



MICHAEL
MORPURGO'S
TALES
FROM
SHAKESPEARE

A MIDSUMMER
NIGHT'S DREAM

TEACHER PACK

ABOUT THIS PACK

This pack supports the RSC's 2021 performances of Michael Morpurgo's Tales from Shakespeare, A Midsummer Night's Dream. Michael Morpurgo's retellings approach Shakespeare's best loved stories from different perspectives and reimagine them for young people, and these writing resources will invite your pupils to do the same, considering how they might interpret them.

The activities provided in this pack are specifically designed to support KS1-3 pupils in their writing and offers a number of writing opportunities centred around A midsummer Night's Dream, exploring the story, characters and vocabulary. In the 'notes from the classroom' boxes you will find helpful hints and suggestions for how activities might be adapted for younger or older pupils.

This pack was created in collaboration with Jan Anderson, an RSC Associate School teacher from Springhead Primary School.

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These symbols are used throughout the pack:



READ

Notes from the production, background info or extracts



ACTIVITY

A practical or open space activity



WRITE

A classroom writing or discussion activity

ABOUT THE APPROACH

The practical activities which are described in this pack act as an important part of the writing process because they give pupils the content for their writing, including:

- A deep understanding of plots and settings
- Detailed understanding of characters and their relationships, dilemmas and motivations
- A rich vocabulary to use in their writing

The exploratory exercises aim to provide a strong audience and purpose for writing, enabling pupils to write for effect on the reader. Each activity may take more than one session to complete but we have found through research that the time spent on these practical tasks is an investment in the pupils' writing because, when they come to write, much of the work of the writer is already done and pupils have, therefore, the cognitive capacity to write effectively. Beneath each writing opportunity you will also find some 'notes for the classroom'. These notes offer ideas and suggestions for how you might extend and adapt activities for pupils of different age groups, and come from experience of working this way with pupils to create writing around Shakespeare's texts.

ESTABLISHING SETTING



ACTIVITY 1: THE WOODS OUTSIDE ATHENS

'They're all in the forest. There is trouble ahead.'

Michael Morpurgo, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

In this activity, the pupils explore the woods where most of the story takes place. There are opportunities for writing poems.

Pupils will need a space such as a hall or classroom cleared of some furniture to work in for the first part. Please see the RSC website for suggestions on how to adapt this classroom work for remote learning.

- Ask pupils to stand in their own space in the room and begin to slowly walk around, being careful to keep a distance from other people.
- Instruct pupils to stop when you ask them to and allow them no more than 15 seconds, without talking, to make a freeze frame on their own, creating an image of *'the moon like a silver bow'*
- Allow half of the pupils to relax and look at the other half and discuss what they notice. Then ask the other half to share their freeze frames.
- Repeat this, but asking pupils to form small groups of five or six when you stop them. Invite each group to create a freeze frame image of:
 - *'the palace wood by moonlight'*.
 - *'the Duke's oak'*
 - *'cowslips tall'*
- Discuss these images with pupils as they create them, as with their first ones. Explain that all these things can be found in the woods near Athens where most of the story is set and that they are going to explore the woods more.
- Place the text for **The Woods Word Carpet** (resources) around the room, cut-up into separate phrases. (Place down lots of duplicates as pupils will need them later.) Younger children could either use images or a mixture of words and images.
- Explain that the room the pupils are in is going to be the woods in the story and that they are going to explore.
- Allow pupils a few minutes to look around and read the phrases alone. For younger pupils, the teacher could take them on a guided walk of the 'woods' and read the phrases to them.
- Ask the pupils to stand by a phrase which they like and make a frozen image of it.
- Select one pupil at a time and ask, 'What can you see?' Invite the pupil to then read the phrase as they remain frozen.
- Repeat this with different phrases until the pupils have heard most of them.
- Explain that there are fairy-like creatures who live in these woods and they see everything that happens in the story and that there is one particular hob-goblin called Puck who likes to sit in a fairy circle and tell stories in the woods.
- Arrange pupils in a circle in the 'woods' and use **Fairy circle 1.3** (resources) to narrate to pupils.
- Explain to pupils that they are going to pretend to be fairy-like creatures exploring the woods by moonlight and they are going to stop at each word or image on the floor, read the phrase and add to it. Pupils will

need felt tip pens or pencils for this. For example, they might add to 'rushy brook' so it becomes 'catch fish in the rushy brook', or 'cowslips tall' might become 'sprinkle stardust over cowslips tall' etc.

- Allow time for the 'fairy creatures' to walk around the woods writing what they would do at each place. Younger pupils could do this as a guided activity, as a whole group with the teacher.

CREATING POEMS

- Ask each pupil to choose two clauses from the floor that they really like and pick them up. (If pupils want the same clause, they can copy them down onto another piece of paper.)
- Arrange pupils into groups of three and ask each group to read all six of their clauses and explain that they are going to make a performance poem about the woods with their six lines.
- Invite pupils to decide on an order for the lines and ask them to make any changes or improvements to each line.
- Allow pupils time to note down their own copy of the lines on paper. Challenge them to find a movement or gesture to go with each line, so that they can share these as they read their poems and give them time to practice these.
- Invite groups to perform their whole poem with actions and speech. Younger pupils might make a whole class performance poem if unable to work in smaller groups.



