

Episode 17: A Midsummer Night's Dream

Clip: Shakespeare in Ballet

Activity: Characters in Dance

Themes: Dance Knowledge, Dance Skills

Elements of dance: body, relationships

1. As a class, view the clip, *Shakespeare in Ballet*, where the students learn about, and perform, the choreography for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.
2. Orientate the students to the story of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. List the characters and their involvement in the plot. If possible, have the class view a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, as live theatre or on video.
3. Have students select one character they would like to understand more about. Have them complete a character analysis, and using the **Student Activity Sheet E17.1: Characters in Dance** worksheet create a series of gestures or movements that might represent the character's motivations, relationships with other characters, actions relating to the plot, and so forth.
4. Have students create a signature phrase for their selected character. Initially, this should be done without music. The phrase should contain:
 - a. One gesture that is repeated several times. This turns the gesture into a motif.
 - b. A motivation for the phrase.
 - c. Movements that travel from one point in space to another.
 - d. Changes in energy and tempo.
5. Rehearse the phrases so that students can perform the phrase without stopping.
6. Ask students to perform the phrase to others in small groups. You may wish to play Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as accompaniment. The other students in the group should try to guess which of the characters each dance portrays and what is the motivation for this representation.

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Download

- Student Activity Sheet E17.1: Characters in Dance

Useful resources

- Ausdance Video Segment 4 - Safe Warm Up, Basic Contemporary Dance.
- Ausdance Video Segment 7 - Positions of the feet and arms in ballet.
- Ausdance Video Segment 10 -Trust Activities for Partner Work.
- [Ausdance Factsheet 16: Caring for the dancer's body](#)
- [Ausdance Factsheet 7: Safe dance floors](#)
- [Ausdance Factsheet 13: Safe spaces for dance](#)
- [Ausdance Factsheet 11: Producing a dance performance](#)
- [A Midsummer Night's Dream \(full script\)](#)
- [A Midsummer Night's Dream \(Study Guide\)](#)
- [Music: Mendelssohn's A Midsummer Night's Dream, YouTube:](#)
- [Overture from A Midsummer Night's Dream](#)
- *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, William Shakespeare retold by Robert Swindells A&C BLACK, 2009, ISBN: 9781408104361.
- [Excerpts from A Midsummer Night's Dream ~ Kenneth Branagh ~ Mendelssohn](#)



NAME:

Student Activity Sheet
Activity:

E17.1
Characters
in Dance

Episode 17:
Clip

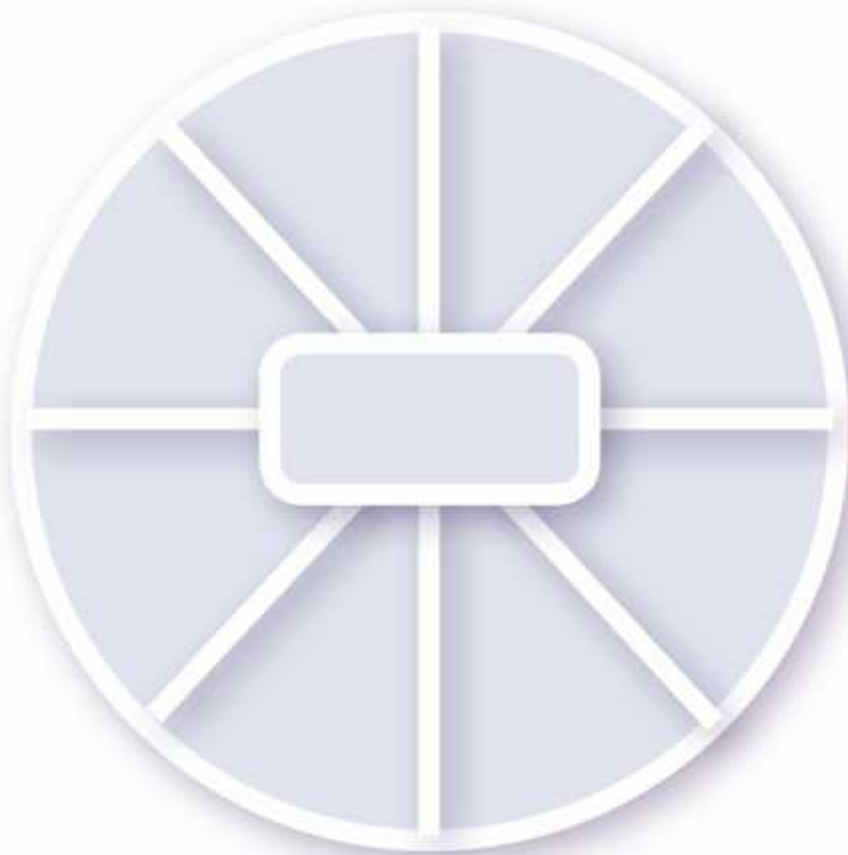
A Midsummer
Night's Dream
Shakespeare in
Ballet

