

STUDY GUIDE

ELEMENTARY • 4th & 5th GRADE



A Midsummer Night's Dream



Dance Alive National Ballet

Study Guides are produced in partnership with Broward County Public Schools.

Performance Summary

ACT I

Theseus, Duke of Athens, is about to celebrate his marriage to Hippolyta, Queen of Amazons. His friend, Egeus, and the Athenian lovers are introduced, and their story unfolds.

Hermia, Egeus' daughter, loves Lysander and wants to marry him. Her father, however, wants her to marry Demetrius, who has earlier professed his love to her friend, Helena, and is now in love with Hermia. With the determination of Hermia and Lysander to fly from Athens and elope, and of Helena to warn Demetrius of the flight and lure him to accompany her to the woods, the complication is fully foreshadowed!

A group of rustic men, among them Quince, the village carpenter, and Bottom, the weaver, are introduced. They are preparing a play, an "interlude" entitled "Pyramus and Thisbe" to be given before the Duke and Duchess the evening of their wedding. Outside the palace gates in the nearby woods live the fairies, invisible to mortal man. Oberon and Titania, King and Queen of the Fairies, are arguing over a little changeling boy. Oberon orders Puck, his mischievous "Court jester" to bring him the flower called "love—in—idleness". He will lay its magic liquor on Titania's sleeping eyelids. This potion will cause the wearer to fall in love with the first person seen upon awakening.

The story of the lovers relates to that of the fairies. Oberon overhears Demetrius scorning the fond Helena, and sympathizing with her, he instructs Puck to anoint the eyes of the disdainful youth with the love juice. Puck sees Hermia and Lysander, and thinking Lysander to be Demetrius, anoints his eyes. Act I is brought to a brilliant conclusion with Puck joyously playing Cupid.

ACT II

When Lysander awakens, he first sees Helena and falls madly in love with her. Hermia is left alone, bewildered.

We leave the lovers briefly to join the rehearsal of the play by the rustic men. Puck merrily decides to turn the doltish Bottom into a donkey. Titania awakens to the sound of his braying, which she hears as angels singing and falls in love with him at once. They fall asleep, and soon the lovers return. The complication is at its height when Puck anoints the eyes of Demetrius, who first sees Helena, falling madly in love with her. The quarreling of the lovers, whose original relations to one another are now so completely reversed, causes them to tire and, spellbound by Puck, they fall asleep.

Oberon decides it is time to put a stop to all this playful confusion and orders Puck to anoint Lysander's eyes. He also feels it is time enough to awaken Titania from her infatuation with Bottom, and the fairy King and Queen are reconciled. The human lovers readjust and reconcile. Theseus, Hippolyta and Egeus come upon the lovers waking up. Egeus realizes Hermia's love for Lysander and gives his blessing to the union. All is well and the wedding festivities, including the "interlude", take place with great joy. After the "iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve", the fairies come and invoke their blessings, leaving with us a lasting impression of Puck's most memorable words, "Look, what fools these mortals be!"

Performance Summary (Continued)

This production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a ballet about the transforming power of love. As a ballet, certain liberties are taken to simplify the complexities of the story, without losing the content. Through its themes of reality versus illusion, change versus constancy, the ballet displays love in all its guises. In the first act there are dances of unrequited love and love that is reconciled. There is a pas de deux for the Fairy Queen Titania and Bottom, who has been turned into a donkey—a perfect illustration in dance of the old proverb, “love is blind”. In the second act, which opens with Mendelssohn’s familiar “Wedding March”, there is a pas de deux representing ideal untroubled love.

Midsummer Night

Midsummer Night, which is June 23rd (St. John’s Eve) has long been associated with love and magic. In European folklore it is the one night of the year when supernatural beings such as fairies are about and can interact with the real world. It is also a date that falls near the summer solstice which in earlier civilizations was traditionally a time for fertility rites and festivals devoted to love.

Main Characters

Theseus, Duke of Athens: Represents authority.

Egeus, Father to Hermia: Insists his daughter marry who he has chosen for her.

Lysander, Beloved of Hermia: Egeus believes that Lysander can’t be trusted. However, he really does love Hermia deeply. He is both a romantic and a realist.

Demetrius, Suitor to Hermia: Egeus approves of this suitor. A fanciful man, he really loves Helena.

Hippolyta, Queen of Amazons, betrothed to Theseus: Once a war-like creature, she now abides by Theseus’ every word.

Hermia, Daughter of Egeus, in love with Lysander: A vixen with spirited and independent temper. She has a deep love for Lysander and a soft teasing side.

Helena, in love with Demetrius: Has a fierce and fiery love for Demetrius and knows their love is not hopeless.