WRITING OPPORTUNITY: FAIRY CIRCLE POEMS

- Explain to pupils that they are going to either write their own version of the poem they created in their groups or use the words they've discovered as inspiration to write a new poem about the woods.
- Share with pupils that some of the poems can be read or performed to entertain Puck at the next 'fairy circle' in the woods.
- **Ask pupils who the audience for this piece of writing is – (Puck and the fairies).**
- **Ask pupils to suggest what the purpose of the writing is (to entertain, to describe, to give detail – and pupils may suggest many more).**
- Revisit the conventions of poetry (depending on what has been previously taught) such as alliteration, rhyme and rhythm and explain that these are all intended to enhance the entertaining nature of the poem.
- Allow pupils time to revisit the notes they have made during the activities so far or other phrases from the woods and highlight words and phrases which they want to build into their poem.
- Ask pupils to write their poems, picking out some good examples to read aloud to the class after a few minutes and supporting them with structure, poetic conventions and purpose as they write.
- Once writing is completed, ask pupils to take editing pens and work in pairs in a space clear of furniture.
- Ask pupils to begin with one of the poems and create a frozen image or movement to represent each line allowing them to edit and improve the poem as they do this.
- Ask them to perform the poem, with the actions, reading the lines chorally and again allowing them to edit and improve the poem as they do this. Repeat this editing process for the second poem.

NOTES FOR THE CLASSROOM

Conventions such as rhyme and rhythm should only be built into these poems if they enhance rather than detract from the effectiveness of the writing; a poem built from direct lines and images in the play like this is often effective because of the beauty of the words.

As an alternative, younger pupils could write sentences describing things in the woods.

Editing pairs can work well as mixed ability pairs or matched ability pairs – I find that it is often dependant on pupils who work well together as it is the process, or reading the writing aloud to an audience, which makes the pupils spot their own errors and add improvements rather than the partner's suggestions. With less able pupils, the editing process can be supported by adults.

EXPLORING THE CHARACTERS



ACTIVITY 2: MEETING PUCK

'Enter Puck, champion troublemaker, cocky comic, creator of chaos and laughter, pain in the neck!'
Michael Morpurgo: A Midsummer Night's Dream

In this activity, the pupils explore the character of Puck. There are opportunities for the writing of rules or recounts.

Pupils will need a space such as a hall or classroom cleared of some furniture to work in for the first part. Please see the RSC website for suggestions on how to adapt this classroom work for remote learning.

- Tell pupils that they are going to find out more about the hob-goblin called Puck and invite them to pretend to be Puck. Read them the following pieces of information, asking them to suggest an action to go with each word or phrase. Once you have agreed on an action ask them to repeat the information with you, along with the action.
 - 'I live in the woods.'
 - 'I work for Oberon, King of the fairies.'
 - 'I'm a hob-goblin.'
 - 'I can move very fast.'
 - 'I can disguise myself as anything.'
 - 'I can make myself invisible.'
 - 'I like causing mischief.'
 - 'I like causing confusion.'
- Discuss with pupils what kind of fairy Puck is.
- Explain that there are some rules in the fairy world: some things that fairies never do and some things that they always do.
- Ask pupils first to think of something that a fairy would never do and say it with an action which the whole circle can repeat.

- Begin the round by saying, 'Fairies never...let themselves be seen,' with an action, pupils repeat and suggestions continue.
- Repeat with the sentence stem 'Fairies always...' and begin with, 'Fairies always make mischief.'
- Hand out **Puck's Tricks** (resources) but ask pupils not to look at it yet.
- Allow pupils ten seconds to look at the text and choose one word from it which stands out to them.
- Ask pupils to devise an action to go with their word and perform these words and actions, one at a time, around the circle. Ask if they can form any sense of what this text is about yet?
- Divide the pupils into 12 groups around the circle and give each group one numbered section of the text.
- Ask them to read their part, choose key words and create an action to go with them before performing the whole text around the circle.
- Explain that this is Puck describing to another fairy some of the tricks he has played on people.
- Arrange pupils into groups of three or four and ask them to go and read the text and see if they can identify some of Puck's tricks in the text.
- Ask each group to create an image for the trick they have identified and share these.
- Invite each group to then add some action after the first image to show how the trick unfolds with another image at the end.
- Finally, ask each group to choose some text from **Puck's tricks** (resources) to say in any way they like during their versions of the trick.
- Encourage pupils to share some of their performed tricks and discuss if the pupils can say any more about the character of Puck.



