

A question of context

ACT ONE SCENE I

Enter EGEUS and his daughter HERMIA, LYSANDER and DEMETRIUS

<i>Egeus</i>	Happy be Theseus, our renowned Duke!	20
<i>Theseus</i>	Thanks, good Egeus; what's the news with thee?	
<i>Egeus</i>	Full of vexation come I, with complaint Against my child, my daughter Hermia. Stand forth, Demetrius. My noble lord, This man hath my consent to marry her.	25
	Stand forth, Lysander. And, my gracious Duke, This man hath bewitch'd the bosom of my child. Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes, And interchang'd love-tokens with my child; Thou hast by moonlight at her window sung, With feigning voice, verses of feigning love,	30
	And stol'n the impression of her fantasy With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gawds, conceits, Knacks, trifles, nose-gays, sweetmeats – messengers Of strong prevailment in unhardened youth;	35
	With cunning hast thou filch'd my daughter's heart; Turn'd her obedience, which is due to me, To stubborn harshness. And, my gracious Duke, Be it so she will not here before your Grace	40
	Consent to marry with Demetrius, I beg the ancient privilege of Athens: As she is mine I may dispose of her; Which shall be either to this gentleman Or to her death, according to our law Immediately provided in that case.	45

Questions

- 1 Why is Egeus angry?
- 2 What does he want Theseus to do about it?
- 3 Explain line 31: 'With feigning voice, verses of feigning love.'
- 4 According to Egeus, what has Lysander been doing?
- 5 From this extract, and from your understanding of the whole play, what impression do you have of Egeus and what is his importance to the plot?

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ACT ONE SCENE I

<i>Lysander</i>	How now, my love! Why is your cheek so pale? How chance the roses there do fade so fast?	
<i>Hermia</i>	Belike for want of rain, which I could well Beteem them from the tempest of my eyes.	130
<i>Lysander</i>	Ay me! for aught that I could ever read, Could ever hear by tale or history, The course of true love never did run smooth; But either it was different in blood –	135
<i>Hermia</i>	O cross! too high to be enthrall'd to low.	
<i>Lysander</i>	Or else misgraffed in respect of years –	
<i>Hermia</i>	O spite! too old to be engag'd to young.	
<i>Lysander</i>	Or else it stood upon the choice of friends –	
<i>Hermia</i>	O hell! to choose love by another's eyes!	140
<i>Lysander</i>	Or, if there were a sympathy in choice, War, death, or sickness, did lay siege to it, Making it momentary as a sound, Swift as a shadow, short as any dream, Brief as the lightning in the collied night That, in a spleen, unfolds both heaven and earth, And ere a man hath power to say 'Behold!' The jaws of darkness do devour it up; So quick bright things come to confusion.	145
<i>Hermia</i>	If then true lovers have been cross'd, It stands as an edict in destiny. Then let us teach our trial patience, Because it is a customary cross, As due to love as thoughts and dreams and sighs, Wishes and tears, poor Fancy's followers.	150

Questions

- 1 How would you describe Hermia's condition in this extract?
- 2 Explain line 134: 'The course of true love never did run smooth.'
- 3 What difficulties do Hermia and Lysander think lovers have? Give three or four examples from the extract.
- 4 In your own words, how does Lysander view true love?
- 5 From your understanding of the play as a whole, why is Hermia angry?

A question of context

ACT TWO SCENE I

<i>Demetrius</i>	I love thee not, therefore pursue me not. Where is Lysander and fair Hermia? The one I'll slay, the other slayeth me. Thou told'st me they were stol'n unto this wood, And here am I, and wood within this wood, Because I cannot meet my Hermia. Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more.	190
<i>Helena</i>	You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant; But yet you draw not iron, for my heart Is true as steel. Leave you your power to draw, And I shall have no power to follow you.	195
<i>Demetrius</i>	Do I entice you? Do I speak you fair? Or, rather, do I not in plainest truth Tell you I do not nor I cannot love you?	200
<i>Helena</i>	And even for that do I love you the more. I am your spaniel; and, Demetrius, The more you beat me, I will fawn on you. Use me but as your spaniel, spurn me, strike me, Neglect me, lose me; only give me leave, Unworthy as I am, to follow you. What worser place can I beg in your love, And yet a place of high respect with me, Than to be used as you use your dog?	205 210