Nick Bottom, A weaver: An impromptu master of wit who carries his talents to extreme so that he often seems an “ass” - which is why the donkey or ass head is so appropriate.

Oberon, King of the Fairies: This King has mortal feelings. He will stop at nothing to get what he wants ... in this case a changling boy who is one of Titania’s attendants.

Titania, Queen of the Fairies: Titania is most concerned with beauty and sweetness. She adores lovely things and is devoted to her subjects. Oberon is a constant test of her good nature.

Puck, or Robin Goodfellow: Puck is Oberon’s jester and never still. He is the spirit of mischief and irresponsibility—and loves to play practical jokes.

What is Ballet?

(DA.4.H.2.1, DA.5.H.2.1)

The word “ballet” is derived from the Italian word “ballare”, meaning “to dance”. The original French names for steps and jumps are still used. Music, dance and mime combine in ballet to tell a story. In ballet, each step and movement is planned in advance. This is called choreography. Performing ballet is very hard work and requires hours of practice. Most ballet dancers begin training at an early age. Just as in athletics, dancers must take very good care of their bodies. Women must work particularly hard to learn a very special technique called “pointe”, wearing special shoes which allow them to dance on the tips of their shoes.

Dance in ballet is based on the five classic positions of the feet and must be performed by dancers trained in classic technique. All ballet movements begin and end with one of the five positions. They were created in the 18th century to provide balance and to make the feet and hands look graceful. The five positions are based on the foundation which underlies ballet dance—the turn out. “Turn out” is the ability of the dancer to rotate the legs outward much further than is normal or natural in everyday life. “Turn out” must come from the hip if injury is to be avoided.

HISTORY

Ballet began as entertainment for the royal families of Europe more than 300 years ago. It has a long and rich history growing out of noble and courtly manners and behaviors. Ladies and gentlemen of the court were the performers. The first “ballet” was presented at the court of Catherine De Medici in 1581. Soon these “ballets” became so popular in France and Italy that, if you were a member of the nobility, you had to have dance training. By the time of France’s Louis XIV there were hundreds of “dance” teachers in Paris alone. The king, an accomplished dancer himself, decided to put ballet in the hands of the professionals. He created a school—the Academie Royale de la Danse. Classical ballet style has developed gradually since that time. In the 19th century “romantic” ballet became popular. Dancers in floating white dresses performed La Sylphide and Giselle.

The Ballets Russes was one of the most influential ballet companies in the world. Great choreographers such as the Michael Fokine, Nijinsky, Massine and Balanchine arranged dances for

Ballet Russe. During this time artists such as Picasso, Stravinsky, Debussy, Bakst and Matisse collaborated in creating works that changed the face of dance.

For a time, ballet companies were able to tour even the smaller cities. During the time of Anna Pavlova (ballet dancer) and Isadora Duncan (modern dancer), dance became the thing for people to see and talk about. Gradually it became too expensive for companies to tour and ballet became less in favor.

Neo-classical ballet and modern ballet are two twentieth century variations on classical ballet. Both have their origins in traditional European ballet. Neo-classical ballet is a style of dance developed by choreographer George Balanchine who was trained in classical Russian ballet technique at the Kirov Ballet School in St. Petersburg, Russia in the twentieth century.

From his classical training, Balanchine kept the line, the elegance, the precision and the presence, but eliminated the heaviness of style—the obvious preparation, the slowness of movement and the amount of time between steps. In choreography, Balanchine chose carefully. He did not completely eliminate storytelling. Instead, he reduced the plot and character to a minimum and drew on his audiences' cultural knowledge through the use of gestures, costumes and properties to convey his story. He retained both classical and folk steps and poses which reflected humanity generously.

Balanchine also explored the movements of other dance styles – modern dance from Middle Europe, folk, jazz and Western dance from the United States. He also utilized the visual forms of modern art; cubism, surrealism and the new harmonies and rhythms created by Stravinsky.

Modern ballet (what has evolved into contemporary dance) is a much more inclusive style of dance than Neo-classical ballet. It is the creation of many choreographers and dancers who were taught in many dance styles.

A modern ballet choreographer can call on the whole range of dance styles and incorporate jazz, various styles of modern dance, ethnic dance and ballet. Today's choreographers collaborate with composers, visual artists and the newest of technology to create new works.

Name: _____

Write a Review

In the space below give future audience members a sense of what to expect if they were going to see this performance. Explain aspects of the performance that were effective and identify areas of improvement. Be sure to support your points with reasons and information. (LAFS.4.W.4.10, LAFS.5.W.4.10)(LAFS.4.L.1.1, LAFS.5.L.1.1)(DA.4.C.3.1, DA.5.C.3.1)

Name: _____

Character Study – 4th Grade

(LAFS.4.RL.1.3, LAFS.4.W.1.1)

Complete the directions in the chart below.

