between the lines

A lesson written for every student in the room

FREE LESSON SAMPLER

A Midsummer Night's Dream: The merry wanderer

How does Shakespeare present Puck as a trickster?

Lesson 6 of 14 from the scheme of learning

Teacher notes, slides and student pages at all three levels

Written for the English national curriculum at Key Stage 3



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What is in this sampler

This is one complete lesson from our A Midsummer Night's Dream scheme for Year 7. It comes exactly as it appears in the full scheme, so you can teach it next week and see how our lessons work.

Teacher notes	Timings with slide numbers, Do Now answers, the exploded quotation, the hinge question and what each answer tells you, the task at three levels, a model paragraph and notes on misconceptions and adapting the lesson (next pages).
Slides	The editable PowerPoint deck for Lesson 6, with teacher notes on every slide (separate file).
Student pages	The lesson's pages from the student booklet: one question, with the Securing, Strengthening and Soaring support side by side (at the end of this document).

How every lesson works

Know	Do Now from memory, vocabulary, then the reading. The five Do Now questions build on what students learned in Lessons 1 to 5 of the full scheme.
Apply	Explode one quotation together; a hinge question checks understanding.
Master	One shared question answered as a What–How–Why paragraph, with Securing, Strengthening and Soaring support; then a model paragraph and an exit ticket.

Three levels of support

Every student answers the same question in every lesson. What changes is the support on the page, so the whole class does the same lesson:

Securing	The most support: a word bank, a choice of quotations, a worked example and sentence starters.
Strengthening	Some support: prompts for What, How and Why, a planner and a checklist.
Soaring	The most challenge: a debatable statement, prompts to think further and an argument planner.

The names describe the support, never the student. The hinge question shows who might start where, and students move between levels from lesson to lesson.

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In the full scheme

- 14 lessons like this one, with editable slides and a teacher handbook (lesson notes, unit map, assessment guide and knowledge bank)
- A student booklet with every lesson and all three levels of support, plus the same lessons as one pack per level
- Six weeks of independent practice homework at three levels
- A checkpoint (Feedback Loop kit) with a whole-class feedback sheet and improvement tasks
- A two-part end-of-unit assessment with a teacher guide, band guidance and annotated models
- A catch-up sheet for every lesson, for students who missed it
- An inclusion guide: pre-teaching, SEND, EAL and pupil premium notes for every lesson

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Lesson 6: The merry wanderer

SEQUENCE 1: ATHENS AND THE WOOD · 60 MINUTES

How does Shakespeare present Puck as a trickster?

By the end of the lesson, students can

- Explain how Shakespeare makes Puck sound proud of his tricks
- Identify first-person speech and rhyming couplets in Puck's speech
- Write a What–How–Why paragraph on Puck as a trickster

Lesson at a glance

Time	Phase	What happens	Slides
0–8	Know	Do Now: five quick questions on Lessons 3 to 5. Students check their own answers from the answer slide.	2–3
8–18	Know	Pre-teach "mischief", "trickster" and "jest". Read the extract aloud while students follow, then ask: what is Puck proud of?	4–6
18–28	Apply	Explode the quotation together. Think aloud about "merry" and "wanderer", then students annotate their copy. Before you reveal any notes, students try the four empty boxes on the first explode slide, on their own or after you model one box.	7–8
28–33	Apply	Hinge question on mini-whiteboards. Use the answers to decide who starts on which level of support.	9–10
33–53	Master	Students write one What–How–Why paragraph using their level of support in the student pack. Share the model paragraph in the last five minutes and ask students to check the spelling of Puck and Oberon and their full stops.	11–12
53–60	Master	Exit ticket. Collect and sort into three piles to plan the start of Lesson 7.	13

Do Now answers

1	What do we call writing that is not verse, like the mechanicals' speech?	Prose
2	Which animal's part does Bottom want to play too?	The lion
3	Which god of love does Helena say is painted blind?	Cupid
4	What must Hermia choose between, by the new moon?	Marry Demetrius, die, or become a nun
5	Who played the women's parts in Shakespeare's theatre?	Boys

Vocabulary

mischief	playful trouble that is not meant to do real harm
trickster	a person who plays tricks on other people
jest	to joke or play a trick, without meaning harm

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Reading

Act 2 Scene 1: Puck tells of his tricks

A fairy has just called Puck by another name, Robin Goodfellow, and asked if he plays tricks on villagers. Puck, who serves Oberon the fairy king, answers. Oberon and his queen, Titania, have quarrelled.

