

Shakespeare

Beginner Track

SAMPLE



Shakespeare: Beginner Track GRADE(S): 4-8



About the Course

Lessons for Grade 4 and/or those new to Shakespeare who would like a gentle on-ramp to the bard. Lessons cover A Midsummer Night's Dream over two terms.



Placement & Combining Tips

Older students can jump into any term of the regular Shakespeare lessons after finishing these, or just read this play and take off one term.



Scheduling

GRADE	SCHEDULE INFO.	BOOKS
4-8	Shakespeare: Beginner Track 1 time/week 30 min	A Midsummer Night's Dream A Midsummer Night's Dream (Audio recording)

Sample Weekly View

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Shakespeare: Beginner Track				
		Shakespeare: Beginner Track		



Planning & Prep

Permission to print for non-commercial use. See Alveary group use policy to use lessons in a group context.

LINKS: Click text or scan the QR code in the top corner of the lesson plan pages to view online resources associated with the lessons.

Responsibility for previewing all links rests with the teacher. All links were checked at the time of publication; however, websites change frequently and may contain objectionable content. Please report broken links by contacting us through our website.

Shakespeare: Beginner Track

You may want to read "Shakespeare and a Christian Worldview" which is Ch.9 in the book, Echoes of Eden – Reflections on Christianity, Literature, and the Arts by Jerram Barrs. This is an excellent overview of why Shakespeare is important for everyone to know, including Christians.

NOTE on VERSIONS

Students should have an unabridged copy, such as the ones linked in the program, not a modern language edition. The language complexity gets easier to understand with practice. (Note: Shakespeare's work does often contain bawdy jokes or off-color content that will go over the heads of students if left in its original form; a modern language version will lay it all right out there in plain modern English.) We like the Folger editions because they are inexpensive, the lines are numbered (making it easy to find your place), and they contain good notes. These are available on the Folger website as free PDFs as well, though the notes are omitted.

NOTE on CONTENT

Teachers are sometimes wary of reading Shakespeare with their students because the plays

contain material that they would deem inappropriate. The Alveary generally follows Mason's programs for younger students. However, that does not mean that your student will never encounter anything unsavory. Our best advice is to read in such a way that these things are moved over quickly, without added attention being drawn to them. Mason assures us that Shakespeare provides students with rich language and character lessons that are unparalleled.



Books & Resources

For book rationales and purchase options, click the Book List link or scan the QR code below.

∞ [View Book List Details](#)

Shakespeare: Beginner Track



A Midsummer Night's Dream



A Midsummer Night's Dream (Audio recording)



Supplies

For supply list details and basic supplies helpful to have on hand, click the links or scan the QR code below.

∞ [View Basic Supplies](#)

∞ [View Supply List Details](#)

Shakespeare: Beginner Track



A Midsummer Night's Dream Black & White Puppets



A Midsummer Night's Dream Painted Puppets



Quick Links

Shakespeare: Beginner Track

- ∞ [Extra Helpings](#)
- ∞ [Coloring Puppets](#)
- ∞ [Painted Puppets](#)
- ∞ [Relational Methods, Sec. 9: How to Teach Shakespeare](#)
- ∞ [Appendix: Ideas for Students New to Shakespeare](#)

Click THIS text
or scan the QR
code for links.



Shakespeare: Beginner Track

How To Teach



Prepare

- Read through the lesson and gather any materials or find any necessary links.
- If you have not already read the book, you may want to read the selected pages in advance, especially for Shakespeare lessons. It is helpful to read the play or a preview of it beforehand.
- Choose which books to have students start reading independently (General Literature selections are especially good for independent work).



Recap

- Connect back to the previous lesson. Ask students to give a summary of what they remember and/or predict what might come next. (Full narration is not necessary.)
- If students have difficulty recalling, teachers might try showing them an illustration, sharing something that the teacher remembers, or prompting them with the first sentence of the last reading. This will often refresh their memory enough to allow them to recall.
- If students still cannot recall anything from the last reading, then teachers might consider continuing anyway (with a shorter reading and/or using a combination of visual and audio support this time) or repeating the last lesson, depending on the reading and the nature of the book.



Introduce

- Use a picture, map, or engaging question to pique the student's interest in the day's lesson.
- If necessary, you may talk about one or two unfamiliar words that will be crucial to understanding.



Read

- Read the day's passage aloud or have students read independently. For Shakespeare, it is highly recommended that each student have their own copy of the play and that you read it aloud together or read along and underline/make notes while listening to the audio recording.
- Use supportive strategies and educational tools to reduce frustration and better engage the mind, as appropriate. These could include, but are not limited to, the use of eBooks, pictures, audio, read-aloud, buddy reading, colored reading strips, etc.
- Some students may benefit from having a notebook or piece of scrap paper available to externalize ideas by drawing, recording names, or making symbolic 'squiggle' notes.
- Students who have a difficult time sitting still or listening may benefit from: a fidget of their choice, such as a piece of putty or clay or an afghan; flexible positioning, such as a wobble seat or inverted sitting; or sensory modulation, such as a weighted vest or blanket or adjustment of light, temperature, or sound.



Narrate

- Have students retell the passage orally or in writing. If writing, encourage students to use the full remaining lesson time and include as much detail as they can remember. For Shakespeare or challenging books, it may be helpful to narrate more frequently and/or use props.
- Alternatively, learners may use words, pictures, Legos, dolls, etc., to process and convey ideas

in the manner most natural to them.