WRITING OPPORTUNITY: PUCK'S SPEECH

- Ask pupils to write in role as Puck recounting one of the tricks he played to the other fairies, either real (from the text) or imagined. Tell pupils that some of these stories will be shared at the next 'fairy circle'.
- Provide pupils with highlighters and look back at the text '**Puck's tricks**' (resources) asking pupils to highlight words and sections of the text which might be useful in writing Puck's account of events. Encourage pupils to keep this selection limited to avoid copying of Shakespeare's text.
- **Ask pupils who the audience for this piece of writing is – (the fairies).**
- **Explain that, in this case, the tone of the writing should be quite informal as this would be Puck telling his story to his friends so it needs to sound as if he is talking and not writing.**
- Encourage pupils to think about the 'voice' of Puck and discuss his character (he likes to please, to amuse etc) so the writing should reflect these character traits.
- Remind pupils of features of informality which have been taught (informal vocabulary and use of the vernacular – '*You'll never guess what I've done*', use of contractions, use of dashes and exclamation marks, use of question tags – '*It's hilarious – isn't it?*'). This will, of course, be dependent on the age and ability of the pupils.
- **Ask pupils to suggest what the purpose of the writing is (to describe, to recount, to entertain, to give details and pupils may suggest many more).**
- Explain that the writing, therefore, needs to be clear, amusing, in chronological order, descriptive, detailed and informative.
- Invite pupils to write Puck's account, picking out some good examples to read aloud to the class after a few minutes and supporting them with structure, tone and purpose as they write. Once writing is completed, ask pupils to take editing pens and work in pairs.
- Ask pupils to imagine that one of them is Puck and the other one of the fairies, while Puck reads their speech to the fairy, ask 'the fairy' to listen carefully and consider if they are entertained by Puck's story, ask any further questions or clarify any points and make suggestions about improvements.
- Give each pair time, as they read, to edit and improve their writing then swap roles.

NOTES FOR THE CLASSROOM

Younger pupils could stop after discussing the possible rules of being a fairy and write rules of the fairy world to go into an illustrated book of fairy rules rather than working on a speech. (Older pupils might enjoy this too!)



ACTIVITY 3: MEETING THE LOVERS

'They're going to run away, into the forest and hide...'

Michael Morpurgo: A Midsummer Night's Dream

In this activity, the pupils will explore the relationships between some of the lovers in the story. There are opportunities for letter writing.

Pupils will need a space such as a hall or classroom cleared of some furniture to work in for the first part. Please see the RSC website for suggestions on how to adapt this classroom work for remote learning.

- Ask pupils to sit in a circle in the 'woods' and share some of Puck's tricks recounts from activity two.
- Narrate **Fairy circle 3.2** (resources) following instructions on sheet.
- Hand out **Egeus' complaint** (resources) and allow pupils 10 seconds to look at the text and choose one word from it which stands out to them.
- Ask pupils to devise an action to go with their word and perform these words and actions, one at a time, around the circle.
- Ask if pupils can form any sense of what this text is about yet?
- Invite pupils to read the text aloud around the circle, asking pupils to move onto the next person every time there is a punctuation mark. Discuss what they think is happening and who people might be.
- Ask four pupils to stand along one side of the room, separated from each other and write each one a character label: Duke Theseus, Lysander, Demetrius and Hermia.
- Encourage the other pupils to stand on the opposite side of the room, facing the four characters and tell them that they are going to read Egeus' speech chorally, all at the same time, but each time he mentions 'I, my, me, mine' they should put their hand on their chest and each time one of the four characters is mentioned, they must point at the appropriate one on the opposite side of the room.
- Reflect with pupils on what they have learnt. What is Egeus most concerned by?



WRITING OPPORTUNITY: EGEUS' LETTER

- In the classroom, read **Theseus' letter to Egeus** (resources).
- Explain that pupils are going to write Egeus' response in role as Egeus.
- Provide pupils with highlighters and look back at the text 'Egeus' complaint' (resources) asking pupils to highlight words and sections of the text which might be useful in writing Egeus' letter.
- Encourage pupils to keep this selection limited to avoid duplicate copies of Shakespeare's text.

- **Ask pupils who the audience for this piece of writing is – (Theseus).**
- Explain that, in this case, the tone of the writing should be formal as Theseus is a duke, a rich and influential man.
- Remind pupils of features of formality which have been taught (formal vocabulary – *my Lord*, no contractions, use of the passive – *My daughter's heart has been stolen*, use of the subjunctive – *if you were to suffer as I have*). This will, of course, be dependent on the age and ability of the pupils.
- **Ask pupils to suggest what the purpose of the writing is (to persuade, to flatter, to inform, to impress – and pupils may suggest many more).**
- Explain that the writing, therefore, needs to be persuasive, descriptive and detailed and discuss features that wouldn't be found in it. For example, it might contain reported speech but not direct speech.
- Ask pupils to write Egeus' letter, picking out some good examples to read aloud to the class after a few minutes and supporting them with structure, tone and purpose as they write.
- Once writing is completed, ask pupils to take editing pens and work in pairs.
- Ask pupils to imagine that one of them is Egeus and the other Theseus, while Egeus reads their letter to Theseus, ask 'Theseus' to listen carefully and consider if he is persuaded by Egeus' letter, ask any further questions or clarify any points and make suggestions about improvements.
- Give each pair time, as they read, to edit and improve their writing then swap roles.

