

FOR TEACHERS AND PARENTS



By Marla Conn MS, Ed.



Discussion Guide



STORY SYNOPSES:

Play On Shakespeare is a delightful introduction to some of the characters, themes, and literary devices that make Shakespeare so well-loved. The beautiful illustrations bring the play to life and the color-coded text highlights and defines literary elements in the story, both contributing to a rich, multi-layered experience.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Come along as four young adventurers go exploring a magical meadow, only to discover that there is more mischief afoot in this Fairy Wood than they might have expected. Hilarious mayhem abounds in this retelling of Shakespeare's comedy, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

ISBN: 9781486708550

GRL: S

Ages: 7-11

Grades: 3-5

The Tempest

Prospero and his lovely daughter Miranda live alone on the tiny island where they were marooned years ago, with only the island creatures for company. That is, until a powerful storm brings a boat full of strangers to the island. Magic and mystery fill the island and these pages as the story of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* unfolds in this charming adaptation of the famous play.

ISBN: 9781486708567

GRL: R

Ages: 7-11

Grades: 3-5

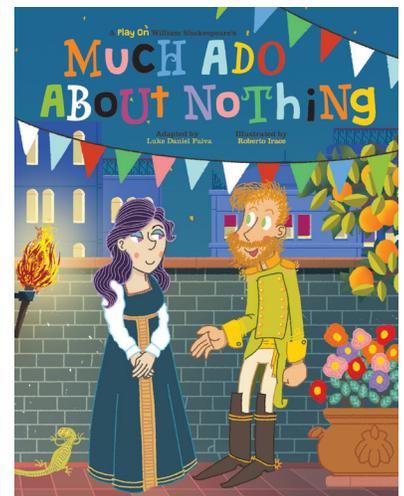
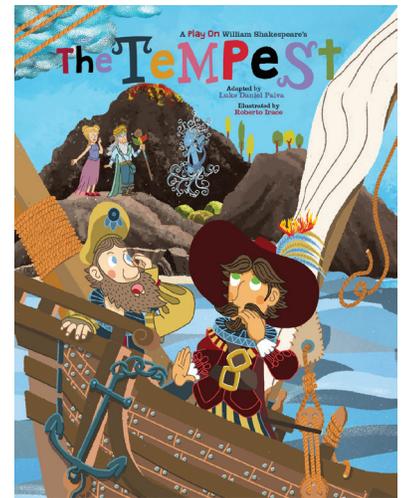
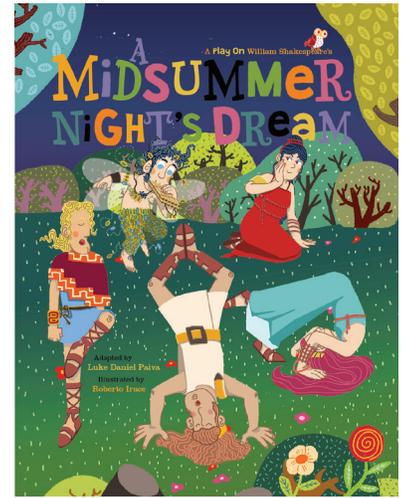
Much Ado About Nothing

A host of characters try to act as matchmakers for a couple, while another couple plans to be married. But everything doesn't go as planned when a meddling villain schemes to ruin the wedding. The trials and tribulations of falling in love will draw you into one of Shakespeare's most popular plays, *Much Ado About Nothing*.