- Students who used paper or a notebook to externalize may refer to these for support. Other students who need external support may benefit from looking at a map or picture from the book while narrating.
- Students who tend to use the same type of narration all the time can be encouraged to try another form of narration by first doing it together through play or discussion.
- Teachers may take turns to model.
- Narration is a complex skill that requires the coordination of several parts of the brain. If a student struggles to narrate in general, with a specific subject or book, or on one day but not others, then this is an opportunity to learn. Observe when they struggle with this or any other activity today; notice facial expressions and body language; listen to what they tell you about why it is hard or how they feel about it. Take note of these observations for later, tell them that you see how hard they are working, and then offer whatever support they need to end on a positive note or take a break for the day, if necessary.



Discuss

- Give the student an opportunity to share thoughts on the lesson and any connections made.
- To stimulate discussion, you could ask them what they thought about the passage or ask an open-ended question.

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Click [THIS text](#) or scan the [QR code](#) for links.



Term 1

WEEK 1 30m Shakespeare: Beginner Track - Lesson 1

Materials: A Midsummer Night's Dream, Character Props, Cover sheet,

PREP:

Choose which character props you will use. There are two options. These are listed in the Supply List and in Quick Links.

→ PRINT

Print out a cover sheet for students to keep in their Citizenship notebook or any place they wish. You may also want to print out the lines that will be read aloud during several lessons.

∞ Link: Midsummer Night's Dream Cover Sheet

∞ PDF Link: Lines from Midsummer Night's Dream

→ INTRO

1. William Shakespeare is considered the greatest writer in the English language. He lived from 1564-1616. He is known as the Bard of Avon since he was born in the town Stratford-upon-Avon in England. He wrote around 38 plays as well as many poems. Let's watch this video about his life.

∞ Video: The Life and Times of William Shakespeare

2. We are going to read the play Midsummer Night's Dream. Look at this cover page.

∞ Link: Midsummer Night's Dream Cover Sheet

What does the title tell you about the play? What sorts of things do you think you will read about? In the video, we heard that Shakespeare wrote three kinds of plays—tragedy, comedy and history. Which one do you think this is?

3. We are going to practice some lines from the play. We can read it aloud together or you can listen to me first. Let's see what some of these words mean: bank—a mound of grass; blow—burst into flower

The speaker is describing an area where Titania the fairy lives where the flowers are blooming and blowing in the breeze. There is a special flower that can put a spell on people. We will find out about that later. Now let's read it again.

∞ PDF Link: Lines from Midsummer Night's Dream (Passage 1)

→ READ

Read about half of the retelling and save half for next time. As you read the retelling you may want to have your student have the character props in front of them to go along with the story.

∞ Link: Beautiful Stories from Shakespeare

Beginning - "or a busy ape."

→ NARRATE

Students can narrate using their character props if desired.

★ TEACHER NOTE

For the first two weeks, you will read a retelling of the play so students are familiar with the story. We are linking Edith Nesbit's retelling, but you can also read Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare or another retelling you may have.

WEEK 2 30m Shakespeare: Beginner Track - Lesson 2

Materials: A Midsummer Night's Dream

→ RECAP

What did we read last time?

→ PRACTICE

Let's read aloud the lines from Passage 1.

∞ PDF Link: Lines from Midsummer Night's Dream

→ INTRO

Where did people watch Shakespeare's plays when they were first

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[Click THIS text or scan the QR code for links.](#)



Term 1

written? Watch this video to learn more about the Globe Theatre.
∞ Video Link: The Globe Theatre

→ READ

We will finish the retelling today. As you read the retelling you may want to have your student have the character props in front of them to go along with the story.

∞ Link: Beautiful Stories from Shakespeare
"While Puck was gone" - end

→ NARRATE

Students can narrate using their character props if desired.

WEEK 3 30m Shakespeare: Beginner Track - Lesson 3

📄 Materials: A Midsummer Night's Dream, Student World Atlas

PREP:

1. Print out a list of characters.
∞ PDF Link: List of Characters
2. Print out the narration sheets. Students will use these after each lesson to add a picture or write some key words.
∞ PDF Link: Narration sheets

→ PRACTICE

Let's read aloud the lines from Passage 1. (Links are in lessons 1 or 2)

→ INTRO

Let's look at the list of characters. (As an option, you can watch this video that describes the characters. Please preview.)

∞ Video Link: Overview of Characters

→ LOCATE

📄 Map Resource: Student World Atlas. p.30-31

Find Greece on the World Map. What continent is it part of?

Now let's zoom in closer and look at a map of Greece. Find Athens. That is where this play takes place. What are the names of other cities in Greece?

What body of water surrounds Greece?

∞ Map Link: Map of Greece

→ READ

In place of reading, you may also follow along with Scene 1 in your book, while listening to the free Arkangel audio on the Folger website (linked below). First read students the summary of the scene on p.6.

Act 1: Scene 1 p.7-15 Beginning of Scene - "we follow you."

∞ Link: Arkangel Scene 1 (recording at bottom of page)

(Audio Timemarker: Beginning - 7:36)

→ NARRATE & DISCUSS

Students can narrate using the character props.

- The anticipation of what event begins the play?
- What complaint does Egeus bring to Theseus?

★ TEACHER TIP

You may want to preview vocabulary on the left hand side in the Folger edition and share a few words with your students. (This is optional.)