

SHAKESPEARE BOOT CAMP

Shakespeare is renowned for his excellent use and manipulation of the English language, as it were. Often Shakespeare's works were written and revised for immediate consumption. There was little to no rehearsal for these plays, so he wrote with purpose.

You'll find that, as the actor, you describe the action on stage. Shakespeare used his words and literary devices to inform actors of the physical, emotional and verbal choices they should be making. While it is my role to guide you through the world of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, you can find SO much inspiration and intention from dissecting the dialogue yourself. Here are some tools to help you with that:

Unearthing Shakespeare – Valerie Clayman Pye

Val was my Shakespeare professor in college. She has vast knowledge of Shakespeare and his work. She, herself, has performed on the Globe stage multiple times and studied his genius through multiple degrees. She is a beautiful human and soul, and has placed her book for free consumption on <http://www.taylorfrancis.com>. This is by no means a required read but would serve as an amazing tool throughout this process. Especially when at home practicing. The book is only 239 pages!

A) Iambic Pentameter

When first dissecting Shakespeare, it's important to discern what style he has written the piece in. Those options are Prose & Verse. Lucky for us, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* features both styles to show status and characterization. The style also gives intel into what's happening on stage. Which we will dive into later.

Prose: Does not use IP and is written as plain English (Old English)

Verse: Uses IP – All Shakespeare's sonnets are written in IP

What is Iambic Pentameter? Iambic is a literary device meaning one unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable. Penta, means five, and meter means device of measurement. When put together, Iambic Pentameter quite literally means 5 groupings of iambs that form a phrase. Let's take this example from the text:

U / U / U / U / U /
"I do | entreat | your Grace | to pardon me." (Hermia, pg 3)

Above you see how we, as actors, notate a line in Iambic Pentameter. By this citation you can see how Shakespeare provides a road map to the importance within the line. Like most things, there are exceptions to these rules.

1. **Trochee** – a switch in the stressed syllable within an iamb. Most times found at the beginning of a phrase, but not always. This draws more attention to the subject of the line

- a. EXAMPLE: "Happy be Theseus, our renownèd duke" (Egeus, pg 2)
 - b. EXAMPLE : "Demetrius is a worthy gentleman." (Theseus, pg 3)
2. Feminine Ending – 11 Syllables, can signify rambling or disorganization in a character or situation
- a. EXAMPLE: "Upon this spotted and inconsistent man." (Lysander, pg 5)
3. Alexandrine Ending – 12 syllables, usually used to end a complete thought or place more emphasis on that specific line of dialogue
- a. EXAMPLE: "Wall, that vile wall which did these lovers sunder." (Quince, pg 67)

Dive through the text and find your own Feminine, Alexandrine or Trochee and write it here:

Page Number: _____

B) Pronunciation

Sometimes we alter pronunciations of words to fit IP.

1. Apostrophes – will usually dictate when a word is missing a syllable to fit the meter, or is being conjoined to another word
 - a. EXAMPLE: "Her silver visage in the wat'ry glass" (Lysander, pg 8)
2. "ED" Endings – in this specific script, words ending in "ed" that are marked with the tilde over the "E" are elongated to fit the meter.
 - a. EXAMPLE: "Two bosoms interchainèd with an oath –" (Lysander, pg 24)
3. General Truncation – sometimes words are written fully (as in, without apostrophes), but are still shortened to fit the meter. This is because there is a presumed understanding that words that are spelled the same have different pronunciations relative to region. We have that in modern English. Think how Delco people pronounce wash "warsh."
 - a. EXAMPLE: "Now, Fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour" (Theseus, pg 2)

Give this a go by yourself. Search through the text for one of these pronunciation quirks:

Page Number: _____

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE:

- Hippolyta (Hi-paul-it-uh)
- Egeus (Ee-jus)
- Aye (Eye)
- Doth (Duhth)
- Pyramus (Peer-uh-mus)
- Ercles (Air-Kleez)