ISBN: 9781486708581

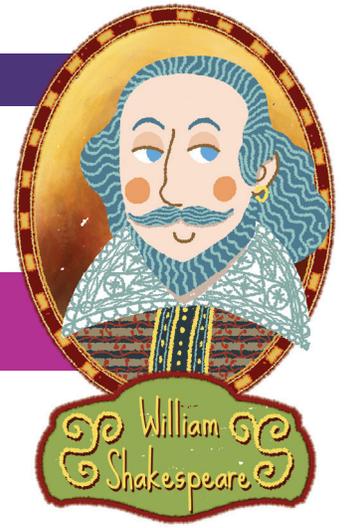
Ages: 7-11

Grades: 3-5



INSTRUCTIONAL SKILLS/STANDARDS IN THIS GUIDE

- Speaking & Listening-SL.4.1,1a,1a,1c,1d,2,3,4,5,6
- Reading Literature- RL.4.1,2,3,4,5,6,7,9,10
- Reading Foundation- RF.4.3,3a,4,4a,4c
- Writing- W.4.4,6,7,8,9,9a,10
- Language-L.4.3,3a,4,4a,5,5a,5b,6



BEFORE READING: BUILD BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE THROUGH RESEARCH, ASK AND ANSWER QUESTIONS, THINK AND COMMUNICATE

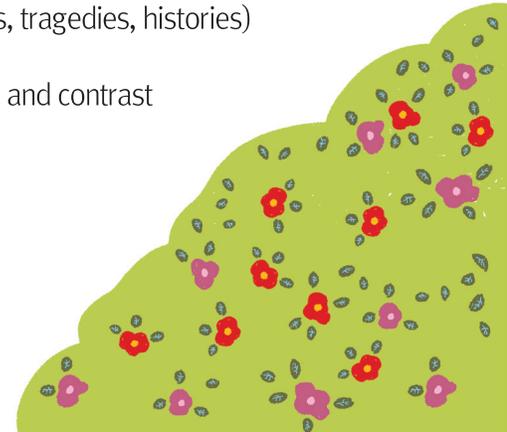
1. How is a play similar to and different from prose and poetry?
2. How can a classic piece of literature be relevant to modern times?
3. Why are we still reading and watching Shakespeare's plays? How is Shakespeare relevant to the 21st century?
4. How do the times that an author lived in influence how and what they write about? Use evidence to explain.
5. How have Shakespeare's plays influenced today's language?
6. How can we use reading strategies to help us understand the language and syntax used by Shakespeare?
7. How can understanding the basic structure of Shakespearean drama help us understand his individual plays?
8. Research and discuss the three types of Shakespearean plays.



TEACHER NOTES: ELEMENTS OF COMEDY

Comedy through language: Shakespeare communicated his comedy through language, and his comedies are full of clever wordplay, metaphors, and insults. Love: The theme of love is prevalent in Shakespearean comedies. Often, we are presented with sets of lovers who, through the course of the play, overcome the obstacles in their relationships and unite. Complex plots: The plot line of Shakespearean comedies contain more twists and turns than his tragedies and histories. Although the plots are convoluted, they do follow similar patterns. For example, the climax of the play always occurs in the third act and the final scene has a celebratory feel when the lovers finally declare their love for each other. Mistaken identities: The plot is often driven by mistaken identity. Sometimes this is an intentional part of a villain's plot. Characters also play scenes in disguise, and it is not uncommon for female characters to disguise themselves as male characters.

9. Why do you think Shakespeare chose to write his plays in various genres? (Comedies, tragedies, histories)
10. How are Shakespearean tragedies and comedies both different and alike? Compare and contrast the characteristics of each structure.



TEACHER NOTES: LITERATURE

In literature, authors use many different types of characters to tell their stories. Different types of characters fulfill different roles in the narrative process, and with a little bit of analysis, you can usually detect some or all of the types.

11. What does characterization do for a story?

TEACHER NOTES: CHARACTERIZATION

Characterization allows us to empathize with the protagonist and secondary characters, and feel that what is happening to these people in the story is happening to us. An important part of characterization is dialogue. Both spoken and inward dialogue give us the opportunity to see into the characters' hearts and examine their motivations. In the best stories, it is actually characterization that moves the story along.