NOTES FOR THE CLASSROOM

Reading Theseus' letter first will set the tone of formality for the reply without having to give pupils a model reply, which can result in less independent writing.
Younger pupils could stop earlier in the activity and write about what happened in the Duke's court.



ACTIVITY 4: THE FAIRY KING AND QUEEN ARGUE

'...the two of them had fallen out badly...'

Michael Morpurgo: A Midsummer Night's Dream

In this activity, the pupils will explore the argument between Titania and Oberon. There are opportunities for the writing of letters.

Pupils will need a space such as a hall or classroom cleared of some furniture to work in for the first part. Please see the RSC website for suggestions on how to adapt this classroom work for remote learning.

- Pupils are going to play a version of 'Giants, Witches and Elves' but in their game they will have Duke, Fairy Queen and Hob-goblin.
- Agree an action and sound or word for each character with all pupils and allow them time to practise – eg – duke could be a bowing action and the word 'Theseus', Fairy Queen could be the word 'Queen' with an action of putting a crown on and Hob-goblin could be the word 'Puck' with a magical action.
- Split the class into two groups and give each group a 'home base', for example, against a wall.
- The two groups must secretly agree which character they will be and then begin lined up and facing each other in the centre of the room or playground in a neutral body position that doesn't give away their character.

- Explain that you will say the line, 'Room Fairy, here comes...' after which, they must do their action and sound or word for the character they have agreed.
- Explain that Duke beats Fairy Queen and Fairy Queen beats Hob-goblin and Hob-goblin beats Duke and the winning team chase the losing team to their base, trying to tag them on the way. Anyone who is tagged must join the other team.
- After each turn, the teams must regroup and secretly choose which character they will be for the next turn.
- Continue until one team has no-one left on it (or pupils are exhausted).
- Ask pupils to sit in a circle in the 'woods' and narrate Fairy circle 4.2 (resources) following instructions on sheet.
- Recap events in the story so far with pupils.

THE ARGUMENT

- Arrange pupils into two groups calling one Titania and one Oberon.
- Chorally read **Titania and Oberon argue** (resources) and discuss who they are and what they are arguing about.
- Using the same texts, arrange pupils into pairs labelled A and B. Explain that A will read Titania and B will read Oberon.
- Ask pairs to read the text in several ways:
 - standing back to back
 - whispering
 - shouting
- Discuss with pupils if any lines were more effective said in certain ways.
- Hand out **Titania Explains** (resources) and allow pupils 10 seconds to look at the text and choose one word from it which stands out to them.
- Ask pupils to devise an action to go with their word and perform these words and actions, one at a time, around the circle. Do they have any sense of what this text is about yet?
- Ask the pupils to stand facing you with the text which they used in part three and explain that they will chorally read Titania's words but that you will play one of her fairies and will interrupt with questions; their job is to listen to her questions and then continue to read.
- Follow the text in the teacher's version of '**Titania explains: interpolated questions**' (resources).



WRITING OPPORTUNITY: LETTERS FROM THE KING AND QUEEN

- Explain that pupils are going to write a double letter. The first from Oberon to Titania asking for the changeling boy and the second her reply.
- Explain that, for the first letter, they are going to write in role as Oberon.
- Provide pupils with highlighters and look back at the texts used in the drama activities asking pupils to highlight words and sections of the text which might be useful in writing Oberon's letter.
- Encourage pupils to keep this selection limited to avoid duplicate copies of Shakespeare's text.
- **Ask pupils who the audience for this piece of writing is – (Titania).**
- Explain that, in this case, the tone of the writing should be quite formal as the writer is a king and the reader a queen but that, as he is also her husband, it may contain some informality, especially if Oberon thinks this would be more persuasive.
- Remind pupils of features of formality which have been taught (formal vocabulary – *my Lady*, no contractions, use of the passive – *My mind is made up*, use of the subjunctive – *if you were to change your*

mind. Also remind pupils that some informality may be persuasive – *My sweet queen, I beg you*). This will, of course, be dependent on the age and ability of the pupils.

- **Ask pupils to suggest what the purpose of the writing is (to persuade, to threaten, to flatter – and pupils may suggest many more).**
- Explain that the writing, therefore, needs to be clear in its demands, persuasive, personal, and detailed and discuss content that wouldn't be found in it. For example, would Oberon insult Titania in this letter?
- Ask pupils to write Oberon's letter, picking out some good examples to read aloud to the class after a few minutes and supporting them with structure, tone and purpose as they write.
- Once writing is completed, ask pupils to take editing pens and work in pairs.
- Ask pupils to imagine that one of them is Oberon and the other Titania, while Oberon reads their letter to Titania, ask 'Titania' to listen carefully and consider if she is persuaded to give Oberon the changeling boy, ask any further questions or clarify any points and make suggestions about improvements.
- Give each pair time, as they read, to edit and improve their writing then swap roles.



