

# ACT

# FOUR

# FATE

# AND

# DESTINY

Do people control their own future

?

## Objectives

To explore events and the people in our lives that can influence the decisions we make. To examine how language can be used to evoke atmosphere and mood. To encourage pupils to look at the poetic elements of Shakespeare's verse.

## Curriculum links

English, Drama, Citizenship, Personal, Social and Health Education, Art and Design.

## Citizenship skills and outlooks

Communicating, collaborating, creative thinking, developing empathy.

## Resources required

Scissors, diamond nine sheets, musical instruments, copies of Ariel's song, magazines, glue, card, recording equipment, art materials or construction pieces, play extracts.



## LEARNING FOCUS

Decision making, Shakespeare's use of poetic language and imagery.

## INTRODUCTION

Some people believe that fairies, witches or unseen forces control fate and destiny. At the time when Shakespeare was writing, these were important issues of the day. King James I had written a book called **Daemonology** warning about the dangers of the supernatural. Fairies and spirits were considered dangerous, witches were thought to be able to predict the future and magic represented unseen forces in the world.

## WARM UP ACTIVITIES

- Invite pupils to organise themselves into five or six lines, with an equal number in each.
- Ask them to extend their arms so that they are standing an equal width apart with their fingertips touching, so that they form barriers.
- Check that these barriers are well spaced and that you can move between them easily. On the command 'change,' ask them to turn 90 degrees with their arms still extended, creating lines that go in the opposite direction, checking these in the same way.
- Select two volunteers, one to move through the grid and one to stand on the outside of the grid. The first volunteer should try to make their way through the grid to reach the person on the outside.
- As the pupil in the grid moves towards the other volunteer, ask pupils to change direction at appropriate moments.
- Allow a few pupils the chance to feel what it is like to have their path and direction changed for them.

This activity is a great way to introduce the question of what it feels like to have a force outside of your own control forcing you to change the decisions in your life. You can also tailor this activity to a specific play, by making all the pupils in the grid pretend that they're trees and suggesting the volunteer is Helena trying to reach Demetrius, with magic controlling her environment.

Shakespeare wrote for both poetic and dramatic purposes. Watch a clip with your class and read through the opening scene of **Macbeth** and discuss how Shakespeare creates atmosphere and tension. Encourage your pupils to imagine they are entering this place. What would they see, hear and feel? How might the witches look and move? Ask them to work in small groups and jot down ideas, phrases and sketches on large sheets of paper.

Starting with the line '**When shall we three meet again / In thunder, lightning or in rain?**' ask them to build up a soundscape using body percussion and musical instruments to create an impression of the scene that reflects Shakespeare's words and ideas. After a discreet amount of time ask two pupils to act as Banquo and Macbeth to interrupt the crescendo when appropriate with the line, '**So fair and foul a day I have not seen**'.



## EXPLORING OPENING SCENES

**For ways to explore the setting and atmosphere in a play, using language to open up a Soundscape. You can see an example of how this might work with Julius Caesar on page 56, but it can be used with any text.**

# EXPLORING CITIZENSHIP THEMES, SKILLS AND VALUES

## ? KEY QUESTIONS

**Do people control their own future?**

Read Hermia's speech in **Act 1 Scene 1** of **A Midsummer Night's Dream**, and Romeo's speech in **Act 1 Scene 4** of **Romeo and Juliet**. Discuss what influences Hermia to run away, and Romeo to believe the night's events will lead to tragedy? Ask groups to create a mind map showing all the factors that influenced them to behave in a certain way. Did superstition or 'fate' play a part?

Alternatively, ask each group to choose a major decision taken by a character in a play they know well and carry out the same activity.

If you had an important decision to make about your future, what factors might influence your decision? Ask your pupils to work in groups and look at the factors listed on the activity sheet. Cut out the cards and decide which you think would have the greatest influence on your decision. Rank the cards into a **diamond nine** shape in order of importance with the most important at the top and the least important at the bottom. Gather the whole class together to discuss whether similar choices were made.