12. How can the actions of the characters influence the plot development?

13. Why is it important to reflect on the theme from a piece of literature?

14. Research some of the universal themes of Shakespeare's works.



AFTER READING: APPLY KNOWLEDGE, ANALYZE, AND MAKE CONNECTIONS

1. Use the characters from the play to determine their character type. What kinds of people are the characters? How do they conduct themselves? What do they do and say to reveal themselves?

3. Find examples of spoken and inward dialogue from the story.

4. How do the actions of the characters influence the plot development?

5. Discuss the ten direct or indirect ways in which characters can be revealed:

psychological description
physical description
what they think
what they say
how they say it

what they do
what others say about them
their environment
their reaction to others
their reaction to themselves

6. How are each of the characters in the play revealed? (There can be more than one answer.) Find specific examples from the play.

7. What are your feelings or opinions of the characters? Choose two characters.

8. Why should we read Shakespeare? Write a persuasive essay.

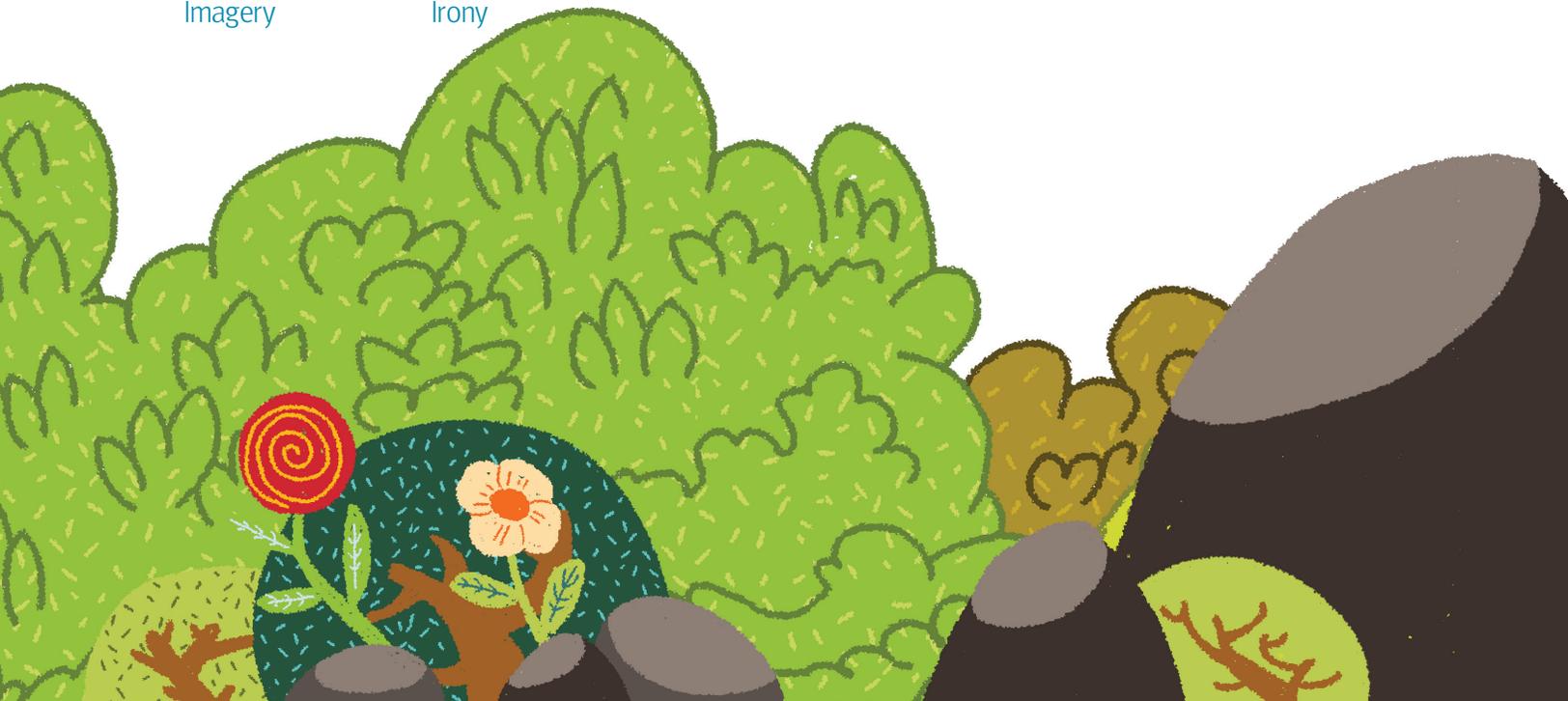


AFTER READING: APPLY KNOWLEDGE, ANALYZE, AND MAKE CONNECTIONS (CONT.)

9. Find examples of symbols in the story.
10. Explain what type of Shakespearean play the story is. Explain the elements.
11. How does the structure of the text contribute to the meaning and style?
12. How do words and phrases (word choice) impact the meaning and tone of the story? Give examples.
13. Why does one act of the play have such an important impact on all of the other acts?
14. Choose an act, summarize it, and create a comic strip.
15. In small groups, choose an act, write a script, and create a video recording from a Play On Shakespeare book.
16. What are the central ideas or themes in the play?
17. What do the themes teach you about your own life?
18. How does the setting affect meaning? What feelings does the setting evoke?
19. What do the illustrations in the play tell us that the words do not?
20. Find examples of how Shakespeare uses the following literary devices. How do literary devices affect meaning?

Setting
Foreshadowing
Imagery

Figurative language: Simile, Alliteration
Conflict
Irony



TEACHER NOTES: CHARACTERIZATION TERMS

- **Major or Central character** – These characters are vital to the development and resolution of the conflict. In other words, the plot revolves around these characters.
- **Minor character** – These characters serve to complement the major characters and help move the plot forward.
