

# Knowledge Organiser: English Year 7 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'

## Context:

'A Midsummer Night's Dream' is one of Shakespeare's early 'festive comedies,' written around **1595-6**. The play contains many thematic references to 'dreams' and the fantastic setting of the Athenian forest. The play's title refers to an English holiday custom: on '**Midsummer Eve**,' or the night of the summer solstice on **June 23**, English men and women would spend the night outdoors around bonfires, telling **supernatural** tales of **fairies** and **witchcraft**. The play not only suggests this holiday, but also refers to 'the rite of May,' or 'maying' - a similar English tradition that took place on the **first night of May**, when young men and women would engage in **singing, dancing** in the woods outside their towns. It is thought that Shakespeare wrote this play to be performed first at the country house of a young nobleman, as part of his **wedding festivities**.

## AR Reading

20 minutes reading every day. Challenge yourself with different genres!



## Characters:

**Puck** - Also known as Robin Goodfellow, Puck is Oberon's jester, a mischievous fairy who delights in playing pranks on mortals.  
**Oberon** - The king of the fairies.  
**Titania** - The beautiful queen of the fairies.  
**Lysander** - A young man of Athens, in love with Hermia.  
**Demetrius** - A young man of Athens, initially in love with Hermia and ultimately in love with Helena.  
**Hermia** - Egeus's daughter, a young woman of Athens. Hermia is in love with Lysander and is a childhood friend of Helena.  
**Helena** - A young woman of Athens, in love with Demetrius.  
**Egeus** - Hermia's father, who brings a complaint against his daughter to Theseus.  
**Theseus** - The heroic duke of Athens, engaged to Hippolyta.  
**Hippolyta** - The legendary queen of the Amazons, engaged to Theseus.  
**Bottom** - The overconfident weaver chosen to play Pyramus in the craftsmen's play for Theseus's marriage celebration.  
**Quince** - A carpenter and the nominal leader of the craftsmen's attempt to put on a play for Theseus's marriage celebration.

## Key Literary Vocabulary:

**Simile**- comparing using 'like' or 'as'.  
**Metaphor**- saying one thing is another.  
**Personification**- make an object human.  
**Connotation**- associated meaning of word.  
**Characterisation**- built up description of character in text.  
**Imagery**- visually descriptive language.  
**Iambic Pentameter**- a line of verse with five metrical feet, each consisting of one short (or unstressed) syllable followed by one long (or stressed) syllable.  
**Dramatic Irony** - when the audience knows more than the characters.  
**Soliloquy** - a character speaks their thoughts to the audience.  
**Monologue** - a long speech by a single character.  
**Oxymoron** - contradictory terms together.  
**Carnavalesque** - settings within a forest, outside of reality where anything can happen.  
**Metadrama** - a play within a play.  
**Malapropism** - the mistaken use of a word in place of a similar-sounding one, often with an amusing effect

## Key Quotations:

'The course of true love never did run smooth...',  
'Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind,/ And therefore is winged Cupid painted blind...',  
'Lord, what fools these mortals be...',  
'Lovers and madmen have such seething brains...',  
'And yet, to say the truth, reason and love keep little company together nowadays...',  
'My soul is in the sky...',  
'The lunatic, the lover, and the poet, are of imagination all compact...',  
'The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen...',  
'If we shadows have offended,/ Think but this, and all is mended...',  
'Give me your hands, if we be friends,/ And Robin shall restore amends.'

## Themes:

Love's Difficulty, Magic, Relationships, Gender, Dreams, Love, Transformation, Foolishness, Man vs the Natural World

## Symbols:

The Moon  
Animals  
The Forest  
The Fairies  
Flowers  
Love Potion  
Light and Dark