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

William Shakespeare, A Midsummer Night's Dream (about 1595), Act 2 Scene 1

Word help **beguile**: trick · **gossip**: an old woman, a close friend · **crab**: a roasted crab apple, dropped in a drink · **dewlap**: loose skin hanging from the neck

Explode the quotation

Method
Puck speaks about himself in the first person. He names himself in one proud line.

Zoom in
The cheerful adjective "merry" makes him sound happy. A "wanderer" has no home and no rules.

"I am that merry wanderer of the night."

Effect
The audience expects fun and trouble together. Puck seems friendly, but nobody can stop him.

Purpose
Shakespeare gives the night to Puck. The play's mix-ups all happen in the dark, so Puck is the right guide.

Hinge question

Puck tells a fairy about his tricks on a horse and an old woman. Who laughs at them?

A. Nobody, because the tricks are too cruel.

B. Oberon, and the whole choir of listeners. **(the right answer)**

C. Only Puck, who enjoys them alone.

What the answers tell you

A means the student is looking only at the old woman who falls: ask who else is in the picture, and point to "the whole choir hold their hips and laugh". C means the student has not read the last two lines: reread them together. Students who chose A or C may start on Securing.

Why the answer is right

Puck makes Oberon "smile" and the "whole choir" laugh, so his tricks are shown as a joke that everyone enjoys.

Master task

How does Shakespeare present Puck as a trickster?

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Securing the most support	Strengthening some support	Soaring the most challenge
Quotations to choose from "I jest to Oberon and make him smile" "Then slip I from her bum, down topples she" "A merrier hour was never wasted there." **Starters** Shakespeare presents Puck as a ____ trickster who ____. Puck says "____". The ____ (adjective) ____ (word class) "____" shows ____. Shakespeare wants the audience to ____ because ____.	**Prompts** **What:** Make a clear point about the kind of trickster Puck is. **How:** Choose a short quotation from one of his tricks. Name the method, such as first-person speech or a list, and zoom in on one word. **Why:** Why does Shakespeare want the audience to enjoy Puck's tricks before the love-juice is used? Think about who laughs.	**The debate** *"Puck's tricks are only a game, so nobody could really be angry with him."* Write one paragraph that argues for or against the statement. Use at least two short quotations.

Model paragraph

What	Shakespeare presents Puck as a trickster who loves his own mischief and is proud of it.
How	Puck calls himself "that merry wanderer of the night" and tells how he pretends to be a stool, so that an old woman falls. The sudden verb "topples" makes the fall quick and comic, and the "whole choir" laugh.
Why	Shakespeare wants the audience to enjoy Puck's jokes, so they follow him happily into the night. Yet the old woman is hurt for a laugh, a small sign that his tricks can go wrong when he meets the lovers.

Exit ticket

Puck makes a good trickster for a comedy because...

Teacher notes

Subject knowledge

Puck is also called Robin Goodfellow and "Hobgoblin". In English country stories he was a mischievous spirit blamed for small accidents, such as spilled milk. In this speech he talks in the first person, so the audience hears his tricks in his own pleased voice. The lines are mostly rhyming couplets, which give it a quick, bouncing rhythm. The victims are ordinary people and the joke ends in laughter, so the tricks look harmless. Lesson 7 shows what happens when Puck is given a more serious job.

Common misconceptions

- Calling Puck evil. The speech makes him cheerful and proud, and the harm is small.
- Retelling the old woman's fall instead of explaining how Shakespeare makes it funny.
- Treating the speech as Shakespeare speaking. Puck is a character talking to a fairy.
- Naming a method without zooming in on a single word.

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