Draw a picture that represents a character that interested you.

Write a profile describing your character. Use details from the performance to make inferences about your character. Consider the character's thoughts, feelings, motivations, and/or actions.

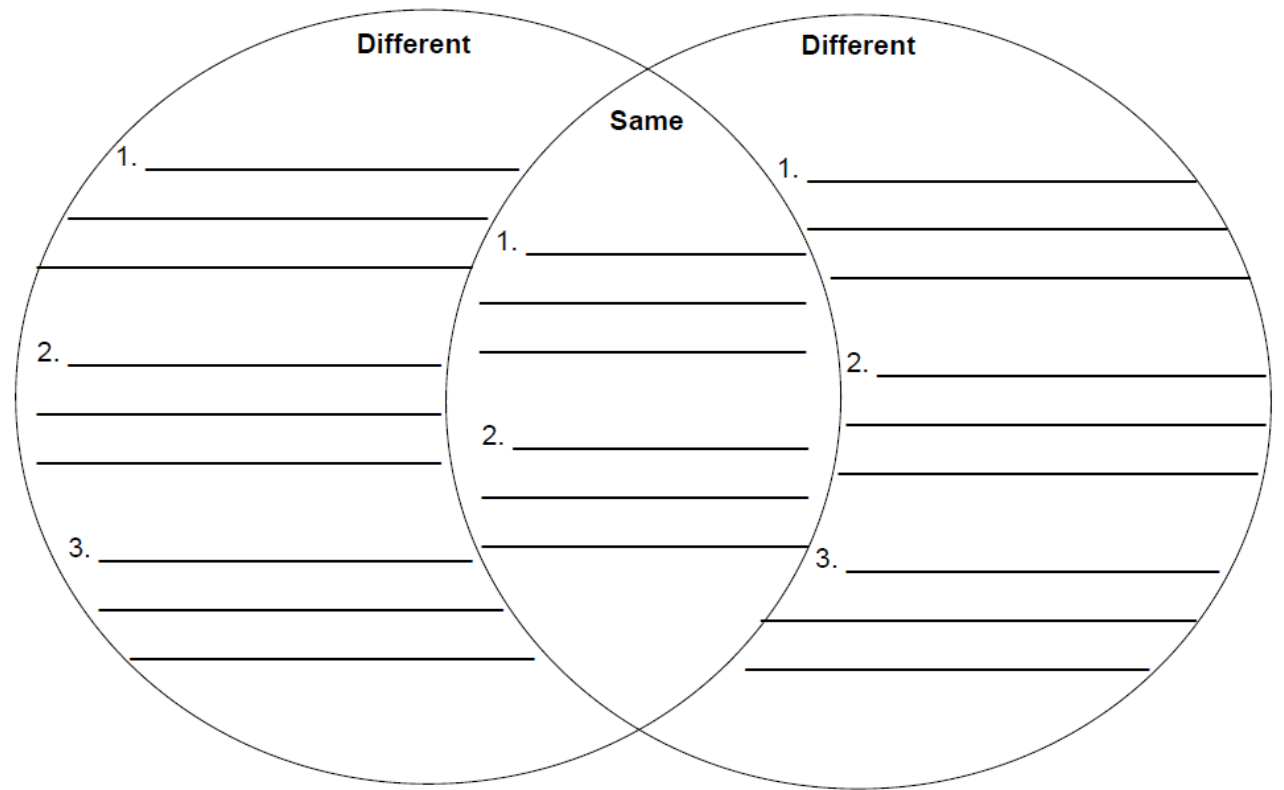
Name: _____

Character Study – 5th Grade
(LAFS.5.RL.1.3)

Compare and contrast two characters from the play. Be sure to use specific details! See page 3 for a list of main characters to choose from.