- **Dynamic character** – A dynamic character is someone who changes over time, usually as a result of resolving a central conflict or facing a major crisis.
- **Static character** – A static character is someone who does not change over time; their personality does not transform or evolve.
- **Round character** – A round character is someone who has a complex personality; they are often portrayed as a conflicted and contradictory individual.
- **Flat character** – A flat character is the opposite of a round character. They are notable for one kind of personality trait or characteristic.
- **Stock character** – Stock characters have become conventional or stereotypical through repeated use in particular types of stories. Stock characters are instantly recognizable to readers or audience members (the mad scientist, the geeky boy with glasses, and the faithful sidekick). They are normally one-dimensional flat characters, but sometimes stock characters are deeply conflicted, round characters (e.g. the Hamlet type).
- **Protagonist** – The protagonist is the main character in a story. They are faced with a conflict that must be resolved. The protagonist may not always be admirable (e.g. an anti-hero); nevertheless, they must command involvement on the part of the reader, or better yet, empathy.
- **Antagonist** – An antagonist is a character or situation that represents the opposition against which the protagonist must contend. In other words, the antagonist is an obstacle that the protagonist must overcome.
- **Anti-Hero** – An anti-hero is a major character, usually the protagonist, who lacks conventional nobility of mind, and who struggles with values not deemed universally admirable.
- **Foil** – A foil is any character (usually the antagonist or an important supporting character) whose personal qualities contrast with another character (usually the protagonist). By providing this contrast, we get to know more about the other character.
- **Symbolic character** – A symbolic character is any major or minor character whose very existence represents some major idea or aspect of society.
- **Direct presentation (or Characterization)** – This refers to what the speaker or narrator directly says or thinks about a character. In other words, in a direct presentation, the reader is told what the character is like.
- **Indirect presentation (or Characterization)** – This refers to what the character says or does. The reader then infers what the character is all about. This mimics how we understand people in the real world, since we can't see inside their minds. In other words, in an indirect presentation, the reader has to figure out what the character is like. And sometimes the reader will get it wrong.