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## ! CONTEXT

**In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Hermia is in love with Lysander, but her father is very angry and tells her she must marry Demetrius. Her father brings back a very old law that says a daughter must marry the person her father chooses, or else face death or live as a nun. She decides to run away with Lysander into the forest in the hopes of eloping.**



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## IN DEPTH ANALYSIS – POETIC LANGUAGE

Shakespeare's plays are famous for their rich imagery and language. When people visited open-air theatres to see one of his plays, they mainly came to hear the play, rather than to see it. The plays were performed in the afternoon, there were limited scenery and effects, all parts were played by men and boys but the audience was transported to other countries and other worlds by the magical language of the play. Shakespeare's language is particularly vivid and atmospheric when the humans in his plays come into contact with beings or spirits from other worlds.

An example can be seen in the extract of Ariel's song from **The Tempest**. Ask your pupils to read this aloud together. Discuss the use of imagery and encourage them to identify language techniques such as rhyme, alliteration and onomatopoeia within the stanza.

### ! CONTEXT

**In Act 1 Scene 2 of *The Tempest*, the "Fairy Spirit" Ariel is ordered by Prospero to lead the shipwrecked Ferdinand to him. He does this by singing a song. The words resonate with Ferdinand who believes his father has drowned in the shipwreck.**

## APPLY YOUR LEARNING

Listen carefully again to the words in Ariel's song, this time sung by a children's choir, as part of the British Council's World Voice Programme. Encourage your class to join in with the song and to picture in their mind the vivid images that the language conveys.

Invite your pupils to use pictures from magazines and words from the play to create a collage which portrays an impression of the images in the song.

British Council World Voice Shakespeare song:

<https://schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org/classroom-resources/list/shakespeare-lives>



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## WHAT DOES A FAIRY OR SPIRIT LOOK LIKE?



Examples of Shakespearean magical creatures – Derek, Frank and Ninja from Clapham Terrace Primary School.

During the period when Shakespeare was writing, fairies and spirits were thought of as strange creatures that used magic and were considered to be very dangerous. Ask your pupils to use their imaginations to design and create their own Shakespearean magical creatures in a media of their choice and give the character a name, a particular power and a secret! They could use play dough, air-dry clay, recycled materials or LEGO®/ construction kit pieces.

Invite your pupils to take photographs of their models and use computer software if available, to create an exciting backdrop from the play or use stop frame techniques to recreate a scene as an animation with sound effects and extracts from the play.

## AND FINALLY...

- Return to the original question. Do people control their own future? What other factors may influence this?
- What are your pupils' hopes and dreams for the future? What knowledge, skills and attributes will they need to reach their goals?
- If one of Shakespeare's magical spirits could make one wish for your future what might it be?

## PARTNER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

- Record your soundscapes and share with your partner school. Can they work out which Shakespearean scene is being portrayed?
- Both schools could learn Ariel's song from the World Voice resources and perform it together over Skype.
- Exchange mind maps and ideas from the **diamond nine** activity and photographs of collages and magical creatures.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### Macbeth Act 1 Scene 1

*Thunder and lightning. Enter three Witches*

**First Witch** When shall we three meet again?

In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

**Second Witch** When the hurly-burly's done,  
When the battle's lost and won.

**Third Witch** That will be ere the set of sun.

**First Witch** Where the place?

**Second Witch** Upon the heath.

**Third Witch** There to meet with Macbeth.

**First Witch** I come, Grey Malkin.

**Second Witch** Paddock calls.

**Third Witch** Anon.

All Fair is foul, and foul is fair:

Hover through the fog and filthy air. *Exeunt*

## ! OVERVIEW

In Act 1 Scene 1 of *Macbeth*, the play opens with thunder and lightning, the three Witches deciding that their next meeting will be with Macbeth.

## 👉 NOTES

**hurly-burly**: turmoil, uproar, strife

**ere**: before

**Grey Malkin**: a cat, the First Witch's familiar (a spirit in animal form that carried out evil deeds for a witch)

**Paddock**: the Second Witch's familiar, a toad

**Anon**: soon, in a moment



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## ? KEY QUESTIONS

### Do people control their own future?

Read Romeo's speech in **Act 1 Scene 4** of **Romeo and Juliet**. Discuss what influences Romeo to believe the night's events will lead to tragedy?