Character 1:

Character 2:



Using details from the chart above, write a paragraph describing the characters' similarities and differences:

Name: _____

Write a Sequel

Now it’s your turn to imagine what happens next! Select one or more characters and write a sequel to their story. What happens to them next? Be sure to include a clear sequence of events and descriptive details. *(LAFS.4.W.1.3, LAFS.5.W.1.3)(LAFS.4.L.1.1, LAFS.5.L.1.1)*

Arts Integration

Creation (DA.4.S.1.4, DA.5.S.1.4)

Play a game of charades to explore movement. First, have a class discussion of types of movements present in all areas of life. Encourage students to come up with examples from areas such as sports (ice skating, catching a fly ball), animals (hop like a bunny, run like a deer), occupations (policeman directing traffic, carpenter hammering a nail), everyday activities (sweeping the floor, driving a car), and recreation (catching a fish, riding a roller coaster). Then have students select a movement and write it on a piece of paper; pull ideas at random and have the whole class explore that movement. After, have a summary discussion of the following movement elements:

- ***non-locomotor movements*** such as bend, twist, stretch and swing.
- ***simple locomotor movements*** such as walk, run, hop, jump.
- ***compound locomotor movements*** such as gallop, slide and leap.
- ***kinesthetic awareness*** such as high, middle and low movements in space.
- ***tempo and rhythmic pattern of repetitive movements***
- ***movement follows straight and curved pathways.***

EXTENSIONS/VARIATIONS

1. One or more "movements" in the same space can "dance" together, representing their relationships (For example, a fox stalking a rabbit or a baseball catcher and pitcher).
2. Classify movements into categories such as high, middle or low, fast or slow, straight or curved and round or square/angular.
3. Students can play the game using movements which convey a particular emotion or feeling.

Analysis (MU.4.O.3.1, MU.5.O.3.1)

Play the following excerpts from Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and explain that the different musical selections represent different characters and moods in the plot:

- March of the Fairies (Invisible to mortal man.)
- Nocturne (Enchanted sleep.)
- Scherzo (Demonstrates Puck's playfulness.)
- Dance of the Clowns (Puck turns Bottom into a donkey.)
- Wedding March (Traditional march for bride and groom.)

As you play the excerpts, have students listen very closely to how the basic elements of music (rhythm, melody, timbre, texture and dynamics) are used differently, and then have them describe how these elements helped communicate the desired mood/character to the audience.

Vocabulary

- **Theme** – a melody around which a musical composition is based
- **Composer** – a person who writes music
- **Melody** – a series of notes that form a distinctive sequence
- **Review** – writing that gives the audience a sense of what to expect at the performance – may include positive and negative feedback
- **Ballet** – a form of classical theatrical dance based on the five positions and the turnout of the legs from the hips.
- **Dynamics** – the expressive content of human movement, sometimes called qualities or efforts. Dynamics manifest the interrelationships among the elements of space, time and force/energy.
- **Pas de deux** – A dance for two; usually a man and a woman.
- **Melancholy** – a feeling of thoughtful sadness
- **Cunning** - crafty artfulness, especially in deception
- **Edict** – a formal proclamation
- **Profess** - to declare openly or freely
- **Bewilder** - to confuse especially with a great many things to worry about
- **Interlude** – a brief show between the longer sections of a performance
- **Lamentable** – bad; unfortunate

Standards Alignment: The activities in this study guide are aligned with the standards listed below. When teachers incorporate the arts, they increase student engagement, offer multiple points for students to access the curriculum, and provide alternative means for students to demonstrate what they know.

Language Arts Florida Standards	
Grades 4 & 5	
Writing Standards	
LAFS.4/5.W.1.1	Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.
LAFS.4/5.W.1.3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
LAFS.4/5.W.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.
Language Standards	
LAFS.4/5.L.1.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
Reading Standards for Literature	
LAFS.4.RL.1.3	Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).
LAFS.5.RL.1.3	Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).

Florida Music Standards	
Grades 4 & 5	
Organizational Structure	
MU.4.O.3.1	Identify how expressive elements and lyrics affect the mood or emotion of a song.
MU.5.O.3.1	Examine and explain how expressive elements, when used in a selected musical work, affect personal response.

Florida Dance Standards	
Grades 4 & 5	
Critical Thinking and Reflection	
DA.4.C.3.1	Evaluate a dance by examining how effectively two or more elements were used in the piece.
DA.5.C.3.1	Critique a dance piece using established criteria.
Historical and Global Connections	
DA.4.H.2.1	Identify and examine important figures, historical events, and trends that have helped shape dance.
DA.5.H.2.1	Describe historical developments and the continuing evolution of various dance forms.
Skills, Techniques, and Processes	
DA.4.S.1.4	Change isolations, level, direction, or tempo to explore movement choices.
DA.5.S.1.4	Use kinesthetic awareness to respond to shared movement with one or more dancers.

Student Work Samples

Teachers:

Thank you for your continued support of the SEAS Program. Using the suggestions and/or activity pages included in this Study Guide, please collect student work samples, and upload them using the link below.

Please click on the link below to upload your student's work samples to their respective show folder:

[Click Here to Upload Student Work Samples](#)

Should you have any questions, please contact Lauri Foster at:

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