- Phibbus (Fee-bus)
- Phillida (Fill-uh-duh)
- Perigouna (Pair-i-gone-uh)
- Ariadne (Air-ee-add-knee)
- Dulcet (Dull-set)
- Fie (Pronounced like "die")
- Reremice (re-rem-iss)
- Eke (Eek)
- Antipodes (Aunt-tip-poe-deez)
- Aby (Uh-bye)
- Acheron (Ack-ron)
- Dotage (Dote-idg)
- Vaward (Vay-ward)
- Bacchanals (Back-en-uhl)
- Thracian (Thray-she-in)
- Shafalus (Sha-full-us)
- Hecate (Heh-ka-dee)
- Flouriets (Floor-ets)
- Holloed (Howled)
- Lakin (Lay-kin)
- Loffe (Law-f)

C) Punctuation Meaning

There's a common misconception when performing Shakespeare that you're not allowed to breathe between periods. That is NOT the case. While periods should give pause to a phrase, it is not the only place to breathe. Punctuation is used for many other reasons within his work:

- Periods/Commas – signify the end of a phrase or thought
- Parentheses – signify a disrupting thought, usually spoken to self, the Heavens or audience as if present company is not on stage (Think: Breaking the 4th wall like Fleabag or The Office)
- Semicolons – a continuation of a phrase or thought that elaborates on the previous one
- Colons – beginning of a list, though may not always be continued by the same character, so be aware that you may be continuing the list of someone else.
- Hyphens – interruptions in lists, thoughts, phrases that aren't replaced by other thoughts, usually signifies scattered or disjointed characters or situations

As you can see, each of these instances gives you an opportunity to breathe. Especially since they are, yet another tool in your arsenal to delivering a dynamic performance.

Find one of your lines that uses at least one of these devices and write it here: _____

_____ Page Number: _____

D) Capitalization

There are obvious reasons as to why some words are capitalized: names, places, or the beginning of a new phrase. However, this is a HUGE literary device to give clue to who we are talking to. The Heavens are literally painted on the ceiling in *The Globe*. There are times that the words an actor is saying are directed to the Gods and the Heavens. Yet another instance that Shakespeare uses spoken word rather than stage directions. If "God(s)" is written with a capital "G," it's best to assume that you're communicating with the Heavens.

EXAMPLE:

To The Gods – "Masters, you ought to consider with yourself, to bring in (God shield us!) a lion among ladies is a most dreadful thing." (Bottom, pg 29)

Not To The Gods – "We, Hermia, like two artificial gods," (Helena, pg 42)

E) Opening Vowels

A very common occurrence in classical texts is phrasing that begins with an open vowel, like "O." While sometimes a filler to stay in meter, there is usually a reason for this word choice as opposed to one of the other devices we've discussed. An open vowel could be a sign of distress, upset, anger or another dramatic emotional release. As actors, we use that to our advantage to propel us into the subsequent lines and subject matter. We don't gloss over this significance.

EXAMPLE: "O spite! Too old to be engaged to young." (Hermia, pg 6)

Your turn! Search the text and find an instance of this emotional device: _____

_____ Page Number: _____

F) Writing In Plain Text

The best thing you can do to help yourself to understand what your saying is to write each line in colloquialisms. Even in modern English, there are words that you have to research the meanings of. If you don't know what you're saying, how do you expect the audience to?

Most of our rehearsal process will be spent making sure that you understand what you're saying, what is happening on stage, and that all of your hard work reads for the audience. So, as we dissect the language use your notebook, use the open space next to your lines, whatever. WRITE OUT THE MEANING OF WHAT YOU'RE SAYING!!!!

EXAMPLE:

"QUINCE

Is all our company here?

BOTTOM

You were best to call them generally, man by man, according to the scrip.

QUINCE

Here is the scroll of every man's name which is thought fit, through all Athens, to play in our interlude before the Duke and the Duchess on his wedding day at night.