Ask groups to create a mind map showing all the factors that influenced Romeo or other Shakespearean characters they know well to behave in a certain way during the play. Did superstition or 'fate' play a part?



## Romeo and Juliet Act 1 Scene 4

**Romeo** I fear too early, for my mind **misgives**  
Some consequence yet hanging in the stars  
Shall bitterly begin his **fearful date**  
With this night's revels and **expire** the term  
Of a despised life closed in my breast  
By some vile **forfeit** of untimely death.  
But he that hath the steerage of my course,  
Direct my suit. On, lusty gentlemen!

## ! OVERVIEW

In **Act 1 Scene 4** of **Romeo and Juliet**, **Romeo and his friends are heading to the feast at the Capulet house. Romeo has a sense of foreboding what the night ahead may lead to.**

## ✍ NOTES

**misgives:** fears/is full of foreboding about

**fearful:** fear-inspiring

**date:** appointed time

**expire:** cause to expire the agreed period for repayment (Romeo has mortgaged his life)

**forfeit:** penalty/loss



# A Midsummer Night's Dream

## Act 1 Scene 1

**Hermia** If then true lovers have been **ever crossed**,  
It stands as an edict in destiny.

Then let us teach our **trial** patience,  
Because it is a customary cross,  
As due to love as thoughts and dreams and sighs,  
Wishes and tears, poor **fancy's** followers.

**Lysander** A good **persuasion**. Therefore, hear me,  
Hermia.

I have a widow aunt, a dowager  
Of great revenue, and she hath no child.  
From Athens is her house removed **seven leagues**,  
And she **respects** me as her only son.  
There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee,  
And to that place the sharp Athenian law  
Cannot pursue us. If thou lov'st me then,  
Steal forth thy father's house to-morrow night,  
And in the wood, a league **without** the town,  
Where I did meet thee once with Helena,  
To **do observance to a morn of May**,  
There will I **stay** for thee.

**Hermia** My good Lysander!  
I swear to thee, by **Cupid's** strongest bow,  
By his **best arrow with the golden head**,  
By the **simplicity** of Venus's **doves**,  
By that which **knitteth** souls and prospers loves,  
And by that fire which burned the **Carthage queen**,  
When the **false Trojan** under sail was seen,  
By all the vows that ever men have broke,  
In number more than ever women spoke,  
In that same place thou hast appointed me,  
Tomorrow truly will I meet with thee.



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## ! OVERVIEW

In Act 1 Scene 1 of **A Midsummer Night's Dream**, **Hermia and Lysander** decide to run away together after **Hermia's Father, Egeus, threatens to kill her if she doesn't marry Demetrius, his choice for her.**

## ✍ NOTES

**ever crossed**: always prevented from doing something

**trial**: experience of this trial

**fancy's**: love's

**persuasion**: opinion

**seven leagues**: about 21 miles

**respects**: considers

**without**: outside

**do... May**: i.e. celebrate May Day

**stay**: wait

**Cupid**: Roman god of love

**best... head**: i.e. one causing love (Cupid's lead arrows were supposed to induce loathing)

**simplicity**: innocence

**doves**: symbol of faithfulness to a person, these birds drew the goddess of love's chariot

**knitteth**: binds together

**Carthage queen**: Dido, who committed suicide on a fire when Aeneas deserted her

**false Trojan**: the Trojan Aeneas



## ACTIVITY SHEET 3 WHAT INFLUENCES YOUNG PEOPLE TODAY?

Photocopy the Activity Sheet and give one to each group of students. Ask them to cut out the boxes and arrange them into a **diamond nine** shape to show what factors influence them when they make important decisions, with the most influential factor at the top. The bottom box has been left blank for them to add one suggestion of their own.



### GLOSSARY

**Diamond nine:** An activity where students arrange nine items or choices into priority order, in the shape of a diamond with the most important at the top and the least important at the bottom.



### RESOURCES

- Scissors
- Pens
- Paper



**Views of parents or carers**

**Faith**

**The media**

**Views of extended family**

**School and teachers**

**Views of friends**

**Social media**

**Role models**