Questions

- 1 In your own words, describe the relationship between Demetrius and Hermia in this extract.
- 2 What is Helena's reaction to Demetrius's behaviour towards her?
- 3 Explain the meaning of line 208: 'What worser place can I beg in your love.'
- 4 From your understanding of the whole play, how does this relationship change?
- 5 Why might the audience feel sympathetic towards Helena in this extract?

A question of context

ACT THREE SCENE II

Puck My mistress with a monster is in love.
Near to her close and consecrated bower,
While she was in her dull and sleeping hour,
A crew of patches, rude mechanicals,
That work for bread upon Athenian stalls, 10
Were met together to rehearse a play
Intended for great Theseus' nuptial day.
The shallowest thickskin of that barren sort,
Who Pyramus presented, in their sport
Forsook his scene and enter'd in a brake; 15
When I did him at this advantage take,
An ass's nole I fixed on his head.
Anon his Thisby must be answered,
And forth my mimic comes. When they him spy,
As wild geese that the creeping fowler eye, 20
Or russet-pated choughs, many in sort,
Rising and cawing at the gun's report,
Sever themselves and madly sweep the sky,
So as his sight away his fellows fly;
And at our stamp here, o'er and o'er one falls; 25
He murder cries, and help from Athens calls.
Their sense thus weak, lost with their fears thus strong,
Made senseless things begin to do them wrong,
For briars and thorns at their apparel snatch;
Some sleeves, some hats, from yielders all things catch. 30
I led them on in this distracted fear,
And left sweet Pyramus translated there;
When in that moment, so it came to pass,
Titania wak'd, and straightway lov'd an ass.

Questions

- 1 At what event did Puck arrive uninvited?
- 2 What did Puck do to one of the players and what effect did this have on the others?
- 3 Explain lines 27–28:

*Their sense thus weak, lost with their fears thus strong,
Made senseless things begin to do them wrong.*

- 4 From your understanding of the play as a whole, what effect did Puck's joke have on others beyond this extract?

A question of context

ACT THREE SCENE II

<i>Demetrius</i>	<i>[Awaking]</i> O Helen, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine! To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne? Crystal is muddy. O, how ripe in show Thy lips, those kissing cherries, tempting grow! That pure congealed white, high Taurus' snow, Fann'd with the eastern wind, turns to a crow When thou hold'st up thy hand. O, let me kiss This princess of pure white, this seal of bliss!	140
<i>Helena</i>	O spite! O hell! I see you all are bent To set against me for your merriment. If you were civil and knew courtesy, You would not do me thus much injury. Can you not hate me, as I know you do, But you must join in souls to mock me too? If you were men, as men you are in show, You would not use a gentle lady so: To vow, and swear, and superpraise my parts, When I am sure you hate me with your hearts. You both are rivals, and love Hermia; And now both rivals, to mock Helena. A trim exploit, a manly enterprise, To conjure tears up in a poor maid's eyes With your derision! None of noble sort Would so offend a virgin, and extort A poor soul's patience, all to make you sport.	145 150 155 160

Questions

- 1 Describe the relationship between the two characters in this extract.
- 2 How does Demetrius describe Helena?
- 3 What does Helena think Demetrius is doing?
- 4 Explain line 157: 'A trim exploit, a manly enterprise.'
- 5 From your knowledge of the play as a whole, what is the outcome of this relationship?
- 6 Make a list of words and phrases in this extract that you can associate with the themes of love and hate.