BOTTOM

First, good Peter Quince, say what the play treats on, then read the names of the actors, and so grow to a point." (pg 10)

^ You guys give Bottom's second line a go:

Quince:

are all the actors here?

Bottom:

your best bet would be to call each character by name

Quince:

I have the script with each name of the actors best fit to act in this play for the royal's wedding

Bottom:

G) Alliteration & Rhyming

Like most poetry, Shakespeare used emphatic devices like alliteration and rhyming to entertain and paint an even more vivid picture for audiences. For characters like the extra-humans, they speak in verse AND a rhyme scheme most of the time, to signify their characteristic. This will also serve to identify other extra-human characters later in the play. You'll find that most other characters will begin a rhyme scheme, either in dialogue or monologue, when conveying a message of great emotion (usually love).

What makes these devices Shakespearean tools are the ways in which he implements them.

- Alliteration -- Not limited to the beginning letter or sound, can sometimes be repeated vowel sounds or a syllable in the text.
 - EXAMPLE: "An adder did it for with doubler tongue
Than thine, thou serpent, never adder stung." (Hermia, pg 38)
- Rhyming -- Not limited to the ends of phrases or iambs, can happen mid-sentence.
 - EXAMPLE: "O Helen, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine!
 To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne?" (Demetrius, pg 40)

Both rhyming and alliteration are not limited to one or two lines of text. It's often found scattered through entire monologues/soliloquys, or even dialogue and shared iambs, to increase drama. I challenge you to find an example of both within the text:

ALLITERATION _____

_____ Page Number: _____

RHYMING _____

_____ Page Number: _____

H)Poetry/Songs Within Shakespeare

A *Midsummer Night's Dream* is meta, to put it plainly. There is a play within a play, and some of the characters are aware that there is an audience, while other exclusively speak to other characters of the Heavens. This work is so hyper aware of what it is that there are song and poetry references right within the text. Meaning you are playing a character whose lines are already poetry, delivering poetic text citations.

The sung or spoken word poetry is italicized and bolded within the text and we will discuss which is which in the moment and as we block the scenes. However, when delivering these words to the audience, this is when you get to be ~an actor~. It's giving drama.

EXAMPLE:

The raging rocks

And shivering shocks

Shall break the locks

Of prison gates.

And Phibbus' car

Shall shine from far

And make and mar

The foolish Fates. (Bottom, pg 11)

I want you to sift through the play and list all the characters that speak/sing non-Shakespearean poetics: _____

I) Repetition

Even in modern plays, playwrights use repetition in lines to dramatize the text. As actors, we know the rule is: if a word is repeated it must be said with different intention each time you say it! It's no different with Shakespeare. What you will see with his work, however, is his use of repetition is not limited to just words.

There are times he may specifically use words with double letters, to draw attention to the importance of the speech. In other works, he has also opted to use the letter "s" in as many words within a soliloquy for a villain as possible. This alludes to the idea that they are imitating the slithering of a snake. So be on the look out for repetition in words, phrases and sounds in every line.

EXAMPLE:

_"O grim-looking night! O night with hue so black!
O night, which ever art when day is not!
O night! O night! **Alack, alack, alack!**" (Bottom, pg 68)

Take some time to search through the text and find an example of a...

Repeated word/phrase: _____

_____ Page Number: _____

J) Status (Prose/Verse)

The amazing thing about this play is the utilization of both Prose and Verse. This is to differentiate characters and class. Men and women with titles (Duke, Duchess, Lord, etc.) speak in Verse to convey their education level. While commonfolk (The Laborers) speak in Prose to signify the working class, or lack of proper education at the time.

You'll also find that the extra-humans (Titania, Oberon, Puck, etc.) speak in Verse but will also use rhyming to depict their un-human-like eloquence and behavior.