WRITING OPPORTUNITY: LETTERS FROM THE KING AND QUEEN PART 2

- After the session, choose one of Oberon's letters to scan or copy and at the start of the next session, read this to the pupils.
- Explain that they are now going to write in role as Titania, replying to Oberon's letter.
- Provide pupils with highlighters and look back at the texts used in the drama activities asking pupils to highlight words and sections of the text which might be useful in writing Titania's letter.
- Encourage pupils to keep this selection limited to avoid duplicate copies of Shakespeare's text.
- **Ask pupils what the audience for this piece of writing is – (Oberon).**
- Explain that, in this case, the tone of the writing should be quite formal as the writer is a queen and the reader a king but that, as she is also his wife, it may contain some informality, especially if Titania thinks this would be more effective at getting her message across.
- Remind pupils of features of formality which have been taught (formal vocabulary – *my Lord*, no contractions, use of the passive – *My decision will not be reversed*, use of the subjunctive – *if you were in my position*. Also remind pupils that some informality may be effective – *You're not the only one who rules around here*). This will, of course, be dependent on the age and ability of the pupils.
- **Ask pupils to suggest what the purpose of the writing is (to deny, to threaten, to reiterate – and pupils may suggest many more).**
- Explain that the writing, therefore, needs to be clear in its message, personal, and detailed and discuss content that wouldn't be found in it. For example, would Titania show any doubt in this letter?
- Consider structuring the letter using Oberon's letter which was read at the start; could Titania's letter reply to the points made in the order set out there?
- Ask pupils to write Titania's letter, picking out some good examples to read aloud to the class after a few minutes and supporting them with structure, tone and purpose as they write.
- Once writing is completed, ask pupils to take editing pens and work in pairs.
- Ask pupils to imagine that one of them is Titania and the other Oberon, while Titania reads their letter to Oberon, ask 'Oberon' to listen carefully and consider if he now believes that Titania will never give him the boy, ask any further questions or clarify any points and make suggestions about improvements.
- Give each pair time, as they read, to edit and improve their writing then swap roles.

NOTES FOR THE CLASSROOM

If time doesn't allow for older pupils to write both letters, the teacher could write Oberon's as a model for pupils to write Titania's reply in part 2.

Younger pupils could stop earlier in the activity to write what Oberon wants and what Titania wants.



ACTIVITY 5: TITANIA AND BOTTOM

'She adores his long hairy ears, his hairy cheeks.'

Michael Morpurgo: A Midsummer Night's Dream

In this activity, the pupils will explore the trick which Oberon plays on Titania. There are opportunities for the writing of a love letter.

Pupils will need a space such as a hall or classroom cleared of some furniture to work in for the first part. Please see the RSC website for suggestions on how to adapt this classroom work for remote learning.

- Ask pupils to sit in a circle in the 'woods' and narrate [Fairy circle 5.2](#) (resources) following instructions on sheet.
- Recap events in the story so far with pupils.

BOTTOM'S ORDERS

- Explain that Bottom gets used to being waited on and asks Titania's fairies to do lots of jobs for him.
- Tell pupils that they are going to pretend to be Bottom and they are going to think of a job which he might tell the fairies to do.
- Model examples for pupils from the text: 'Scratch my head,' 'Bring me a honey-bag', 'Fetch me good dry oats,'
- Ask pupils to give Bottom's commands, one at a time, round the circle and after each command, ask the rest of the pupils to pretend to be Bottom and mime the job which has been commanded.

- Distribute **Titania and Bottom** (resources) and arrange the pupils into five groups, each group taking one of the parts.
- Read the scene chorally and discuss what is happening.
- Arrange pupils into groups of five and ask them to take a part each and rehearse the scene.
- Share some of the scenes.



WRITING OPPORTUNITY: LOVE LETTER TO BOTTOM

- In the classroom, tell pupils that they are going to write in role as Titania, writing her love letter to Bottom.
- Provide pupils with highlighters and look back at the text 'Titania and Bottom' (resources) asking pupils to highlight words and sections of the text which might be useful in writing Titania's letter.
- Encourage pupils to keep this selection limited to avoid duplicate copies of Shakespeare's text.
- **Ask pupils who the audience for this piece of writing is – (Bottom).**
- Explain that, in this case, the tone of the writing should be quite informal as Titania is in love with Bottom and they have a friendly warm relationship.
- Remind pupils of features of informality which have been taught (informal vocabulary – *my dear*, use of contractions, use of question tags – *We could stay together forever – couldn't we?*). This will, of course, be dependent on the age and ability of the pupils.
- **Ask pupils to suggest what the purpose of the writing is (to describe, to persuade, to give detail – and pupils may suggest many more).**

- Explain that the writing, therefore, needs to be descriptive, detailed and amusing (a queen is in love with a man who has a donkey's head) and discuss features that wouldn't be found in it. For example, it wouldn't contain dialogue.
- Ask pupils to write Titania's letter, picking out some good examples to read aloud to the class after a few minutes and supporting them with structure, tone and purpose as they write.
- Once writing is completed, ask pupils to take editing pens and work in pairs.
- Ask pupils to imagine that one of them is Titania and the other Bottom, while Titania reads their letter to Bottom, ask 'Bottom' to listen carefully and ask any further questions or clarify any points and make suggestions about improvements.
- Give each pair time, as they read, to edit and improve their writing then swap roles.

