal experience. Students will interview a person or group of people on a topic closely related to one in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The activity requires that students prepare for the interview

Writing from Personal Experience

(Directions and Topic Choices)

Directions for Students

To write from personal experience, you must respond to a question or a situation based on your own current knowledge, feelings, and beliefs. You should not have to do any real research for this but should need to give the topic a lot of thought and consideration. Your teacher may give you additional expectations for this assignment. But, at the very least, your writing should make a clear point, it should be well organized, and it should support its ideas with enough details to convince the reader that your point is valid. Below is a list of possible topics:

Personal Experience Topic #1:

A Midsummer Night's Dream was written in the late 1500's. That was over 400 years ago. Think about what might happen if Shakespeare were alive and writing plays today. Assume that he is knowledgeable about present-day American people, life, and customs. Imagine that he lives somewhere in your state, perhaps in your community. Do you think that he could write a modern play based on the themes in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*? If not, explain why not, showing briefly why the play's themes would not appeal to a contemporary audience.

If you believe that Shakespeare could write such a successful play, explain why you believe that, showing briefly how three of the play's themes could be modernized for an audience today.

If you do not believe that Shakespeare could write such a successful play, explain why you believe it would not be possible, giving at least three good reasons why the play would not be a hit today.

Personal Experience Topic #2:

Pick one of the characters in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and devise a modern television show based on him or her. Give the show a name, briefly explain what the show would be about, and tell what might happen in approximately three episodes of the show. As you describe the episodes, be sure to fill in enough detail so that the reader has a clear idea of what would happen in each episode.

Personal Experience Topic #3:

Consider the question of whether or not it is possible to fall in love at first sight. For this assignment, you may write of experiences of your own or those of a friend of yours. Explain whether or not it is possible to fall in love at first sight and, if so, how the experience would affect the people involved as well as the people around them. If you do not believe that it is possible to fall in love at first sight, explain why you don't think it's possible. Be sure to give clear reasons why you think what you do. Be careful in this assignment not merely to repeat your point over and over but instead to offer specific reasons to support it.

More and More Activities

What follows is basically a resource list of activities for you, the teacher. Some of them are simple, and some are very difficult. Some require no special skills, but some require especially talented and dedicated students. How you wish to use them is necessarily entirely up to you. They are presented in the sincere hope that somewhere in this grab bag of activities there is a project that appeals to every student and every teacher.

Although there are only 50 numbered activities, many of them actually are multiple assignments. There are twelve major characters in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. When an activity calls for choosing a character on which to base an assignment, the students actually have a dozen different choices. And in the case of some other assignments, there are even more possible combinations.

The suggested activities are presented in no special order and are attached to only the barest of suggestions for their use. They are what they are—more and more activities.

1. Ask students to pretend that some people from outer space have been deposited into the middle of the action of *A Midsummer Night's Dream.* The students could pretend to be one of the aliens writing a letter back to their planet describing the new world that they are observing. These letters could just be turned in to you or could be read for the whole class' enjoyment. Or you could have them handed in and then choose the best three or four for reading.

2. Students could research and write a paper on Shakespeare's use of figurative language in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

3. Students—singly or in a group—could set one or more of the scenes of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to music. The music could be recorded and performed solely for the teacher or presented to the whole class. If you choose this activity, you might have the music playing when students enter the classroom each day and play a little bit more each day to set the scene for studying *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

4. Students could keep journals during the time that they are studying *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and record in them daily their honest thoughts about the play. If you choose this activity, be prepared for the need to make comments back to the students. Be prepared, too, for what could be some pointedly honest comments from them.

5. Students could research and deliver to the whole class a brief presentation on the Shakespearean audience. The point would be to inform the class about the kind of people who would have attended performances of Shakespeare's plays. If students better understand the audience, they will better understand the playwright's