**Analysis**

        Move once more into large groups, 4-5. You will be responsible for answering the questions for an Act. You will find the questions on the course website, which means at least one student must have a computer within your group.

***ACT 1***

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| **1.1** |  |
| 1. | What event are we waiting for as the play begins? How did Theseus win Hippolyta (1.1.16-19)? What do you know about these two? |
| 2. | What complaint does Egeus bring before Theseus? Why does he claim the right to name the man his daughter Hermia will marry? What, according to the law, will happen to her if she refuses this marriage? Why is she willing to take the risk? |
| 3. | What has been said against Demetrius, the man Egeus wants Hermia to marry? Other than that, how much difference is there between the two young men? |
| 4. | What was the original matchup of young lovers? Who loves whom? |
| 5. | What do Hermia and Lysander plan to do? Where do they intend to go, and why will they be safe there? To whom do they tell their plans? Why? |
| 6 | What does Helena plan to do with the news of the elopement of Lysander and Demetrius? Why? How does she describe love in her soliloquy (1.1.226-251)? |
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| **1.2** |  |
| 1. | These are the "rude mechanicals" (3.2.9) who want to perform a play for Theseus's marriage. What is the subject of their play? What do you know about this story? Does it have any echoes to what we've heard in 1.1? |
| 2. | Which actor is going to cause Peter Quince the most problems? Why? |
| 3. | What do the actors fear will happen if they frighten the ladies? Given what we've seen of Athenian law, how reasonable is their fear that they might do something wrong? |
| 4. | When and where will they all meet to rehearse? Why can't they rehearse in town? How will they see to rehearse? |

***ACT 2***

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| **2.1** |  |
| 1. | Why, according to Puck, are Oberon and Titania fighting (2.1.20-31)? |
| 2. | Who is Puck/Robin Goodfellow? What sorts of things does he do, both according to the fairy he meets and according to himself? |
| 3. | Based on what they say, do Oberon and Titania have reason to be jealous? What, incidentally, do we learn about the past history of Theseus (2.1.77-80)? |
| 4. | What effect is their dispute having on the weather? |
| 5. | Read Titania's version of the argument over the young boy carefully (2.1.121-137), noting the ship images and related echoes of 16th-century exploration and commerce. How does her version differ from Oberon's, as stated by Puck in 2.1.20-31? |
| 6. | Read Oberon's description of love-in-idleness carefully (2.1.148-174), especially ll. 149-164, and note that this passage seems to refer to Queen Elizabeth. Why would Shakespeare include a contemporary reference like this in a play set in mythological Athens? |
| 7. | What does Oberon intend to do with the pansy juice (love-in-idleness is the pansy)? |
| 8. | What does Oberon learn from overhearing Demetrius and Helena? What is happening to Helena? What is your reaction to her wanting to be Demetrius's spaniel? |
| 9. | What does Oberon tell Puck to do while Oberon goes to anoint Titania's eyes with the pansy juice? |
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| **2.2** |  |
| 1. | What does Shakespeare do in the language of the fairies (as in Titania's speech 2.2.1-7) to make us feel that the fairies are small? |
| 2. | Notice that once Titania falls asleep, she remains on stage until she awakens. All the intervening action takes place around her. (Of course, she's probably not in the middle of the stage.) What effect might her presence have on other action? |
| 3. | How successful are Lysander and Hermia in getting to Lysander's aunt? Why don't they sleep close to each other? |
| 4. | What mistake does Puck make when he finds Lysander and Hermia, especially since they are sleeping far apart? Is the mistake his fault? |
| 5. | Demetrius and Helena enter, but Helena is too tired to follow when Demetrius leaves. What happens when Lysander wakes up and sees her? Here is the first change in the relationship between the lovers. Who now loves whom? |
| 6. | What does Lysander say has caused him to stop loving Hermia and begin loving Helena? Given what we have seen, how much should we believe him? What does Helena think he is doing? |

***ACT 3***

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| **3.1** |  |
| 1. | What problems do Bottom and the others find with the play? How do they intend to solve those problems and meet what they consider to be the expectations of their audience? |
| 2. | Who comes to watch the play? |
| 3. | What happens to Bottom when he goes "backstage"? What reaction does he get from the others? |
| 4. | Bottom sings to prove he is not afraid. What does his singing cause? |
| 5. | How does Bottom respond to Titania's declaration of love? |
| 6. | Where does Titania take Bottom? |
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| **3.2** |  |
| 1. | As Demetrius woos Hermia, what does Hermia fear he has done to Lysander? |
| 2. | How does Puck expect to solve the problem once Demetrius sleeps (at 3.2.87.1)? What happens instead? We began the play with both men loving Hermia; now both love Helena, as Demetrius awakes (3.2.138). How many times have the women changed whom they love? |
| 3. | What does Helena, still thinking they are all ganging up on her, say about the childhoods of the women (3.2.193-220)? |
| 4. | From various descriptions in the arguments in 3.2, what can you say about the relative sizes and coloring of Helena and Hermia? |
| 5. | What two things does Puck do, on Oberon's orders, to keep Demetrius and Lysander from fighting? |
| 6. | Where are the lovers at the end of the scene and what are they doing? (They'll stay on stage until they wake up at 4.1.135.1.) |
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| **3.3** | (In many editions, 3.2 continues and there is no scene break.) |
| 1. | What is Puck's attitude toward all this? (See especially 3.3.25-29, 45-47.) |

***ACT 4***

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| **4.1** |  |
| 1. | Is Bottom as an ass any different than Bottom as a man (except, of course, for his ass's head)? In what humorous ways is he obviously an ass? |
| 2. | What has happened to the changeling child? (See 4.1.56-58.) |
| 3. | Once her vision has been cleared, what is Titania's response to Bottom? Notice that as order returns to the world of the play, we get real music as Oberon and Titania dance. |
| 4. | When Theseus and Hippolyta (and the others) enter, it is morning. What in their part of the scene echoes the music of Oberon and Titania? Notice the reference to "so musical a discord" (4.1.115) and "this gentle concord" (4.1.140). This idea of *concordia discors* or "discordant harmony" runs from here to the end of the play. |
| 5 | What happens now to Egeus's complaint against Hermia? How does Demetrius explain the return of his love to Helena? Is there really any better way of explaining something like this? What will happen to the lovers? |
| 6 | The last sleeper to awake is, of course, Bottom. How does he describe his experience? |
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| **4.2** |  |
| 1. | Why are the other actors so happy to see Bottom return? |

***ACT 5***

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| **5.1** |  |
| 1. | Read Theseus's first speech carefully (5.1.2-22), especially from "The lunatic, the lover, and the poet" (line 7). What point is Theseus making about poetry (actually all literature, including drama)? |
| 2. | Hippolyta is afraid of how the mechanicals will be treated, but Theseus gives her an assuring response (5.1.89-105). Is this the spirit in which the court party in fact takes *Pyramus and Thisbe*? |
| 3. | The play of *Pyramus and Thisbe* is, of course, a mess. How do Theseus and Hippolyta respond to it at 5.1.207-212? What is most funny about the play? How does it relate to the play by Shakespeare that we are watching or reading? |
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| **5.2** | (In many editions, 5.1 continues and there is no scene break.) |
| 1 | What is the function and effect of the fairies' blessing of the house? Why does it appear at the end of the play? |
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| **Epi.** | (In many editions, 5.1 continues and there is no scene break and thus no separate epilogue.) |
| 1. | How does Puck, in his Epilogue, turn the ideas of the play back onto the audience? |