NOTES FOR THE CLASSROOM

Younger pupils could stop earlier in the activity and write Bottom's commands.

Further writing opportunities

The series of five activities are designed to be carried out with pupils before watching the active story-telling; they introduce the main characters, setting, themes and vocabulary so that pupils can access the stories and be excited to find out how the story unfolds.

Further writing opportunities could be created during and after the performance and could include the following:

- Morpurgo describes different characters in the story: pupils could write kennings or riddles for those characters.
- Morpurgo describes the relationship between Hermia and Egeus: pupils could write a double set of letters – one from Egeus explaining why she must marry Demetrius and not Lysander and one from Hermia saying goodbye to her father as she runs away and explaining her decision.
- Morpurgo describes the fairy world and characters: pupils could write descriptions of the various different types of fairies found in the woods.
- Morpurgo describes the argument between Titania and Oberon: pupils could write a double diary entry from these two characters after the argument.
- Morpurgo describes how the lovers argue in the forest: pupils could write an eye-witness account of their fights and arguments from the point of view of Oberon.
- Morpurgo describes how the love potion makes the male lovers fall in love with Helena: pupils could write four-way diary entries for the lovers after this.
- Morpurgo describes how Titania falls in love with Bottom when he has a donkey's head: pupils could write eye-witness accounts of events from when Titania first sees Bottom from the point-of-view of one of her fairies and one of Oberon's.
- Morpurgo describes how Puck enjoyed the wedding celebrations: pupils could write his account of the wedding.
- Morpurgo describes the wedding celebrations: pupils could write a magazine style article about the event.
- Morpurgo describes the wedding celebrations: pupils could write introductions to the people at the wedding.

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RESOURCES

Activity One 'Woods word carpet'

hawthorn buds
faint primrose-beds
moonlight
the Duke's oak
hill
dale
bush
flood
cowslips tall
a pearl in every cowslip's ear
acorn-cups
fountain clear
spangled starlight sheen
paved fountain
rushy brook
the beached margent of the sea
the whistling wind
pelting river
the green corn
the fresh lap of the crimson rose
sweet summer buds
a little western flower
wild beasts
a bank where the wild thyme blows
oxlips
the nodding violet
luscious woodbine
sweet musk-roses
eglantine
enamell'd skin
weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in
flowery bed
spotted snakes with double tongue

thorny hedgehogs
newts
blindworms
weaving spiders
long-legged spinners
beetles black
worm
snail

Activity One 'Fairy circle 1.3'

(Narrate the following to pupils in role as Puck - a hob-goblin)

How now spirits - you all know me of course - I'm Puck the hob-goblin. Now, normally we all gather in our fairy circle to tell each other stories and act out my stories but tonight we are going to wonder through the woods, exploring by moonlight.

Some of you are sprites, some goblins, some pixies, some elves and some changelings but you all have the power to hide well, disguise yourselves and move silently so that no-one but us will see what we do in the woods tonight. Some of you can fly to the tops of the tall trees, some of you are small enough to crawl into the acorn-cups and some can see under the waters of the rushy brooks. With your magic, we can explore parts of these woods that no-one else sees and do what we like there.

As we explore we'll leave a trail and write down what we've done...*(pick up part of word carpet - eg - 'rushy brook')* What could we do in the rushy brook? *(gather suggestions and model altering the word carpet text - eg - catch fish in the rushy brook - sleep in the weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in)* So go about the woods, stay with a friend in case you run into trouble and explore.

Activity Two 'Puck's tricks'

FAIRY

1. Either I mistake your shape and making quite,
Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite
2. Called Robin Goodfellow. Are not you he
That frights the maidens of the villagery,
3. Skim milk, and sometimes labour in the quern,
And bootless make the breathless housewife churn,
4. And sometime make the drink to bear no barm,
Mislead night-wanderers, laughing at their harm?
5. Those that Hobgoblin call you and sweet Puck,
You do their work and they shall have good luck.
Are not you he?

ROBIN

6. Thou speak'st aright;
I am that merry wanderer of the night.
I jest to Oberon and make him smile
7. When I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile,
Neighing in likeness of a filly foal,
8. And sometime lurk I in a gossip's bowl,
In very likeness of a roasted crab,
9. And when she drinks, against her lips I bob
And on her withered dewlap pour the ale.
10. The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,
Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh me,
11. Then slip I from her bum, down topples she,
And 'tailor' cries, and falls into a cough.
12. And then the whole quire hold their hips and laugh,
And waxen in their mirth and neeze and swear
A merrier hour was never wasted there.

Activity Three 'Fairy circle 3.2'

(Sit 'fairies' in a circle and, in role as Puck, narrate the following, asking pupils to stand in the circle and help you act out the story as you tell it.)