A question of context

ACT FOUR SCENE I

Oberon Welcome, good Robin. Seest thou this sweet sight?
Her dotage now I do begin to pity;
For, meeting her of late behind the wood,
Seeking sweet favours for this hateful fool,
I did upbraid her and fall out with her. 50
For she his hairy temples then had rounded
With coronet of fresh and fragrant flowers;
And that same dew which sometime on the buds
Was wont to swell like round and orient pearls
Stood now within the pretty flowerets' eyes, 55
Like tears that did their own disgrace bewail.
When I had at my pleasure taunted her,
And she in mild terms begg'd my patience,
I then did ask of her her changeling child;
Which straight she gave me, and her fairy sent 60
To bear him to my bower in fairy land.
And now I have the boy, I will undo
This hateful imperfection of her eyes.
And, gentle Puck, take this transformed scalp
From off the head of this Athenian swain, 65
That he awaking when the other do
May all to Athens back again repair,
And think no more of this night's accidents
But as the fierce vexation of a dream.
But first I will release the Fairy Queen. 70

[Squeezing a herb over Titania's eyes]

Be as thou wast wont to be;
See as thou wast wont to see.
Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower
Hath such force and blessed power.
Now, my Titania; wake you, my sweet Queen. 75

Questions

- 1 What has Titania done to change Oberon's mind?
- 2 What does Oberon tell Puck to do?
- 3 What power has the flower or herb Oberon squeezes in Titania's eyes?
- 4 From your understanding of the whole play, what influence did 'This hateful imperfection of her eyes' have on Titania?
- 5 What aspects of Oberon's speech can you associate with the general theme of fate and free will?

A question of context

ACT FOUR SCENE I

<i>Theseus</i>	I pray you all, stand up. I know you two are rival enemies; How comes this gentle concord in the world That hatred is so far from jealousy To sleep by hate, and fear no enmity?	145
<i>Lysander</i>	My Lord, I shall reply amazedly, Half sleep, half waking; but as yet, I swear, I cannot truly say how I came here, But, as I think – for truly would I speak, And now I do bethink me, so it is – I came with Hermia hither. Our intent Was to be gone from Athens, where we might, Without the peril of the Athenian law –	150
<i>Egeus</i>	Enough, enough, my Lord; you have enough; I beg the law, the law upon his head. They would have stol'n away, they would, Demetrius, Thereby to have defeated you and me: You of your wife, and me of my consent, Of my consent that she should be your wife.	155

Questions

- 1 What explanation does Lysander offer as to how he came to be there?
- 2 Why is Egeus so angry with Lysander?
- 3 From your knowledge of the play as a whole, how is the conflict between Egeus and Lysander finally resolved?
- 4 Explain the meaning of line 155: 'I beg the law, the law upon his head.'

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A question of context

ACT FIVE SCENE I

Hippolyta 'Tis strange, my Theseus, that these lovers speak of.

Theseus More strange than true. I never may believe
These antique fables, nor these fairy toys.
Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend 5
More than cool reason ever comprehends.
The lunatic, the lover, and the poet,
Are of imagination all compact.
One sees more devils than vast hell can hold;
That is the madman. The lover, all as frantic, 10
Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt.
The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen 15
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.
Such tricks hath strong imagination
That, if it would but apprehend some joy,
It comprehends some bringer of that joy; 20
How in the night, imagining some fear,
How easy is a bush suppos'd a bear?

Hippolyta But all the story of the night told over,
And all their minds transfigur'd so together, 25
More witnesseth than fancy's images,
And grows to something of great constancy,
But howsoever strange and admirable.