Characters in Dance

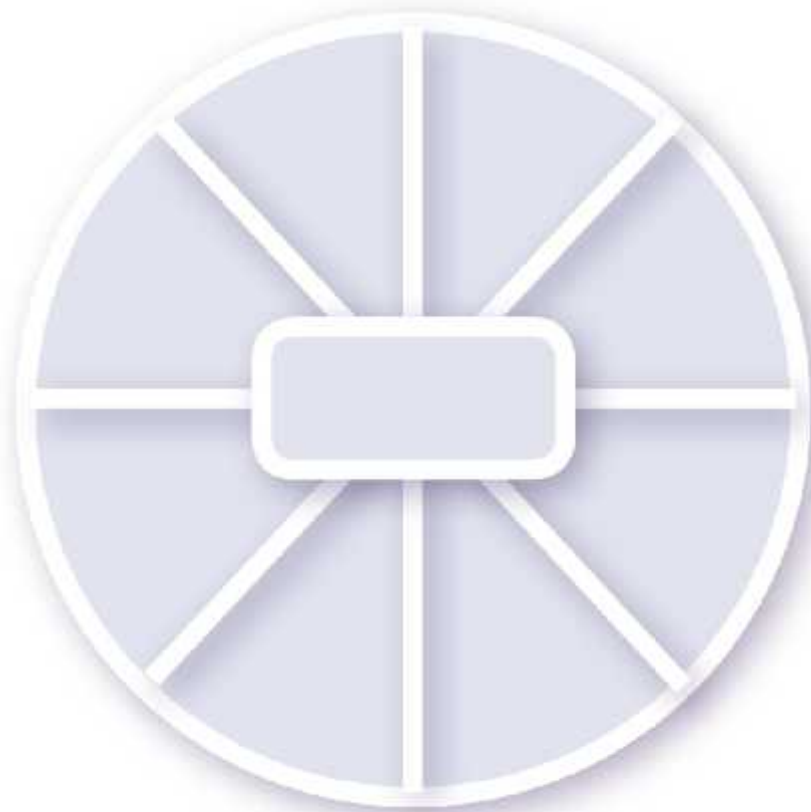
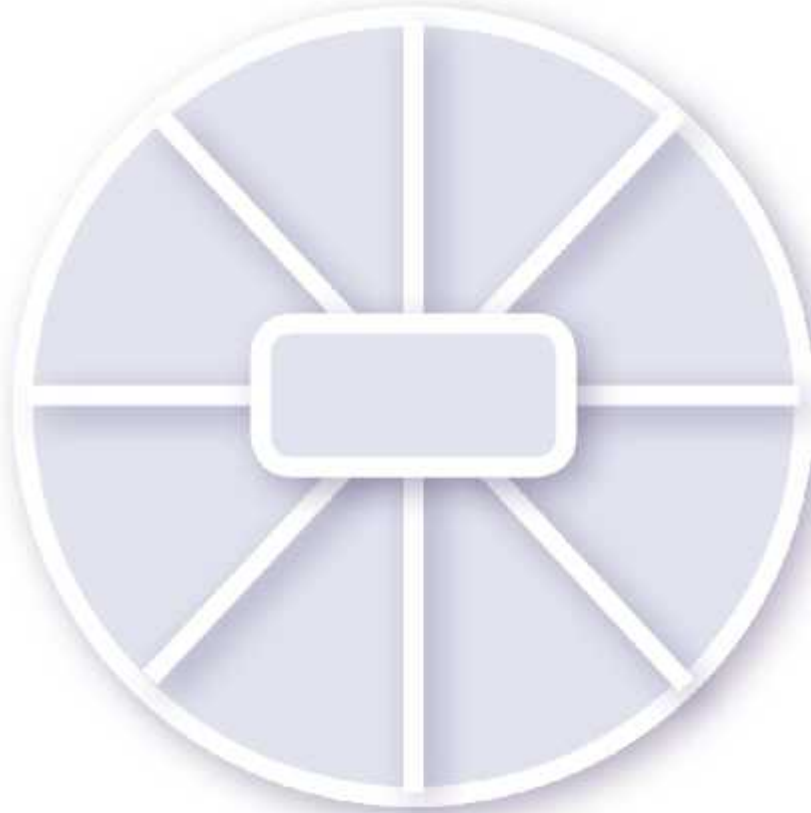
Using the describing wheels below, describe any four characters from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Use all sections of the wheel. You can use text or images to build the character description.

Some ideas about what you can represent in each of the character wheel sections include:

- motivations
- characterisations
- relationships with other characters
- favourite words/sayings



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