K) Glossary

Abjure – swear to abandon, solemnly reject

Abridgement – summary/outline/synopsis

Aby – suffer, pay or atone for

Acheron – Underworld abyss/river that souls of the dead must cross

Aegles – daughter of Panopeus od Phocis, love by Theseus

Alack – alas, woe

Amiable – amorous, loving, tender

Amity – friendship, goodwill

Anon – soon, shortly, presently

Antiopa – part of the Amazon abducted by Theseus

Antipodes – those who dwell on the opposite side of the world

Apollo – Greek sun god who pulls the sun across the sky in a horse-drawn chariot

Ariadne – daughter of Minos who helped Theseus find his way through the labyrinth, and then fled him; Theseus abandoned her

Asunder – parted, not together

Aught – anything

Austerity – the same

Avouch – guarantee, assurance

Aweary – weary, tired, fatigued

Bacchanals – Revels of Bacchus

Bankrout – divested of all value and worth, from when it once held value

Barm – froth on the top of fermenting ale

Bedabbled – scattered over with design

Beguiled – with outward honesty

Bellows-mender – someone who manually pumps air into a fire/furnace

Bergomask – circle dance in courtship

Beseech – beg, implore, ask for

Beshrew – to invoke a curse on someone

Beteem – allow, permit, let

Bewail – to lament or express great sorrow

Blots – to tarnish, stain, sully

Bower – enclose, fence in

Bride-Bed – marriage bed

Buskined – wearing high hunting boots

Cankerblossom – grub that destroys the blossom of love

Cankers – sores

Casement – part of a window, made to turn and open on hinges

Chaplet – garland

Chid(e) – scold, quarrel, speak loudly, brawl

Chink – crack or crevice

Choughs – slang for a crow-like bird

Churl – peasant or serf

Clamorous – loud or vociferous
Concord – agreement of minds
Condole – grieve with, express sympathy
Confederacy – alliance, conspiracy, plot
Confounding – destroy, overthrow, ruin
Congealed – icy, freezing, hail-filled
Conjoined – coupled or united
Consecrated – dedicated to a sacred purpose, made hallowed/sacred/sanctified
Consort – companion or spouse
Constancy – self-control, steadfastness
Constraineth – force , compel, oblige
Contrived – scheme, plot, conspire
Corin – reference to a lovesick Shepherd of this name
Coronet – chaplet, garland
Cowslips – wildflower associated with magic and fairies
Coy – showing reluctance to make a definite commitment
Curst – (cursed) malignant, perverse, shrewish
Daphne – nymph pursued by her lover, Apollo, and changed into a Laurel Tree
Darkling – in the dark
Derision – contempt, anger
Dewlap – applied to a woman's breast
Diana – Roman goddess of the hunt and the moon
Disparage – belittle
Distemperature – physical disorder or derangement, ailment, illness
Dogged – spiteful, malicious, vindictive
Dole – an apportioned part
Dotage – feebleness of the mind
Dowager – a woman whose husband is dead and who is in the enjoyment of some title or some property that has come to her from him
Dulcet – sweet, mild, pleasant, agreeable
Durst – dare or dared
Edict – authority, judgement, valuation
Eke – also, moreover, too
Engilds – brighten or illuminate
Enmity – a feeling or condition of hostility or hatred
Enrings – form a ring around

Entreat – ask earnestly

Erewhile – a while before

Ethiop – racist connotation in regard to African culture (Ethiopian)

Eunuch – bedroom guard

Extempore – improvised, preparation, on occasion

Extort – extract with force, wring out

Eyne -- eyes

Fancy-sick – lovesick or infatuated

Fie – exclamation of disgust or disapproval

Filched – to steal something slyly

Flouriets – small flower(s)

