

*All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances; ...*

William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, Act II, Sc.7

Playing games, performing scenes in the garden like the actors in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Premise

The development of the project will be carried out along these axes:

1. reading the whole play or some relevant passages from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* especially the parts concerning the 'theatre in the theatre'
2. acting/performing indoors, and/or outdoors 'in the garden'
3. researching on the games and entertainments typical of the Elizabethan/Shakespearean times
4. The Elizabethan garden
5. The Elizabethan medicinal herbs

As it is, this card is conceived for students of the Middle, High schools.

Notice: the development can be confined to the first three points leaving out the ones more specifically related to 'gardening'. It's up to the teachers to make decisions about that.

Moreover, the subject can be adjusted for primary pupils' levels as it conveys elements that can be understood and described by them in the form of drawings, short narratives with images, easy-developed performances, memory games (also available online), etc. to stimulate creativity, awareness and curiosity. In the garden they can play games based on discovery, orienteering or treasure hunting

Learners

Middle, High school students, educational programmes for adult learners. Age-appropriate adjustments can be envisaged for younger pupils

Subjects

English, ICT and Sciences, should all parts be taken into account

Objectives

- To become acquainted with one of the most famous plays by William Shakespeare
- To explore some features of the Elizabethan world as regards entertainment and gardening
- To enhance awareness, creativity, confidence and spirit of collaboration
- To improve the use of the English language and deepen its cultural, customary and social aspects
- To favour interaction among subjects and methodologies

Competences

- To read, understand and communicate in the English language
- To promote cultural interest, critical thinking and creative skills
- To use digital technology appropriately and responsibly
- To develop social, civic and active participation
- Learning to learn

Tools and materials

Printed and online texts, technological devices, online platforms

Duration

it depends on the methodological plan and the number of activities that will be carried out. The whole project can be developed in about four months

Development

- Brainstorming meeting among teachers to develop a plan of interventions based on a cross-curricular methodology
- Explanation to the class of the activities, targets and achievements of the project
- Warm-up to raise interest, curiosity, motivation and elicit preliminary information about the subject
- Visit to the Botanical Garden to learn about the Shakespearean pathways. Close observation of the one concerning the comedy considered
- Research on the Elizabethan theatre and its characteristics
- Reading of the play *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or of the most relevant parts providing an outline of the whole work
- Research on how often the 'theatre in the theatre' is present in Shakespeare's plays and discussion on the possible reasons for this dramatic device



Pointing out how theatre and dance were popular forms of entertainment during the reign of Queen Elizabeth (with the support of videos, etc.)

Writing an essay on this aspect and on how the Elizabethan court enjoyed these events

Optional: Queen Elizabeth's versatile culture, poetical skill, knowledge of the classics and languages, etc. (High school students)

Middle school students: make a list of the most popular games of the period and compare them with the ones popular today amid both adult and young people

Preparation of a performance of the play (or parts of it) *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It can be performed indoors or in the garden to simulate the wood, to the accompaniment of music

Middle school students: create an e-book with pictures and captions illustrating the games fashionable in the Elizabethan times: *Amusements and Pastimes during the Golden Age*

High school students: collect all the relevant materials about the Elizabethan theatre and Shakespeare's 'theatre in the theatre' and create an e-book: *Playing in the Garden with Shakespeare*

Research the characteristics of the Elizabethan garden on texts and online. Organize a virtual stroll in Shakespeare's garden at New Place

Make a list of some medicinal herbs known and used at the Elizabethan times and still present in the Botanical Garden today; their properties and use once and nowadays

Build up a herb-booklet of the medicinal herbs (by sketching them and/or cutting images) with names and personal annotations

Each student will create his/her own herb-booklet and give it a title

Products

E-book *Amusements and Pastimes* during the Golden Age

E-book *Playing in the Garden* with Shakespeare

Herb-booklets with personal titles

An accurate bibliography and a presentation from the teachers of each subject concerned with an account of the motivations and of the methodological pathways exploited will complete the project production

Evaluation and Validation

See introduction