Questions

1 What is Theseus's attitude to the lovers' story?

2 Explain the meaning of lines 7 and 8:

*The lunatic, the lover, and the poet,
Are of imagination all compact.*

3 How would you describe Hippolyta's attitude to the lovers' story?

4 From your understanding of the whole play, what is your impression of Theseus?

5 What makes Hippolyta and Theseus suited to one another?

A question of context

ACT FIVE SCENE I

Quince [as Prologue]

Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show;
But wonder on, till truth make all things plain.
This man is Pyramus, if you would know;
This beauteous lady Thisby is certain.
This man, with lime and rough-cast, doth present 130
Wall, that vile Wall which did these lovers sunder;
And through Wall's chink, poor souls, they are content
To whisper. At the which let no man wonder.
This man, with lanthorn, dog, and bush of thorn,
Presenteth Moonshine; for, if you will know, 135
By moonshine did these lovers think no scorn
To meet at Ninus' tomb, there, there to woo.
This grisly beast, which Lion hight by name,
The trusty Thisby, coming first by night,
Did scare away, or rather did affright; 140
And as she fled, her mantle she did fall;
Which Lion vile with bloody mouth did stain.
Anon comes Pyramus, sweet youth and tall,
And finds his trusty Thisby's mantle slain;
Whereat with blade, with bloody blameful blade, 145
He bravely broach'd his boiling bloody breast;
And Thisby, tarryng in mulberry shade,
His dagger drew, and died. For all the rest,
Let Lion, Moonshine, Wall, and lovers twain,
At large discourse while here they do remain. 150

Questions

- 1 According to Quince, how is Moonshine presented in the play?
- 2 Explain the meaning of line 126: 'Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show'.
- 3 From your understanding of the whole play, why did Quince and company resort to using actors with objects to represent props and scenery?
- 4 According to Quince, what damage did the Lion inflict?
- 5 Explain the dramatic effect of this Prologue and why the Athenian workmen felt it necessary to have one.

Who said?

Who said what, where and when?

Try to match the following quotes with these characters.
There are four quotes for each character.

Bottom Theseus Lysander Helena Puck Oberon

- 1 Fetch me that flow'er, the herb I showed thee once.
- 2 O grim-look'd night! O night with hue so black!
- 3 Lovers and madmen have such seething brains.
- 4 Where are these lads? Where are these hearts?
- 5 Welcome, good Robin. Seest thou this sweet sight?
- 6 Give me your hands, if we be friends.
- 7 My legs are longer though, to run away.
- 8 That I do hate thee and love Helena.
- 9 Never did mockers waste more idle breath.
- 10 What hast thou done? Thou hast mistaken quite . . .
- 11 This is the woman, but not this the man.
- 12 Hippolyta, I woo'd thee with my sword.
- 13 The course of true love never did run smooth.
- 14 The more I love, the more he hateth me.
- 15 Ready. Name what part I am for, and proceed.
- 16 I am that merry wanderer of the night.
- 17 I do but beg a little changeling boy.
- 18 I'll put a girdle round the earth in forty minutes.
- 19 Love takes the meaning in love's conference.
- 20 The more my prayer, the lesser is my grace.
- 21 Some man or other must present Wall.
- 22 Helen, I love thee, by my life I do.
- 23 Here come the lovers, full of joy and mirth.
- 24 His speech was like a tangled chain . . .

(Answers are on page 175.)

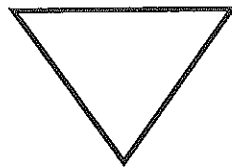
The Forester's Report

A sneak preview.

As an Athenian reporter, you had been invited by Peter Quince for a sneak preview of the play "Pyramus and Thisby". Peter had requested that you hide in the trees out of sight from the other players. Write a column for your newspaper in which you describe the ridiculous farce you witnessed in the wood that night.

Newspaper Article

Newspaper articles require a different style of writing from what is used when writing a story. When writing a newspaper article, picture a triangle like the one shown.



The newspaper article has all of the important information in the opening paragraph. This information includes **who, what, when, where, why** and **how**. It is written this way because most people do not read an entire newspaper article all the way through. So newspaper writers put the most important information at the beginning.