Flout – insult, jab or taunt

Folly – lack of reason, wisdom or understanding

Fordone – exhausted, tired out, worn out

Forester – officer of the forest

Forsook – to decline or refuse

Forsooth – in truth, certainly

Fray -- fight

Gambol – playful supportive spirited

Gleek – taunt or insult

Guest-wise – acting as a guest or visitor

Habitation – place of dwelling

Harbinger – a forerunner

Harelip – cleft lip

Hasty-footed -- swift

Hawthorn – a white-thorned plant

Hecate – the goddess of witchcraft

Hempen – made of hemp

Heraldry – devising a coat of arms

Hiems – hasty or hurried moving

Hobgoblin – a household spirit

Holloed – yell, shout or cry out

Homespun – boorish behavior

Honey-bag – that area of the bee that carries pollen

Humble-bee – bumble bee

Huswife -- housewife

Imbrue – stab and stain with blood
Injurious – insulting, slanderous, offensive
Kill-Courtesy – a rude human
Knavery – rascal or rogue
Knavish – acting michievous
Knotgrass – a wee whose stem is entwined like knots
Lakin – variant of lady
Lanthorn -- lantern
Leagues – alliance or friendship
Leviathan – a great whale
Limander – the lover of Hero who swam every night across the Heelspent to meet her and drowned
Liveries – uniform, costume or special clothing
Loam -- clay
Lodestar – guiding star
Loffe -- laugh
Marshal – warlike, valiant or brave
Merriment – entertainment or amusment
Mirth – merry-making or pleasure-seeking
Misgraffed – ill-matched and unsuited
Misprised – despise and undervalue
Misprision – to mistake one thing for another
Momentany – momentary, transitory, and fleeting
Mulberry – a Morus Tree fruit
Murrian – infected with the plague
Muskrose – rose used in funeral pyres
Nativity -- birth
Neeze – to sneeze
Notwithstanding – all the same, nevertheless
Odorous – stinky
Off -- often
Pap -- nipple
Paragon – surpass, excel, transcend
Paramour -- lover
Pard – panther or leopard
Pensioners – gentlemen in the royal bodyguard

Peradventure – perhaps, maybe, very likely

Perfit – perfect

Perforce – physical coercion

Perigouna – Daughter of Sinis

Persever -- persist

Personage – an important or distinguished person

Pert – lively, brisk, sprightly

Phillida – a typical name of a shepherdess

Playfellow -- palymate

Procrus – mispronunciation of legendary Greek lover who was harmed by husband (Cephalus) jealousy

Prodigious – something amazingly large

Progeny – ancestry, descent, parentage

Prologue – words that preface and precede the action

Promontory – a high, rocky cliff jutting into a body of water

Provender – dry food for beasts

Quern – a handmill for grinding corn, made of two corresponding stones

Recompense – payment for services

Recreant – crying for mercy

Red-hipped – having red hips

Reremice – a bat

Rheumatic – inflamed heart valves (amongst other things)

Roughcast – a rough draft of a model

Roundel – a dance in the round

Russet-Pated – reddish brown hair

Sentinel – keep watch during an event

Shafalus – mispronunciation of Cephalus, son of Deion

Shrewishness – women and wives who do not fit into the social role expected of them

Shroud – hide, conceal or shelter

Sixpence – half a shilling

Sojourned – pause, reside, stay a while

Solemnities – celebration, jubilation, festivity

Sovereignty – supreme dominion or rule

Sphery – round, sphere-like

Superpraise – lookover, read-through, peruse

Surfeit – feed to excess, over indulge

Tempest – a violent storm

Thine – possessive pronoun of the second person

Thither – in a specific direction

Thracian – of Thrace, a region of NE Greece

Tiring-house – the dressing room and backstage area

Twere – it were

Unheedy – headstrong and reckless

Upbraid – to find fault

Vaward – forefront

Vestal – sick and green

Vexation – agitation, disturbance, and turmoil

Videlicet – namely

Visage – referring someone's facial features

Votress – a woman under vow

Waggish – playful, mischievous, impish

Wanton – unrestrained and sportive

Warbling – to sing in a trilling manner

Welkin – the vault of the sky

Wend – to go

Wildfowl – like a pigeon, but mistaken the lion

Wonted – accustomed, usual

Woodbine – old name for honeysuckle

Wot – learn, know or be told

Yoke – a piece of wood that harnesses the animal so that it will do work

Yon – over there

Other Definitions: _____

