YEAR 7 KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER:  
***A Midsummer Night’s Dream****(c.1595-1596)*

**Context: Shakespeare’s Ideas**

* Although Shakespeare was writing hundreds of years ago, his works are still relevant today. Many of his plays are social commentaries, exploring how and why people act the way they do.
* Shakespeare explores the impact of control, specifically male power over women, and the oppression of women in a patriarchy.
* Shakespeare may be highlighting the consuming power of obsession, by exploring the things people do and the ways they act when they are obsessed with something or someone.

**Key Knowledge**

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| **What is a play?** |
| * See the source imagePlays are divided into **acts and scenes**. * Plays have **stage directions**, which give information such as how a character is feeling; how a character should speak, act or move; and any key technical elements such as lighting, sound, costume. * Other conventions of plays include the use of **props** and **soliloquy**. |

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| **How did audiences experience plays during the Elizabethan era?** |
| See the source imagePlays were designed to be enjoyed by all classes. Many of Shakespeare’s plays were experienced at the Globe theatre. Theatres like this had a standing area for poorer ‘groundlings’, and sheltered seats for the more affluent members of the audience. |
| **What are the conventions of a comedy play?** |
| * There is humour in the story, often created through wordplay. * Humour is also created through **dramatic irony**. For example, there are often cases of mistaken identity: the audience usually knows who characters really are, but the characters themselves get confused. * There is a happy ending, usually involving a marriage. * Characters must overcome an **obstacle** to have the happy ending. * There is **conflict** between control and freedom. In the end, the good characters get freedom. |

**Plot**

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| **Act 1: Hermia** and **Lysander** love each other but Egeus won’t allow them to marry, so they run away to the forest to get married in secret.  **Demetrius** wants to marry **Hermia**. **Helena** loves **Demetrius** and tells him about **Hermia** and **Lysander**’s plan. They follow **Hermia** and **Lysander** into the forest. |
| **Act 2:** In the forest, Oberon and Titania are arguing. Oberon sees **Demetrius** and **Helena** arguing and commands Puck to use the potion on the “Athenian” man to make him fall in love with **Helena**. However, the first Athenian man Puck sees is **Lysander**, so he puts the love potion on him. **Lysander** falls madly in love with **Helena**. |
| **Act 3:** Puck sees Bottom in the forest and transformed his head into a donkey’s head. He puts the love potion on Titania, who falls in love with Bottom. Puck puts the love potion on **Demetrius** so that he falls in love with **Helena**. As a result, both men love **Helena** so there is chaos, and **Hermia** and **Helena** argue. Puck eventually drops a herb in **Lysander**’s eyes to put him back to normal. |
| **Acts 4 and 5:** Oberon finds Titania and Bottom and decides that he has had enough fun. Puck drops a herb in her eyes, she wakes and leaves with Oberon. The lovers return to Athens where Bottom and the other actors perform their play at the wedding of the three happy couples: Theseus and Hippolyta, **Lysander** and **Hermia** and **Demetrius** and **Helena**. |

**Characters**

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| **Theseus** The duke of Athens. He is a strong and strict ruler of the city. |
| **Hippolyta** Theseus’s bride. She was a fearless warrior. |
| **Egeus** Hermia’s stubborn father who wants her to marry Demetrius or be put to death. |
| **Hermia** Egeus’ daughter, who loves Lysander. |
| **Lysander**  **Before the love potion:** He is in love with Hermia and runs away to the forest with her.  **After the love potion:** Falls in love with Helena. |
| **Demetrius**  **Before the love potion:** He wants to marry Hermia and is disgusted by Helena’s love.  **After the love potion:** Falls in love with Helena. He never has the effects of the love potion removed from him. |
| **Helena** Hermia’s friend who is desperately in love with Demetrius. |
| **Oberon** The king of the fairies who controls the love potion. |
| **Titania** The fierce queen of the fairies. Falls in love with Bottom due to the love potion. |
| **Bottom** An actor who has his head turned into a donkey by Oberon. Titania falls in love with him when she is under the love potion’s influence. |
| **Puck** Oberon’s mischievous servant who puts the potion on people’s eyes. |

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**Key Vocabulary**

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| **Word** | **Meaning** |
| **affluent** | Having a lot of money or possessions. |
| ***characterisation*** | What a writer makes a character like (as a fictional ‘person’). |
| **conflict** | A clash, fight or disagreement between two opposing sides. |
| **convention** | A common feature of a type of text. |
| **dehumanise** | To treat someone as if they are less than human. |

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| **dramatic irony** | When the audience knows something that the characters don’t. |
| **malicious** | When someone does or says things that are meant to upset someone. |
| **manipulate** | To control or influence someone or something unfairly. |
| **obsession** | The state of always having something on your mind. |
| **obstacle** | Something that blocks someone’s way or prevents progress. |
| **oppression** | When power is used cruelly over people and they lose rights or freedom. |
| **patriarchy** | A society where men hold the power. |
| **remorse** | Deep regret or guilt about a bad thing you’ve done. |
| **setting** | The place and time of events in a story. |
| **severe** | Describes something very strict or harsh. |
| **social commentary** | Writing about issues in society. |
| **social inequality** | When groups of people in society are not treated equally. |
| **society** | People living together as a community. |
| **soliloquy** | A longer speech in a play where the character is alone and speaks to themselves or the audience. |
| **victim** | Someone who has been harmed, often by other people. |
| **vulnerable** | When someone could be easily harmed. |