A typical newspaper article contains five (5) parts:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Headline: | This is a short, attention-getting statement about the event. |
| Byline: | This tells who wrote the story. |
| Lead paragraph: | This has ALL the who, what, when, where, why and how in it. A writer must find the answers to these questions and write them into the opening sentence(s) of the article. |
| Explanation: | After the lead paragraph has been written, the writer must decide what other facts or details the reader might want to know. The writer must make sure that he/she has enough information to answer any important questions a reader might have after reading the headline and the lead paragraph. This section can also include direct quotes from witnesses or bystanders. |
| Additional Information: | This information includes people's comments on the event, action(s) to be taken and/or future developments. |

Literary Essay Sample Structure

Paragraph 1.

Orient reader to author/playwright, book/play and its theme you are going to discuss, which is your thesis.

Body Paragraphs: In EVERY paragraph, include, in any order:

- a. Evidence
 - (1) What happened (context)
 - (2) quotes
- b. Commentary
 - (1) Connect evidence to thesis

Conclusion: Summarize your argument in support of your thesis (not just a repetition of the first paragraph).

Orient Reader. In 1-3 sentences, identify the title, author, and subject of the book/play/poem. Don't summarize the whole text in detail. But write just enough, as if to assume the reader knows nothing yet about the text.

Hypothesis, Statement
Thesis. The thesis is your angle. It is what you will organize all your evidence around. A thesis can't be purely true; it has to be able to be argued one way or the other. It should specifically identify *what (specifically)* the author is saying about a *general subject*, like life, relationships, gender, or class.

In other words, it should be a rewording of this formula: **(Author's name) is making a point about (general subject); the specific point s/he is making is that _____.**

It should suggest that the author is using the characters, setting, plot or voice to make that specific point about a general subject.

For example: "Shakespeare uses Theseus to show how men had more power than women".
(The general subject here is authority.)

Evidence—on two levels: **ONE**, support your thesis with **events** that happened in the text. (This is to show the context of your quotes). But stay focused: don't summarize the text unless it's as evidence for an idea of yours.

TWO, use **quotes** with page numbers (or line numbers with Acts and scenes= I, i 65-66) from the text. Try to blend them in with your context, by having quotes and context share sentences. For example:

Not blended:

Theseus is against Hermia's decision to refuse to marry Demetrius: "Either to die the death, or to abjure for ever the society of men" (I, i, 65-66).

Blended:


When Hermia refuses to marry Demetrius, Theseus gives her the choice of " Either to die the death, or to abjure for ever the society of men" (I, I 65-66) that proves he has power over Hermia.

Introduction
Conflict is a theme that is often portrayed in literature. Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* is no exception; throughout this comedy the characters are faced with different types of conflict, some more serious than others. Therefore each character

Literary Essay Sample Structure

You might find the following word bank helpful in your efforts to integrate quotations:

acknowledges
agrees
argues
asserts
claims
comments
concludes
confirms

contests 
declares
disputes
emphasizes
explains
illustrates
implies
notes

objects
observes
points out
refutes
remarks
reveals
states
suggests

Another tip:

Avoid pointing out that you are writing an essay. Don't write, "In this essay I will..." or "I will first describe... and then I will..." or "When I first started to think about this subject..." or "In conclusion, I have proven..."

Sample essay structure: *Conflict in 'Midsummer Night's Dream'*

Introduction
Conflict is a theme that is often portrayed in literature. Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* is no exception; throughout this comedy the characters are faced with different types of conflict, some more serious than others. Therefore each character reacts to conflict in his or her unique way.

Body
When the tradesmen are first seen in the text, they are given the parts of the characters in the play they will perform for the Duke's wedding:
show conflict between Bottom and Quince
discuss how the conflict is light-hearted
describe how the characters react to the conflict

← add quotes to support your points

Another example of conflict is seen when Lysander wakes up after he has been wrongly sprinkled with the magic juice by Puck. As a result,
show conflict between Lysander and Helena
discuss how the conflict is more serious (than Bottom and Quince's)
describe how the characters react to the conflict

←

Conclusion
Overall, *Midsummer Night's Dream* successfully shows the audience situations of conflict and how the characters...