I've got a great story to tell you all today! You know how I love to wander all around the woods and the town, spying on what's happening and causing mischief? Well yesterday I went to Duke Theseus' court; the Duke (*select pupil*) was there looking very serious when in came this man called Egeus (*select pupil*) He looked so angry; he strutted in and couldn't keep still: 'Full of vexation come I,' (*ask pupil to repeat*) he said, 'against my child, my daughter Hermia,' (*ask pupil to repeat*). Well, then he pushed his daughter, Hermia (*select pupil*) in front of the Duke. Hermia looked really upset about something and the Duke just looked confused but the father, Egeus, didn't wait for the Duke to ask any questions; he started talking again.

'Demetrius,' (*ask pupil playing Egeus to repeat*) he shouted and pulled this young man (*select pupil*) in front of the Duke too. 'This man hath my consent to marry her,' (*ask pupil playing Egeus to repeat*) he said. Well, I didn't really understand why Egeus had taken his daughter Hermia to Duke Theseus to tell him that Demetrius could marry her but Hermia didn't look very happy about it at all: she couldn't even bare to look at Demetrius so I don't think she wanted to marry him!

Then Egeus dragged another young man in front of the Duke- Lysander he was called. (*select pupil*) Well, Hermia and Lysander were smiling at each other and that just made Egeus more and more angry because you see, Lysander and Hermia were in love with each other and Hermia didn't want to marry the man her dad had chosen for her and that was why Egeus was complaining to the Duke - because Hermia wouldn't do as she was told. Egeus marched round the room ranting on about how Lysander had stolen his daughter's heart, sung love songs to her, given her presents and stopped her from being obedient. It was hilarious! But then, it got really serious because Egeus looked at the Duke and said that he wanted the Duke to use an old law that meant, if Hermia didn't do as she was told and marry the man that he had chosen for her, Demetrius, she would be put to death! 'I may dispose of her,' (*ask pupil playing Egeus to repeat*) he said. Humans are such fools aren't they? Threatening to kill their own children; who knows what the Duke will say? When I find out, I'll tell you all.

(All sit!)

Activity Three 'Egeus' complaint'

EGEUS

Full of vexation come I, with complaint
Against my child, my daughter Hermia.
Stand forth, Demetrius. My noble lord,
This man hath my consent to marry her.
Stand forth, Lysander. And my gracious duke,
This man hath bewitched the bosom of my child.—
Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes,
And interchanged love-tokens with my child.
Thou hast by moonlight at her window sung,
And stol'n the impression of her fantasy
With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gauds, conceits,
With cunning hast thou filched my daughter's heart,
Turned her obedience, which is due to me,
To stubborn harshness.— And, my gracious duke,
Be it so she will not here before your grace
Consent to marry with Demetrius,
I beg the ancient privilege of Athens:
As she is mine, I may dispose of her;
Which shall be either to this gentleman
Or to her death, according to our law

Activity Three Theseus' letter to Egeus

Dear Egeus,

I listened carefully to your arguments in court today and would like to consult my advisors before I give my final judgement on the matter of your daughter.

Please explain your case relating to your daughter, Demetrius and Lysander in writing to my advisors so that they can further advise me and I can make final judgement.

With kind regards

Theseus

Activity Four Fairy circle 4.2

(Teacher in role as Puck narrate the following)

Well, I've got a brilliant story for you tonight about all sorts of midsummer madness! Do you remember that young woman called Hermia? *(select pupil)*
Well, she must have escaped from her father because I spotted her running around here in our woods and those two men, Demetrius and Lysander *(select 2 pupils)* who were with her in the Duke's court, were here too - and so was another young woman called Helena. *(select pupil)* It turns out that both the men love Hermia but she only loves Lysander and Helena loves Demetrius but he only loves Hermia! Helena was chasing Demetrius and he was shouting, 'I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.' *(Ask pupil playing Demetrius to repeat)*

They were crashing around in the dark- shouting, quarrelling and fighting and making a real scene. *(All sit)*

I skipped away to tell my master all about these young lovers when I came across a group of workmen *(select 6 pupils)* who were rehearsing a play to show to Duke Theseus at his wedding; they were even funnier than the lovers, swaggering around the woods! There was one called Nick Bottom *(select 1 of the 6 pupils)* who wanted to play every part in the play:

'Let me play the lion too. I will roar, I will make the duke say 'Let him roar again.' *(Ask pupil playing Bottom to repeat)* he said. He was hilarious so I thought I'd play a little trick on him. When he left the others for a moment, I changed his head into a donkey's head and they all ran away shouting:

'O Bottom, thou art changed!' *(Ask other 5 pupils to repeat)* *(All sit)*

I couldn't stay and watch any longer because I had to get back to my master, the king of the fairies, Oberon, *(select pupil)* with this purple flower he'd asked me to fetch to trick his queen with: he's been in such a bad mood lately because he and Titania - his queen - *(select pupil)* have had a massive row!

(All sit)

Activity Four Titania and Oberon argue

Enter the King of Fairies [Oberon] with his train, and the Queen [Titania] at another with hers

OBERON: Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.

TITANIA: What, jealous Oberon? Fairies, skip hence.
I have forsworn his bed and company.

OBERON: Tarry, rash wanton, am not I thy lord?

Why should Titania cross her Oberon?

I do but beg a little changeling boy

To be my henchman.

TITANIA: Set your heart at rest:

The fairy land buys not the child of me.

OBERON: Give me that boy, and I will go with thee.

TITANIA: Not for thy fairy kingdom. Fairies, away.

We shall chide downright, if I longer stay.

Exit [Titania and her train]

OBERON: Well, go thy way: thou shalt not from this grove
Till I torment thee for this injury.

Activity Four Titania explains

His mother was a votress of my order,
And in the spice`d Indian air by night
Full often hath she gossiped by my side,
And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,
Marking th'embarke`d traders on the flood,
When we have laughed to see the sails conceive
And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind,
Which she, with pretty and with swimming gait
Following — her womb then rich with my young
squire —
Would imitate, and sail upon the land,
To fetch me trifles, and return again
As from a voyage, rich with merchandise.
But she, being mortal, of that boy did die:
And for her sake do I rear up her boy,
And for her sake I will not part with him.

Activity Four Titania explains: interpolated questions (teacher's version)

Who was the changeling boy's mother?

His mother was a votress of my order,

Where did you meet her?

And in the spice'd Indian air by night

What did you do together?

Full often hath she gossiped by my side,

Where did you sit together?

And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,

What did you watch on the seas?

Marking th'embarke'd traders on the flood,

Oh - you watched the boats bringing goods to land?

When we have laughed to see the sails conceive

What happened to the sails?

And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind,

What did your follower do?

Which she, with pretty and with swimming gait

Go on...?

*Following — her womb then rich with my young
squire —*

She was pregnant with her son, the changeling boy?

Would imitate, and sail upon the land,

Why was she like a boat on the land?

To fetch me trifles, and return again

So she went to fetch you gifts?

As from a voyage, rich with merchandise.

Then what happened to her?

But she, being mortal, of that boy did die:

And you kept the baby?

And for her sake do I rear up her boy,

And you won't give him to Oberon?

And for her sake I will not part with him.

Activity Five Fairy circle 5.2

(Teacher in role as Puck narrate the following)

Well, I've got another brilliant story for you tonight! Do you remember that last time I told you that my master, the King of the fairies, Oberon (*select pupil*) had had an argument with his queen, Titania? (*select pupil*) It was all over this little changeling boy (*select pupil*) who Titania looks after. Well, they argued because Oberon wants the child:

'I do but beg a little changeling boy to be my henchman.'*(Ask pupil playing Oberon to repeat)* he said.

But Titania won't give him up because the child's mother died and she was Titania's close friend and follower:

'For her sake I will not part with him.'*(Ask pupil playing Titania to repeat)* she said.

Well, Oberon became so angry with her that he decided to play a trick on Titania to torment her.

He sent me to get a purple flower and the juice of this flower has magical powers. If you squeeze it on the eyelids of someone who is asleep, they will fall madly in love with the first living thing they see when they wake up.

Oberon, hid and waited until Titania was fast asleep in her flowery bed and then he sneaked up and squeezed some of the juice on her eyelids and as he did it, he whispered:

'Wake when some vile thing is near.'*(Ask pupil playing Oberon to repeat)*

Now, you must remember the workman called Nick Bottom whose head I changed into the head of a donkey? (*select pupil*)

Well, guess what the first thing Titania saw when she woke up was?

Yes...Bottom with a donkey's head and she was head-over-heels in love! My master loved watching her! Titania stroked his donkey's ears and put roses in his hair and told her fairies (*select 3 pupils*) to bring him whatever he wanted.

Bottom bossed them all around and made them bring him food and drink and scratch his head while Titania murmured:

'O, how I love thee! How I dote on thee!' *(Ask pupil playing Titania to repeat)*

(All sit)

Activity Five Titania and Bottom

TITANIA

Come, sit thee down upon this flow'ry bed,
While I thy amiable cheeks do coy,
And stick musk-roses in thy sleek smooth head,
And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy.

BOTTOM

Where's Peaseblossom?

PEASEBLOSSOM

Ready.

BOTTOM

Scratch my head, Peaseblossom. Where's Monsieur Cobweb?

COBWEB

Ready.

BOTTOM

Monsieur Cobweb, good monsieur, get you your weapons in your hand, and kill me a red-hipped humble-bee on the top of a thistle; and, good monsieur, bring me the honey-bag. Where's Monsieur Mustardseed?

MUSTARDSEED

Ready. What's your will?

BOTTOM

Nothing, good monsieur, but to help Cavalery Cobweb to scratch. I must to the barber's, monsieur, for methinks I am marvellous hairy about the face.

TITANIA

say, sweet love, what thou desirest to eat.

BOTTOM

I could munch your good dry oats. Methinks I have a great desire to a bottle of hay.

TITANIA

Sleep thou, and I will wind thee in my arms.

Fairies, begone, and be all ways away. *[Exit fairies]*

O, how I love thee! How I dote on thee!