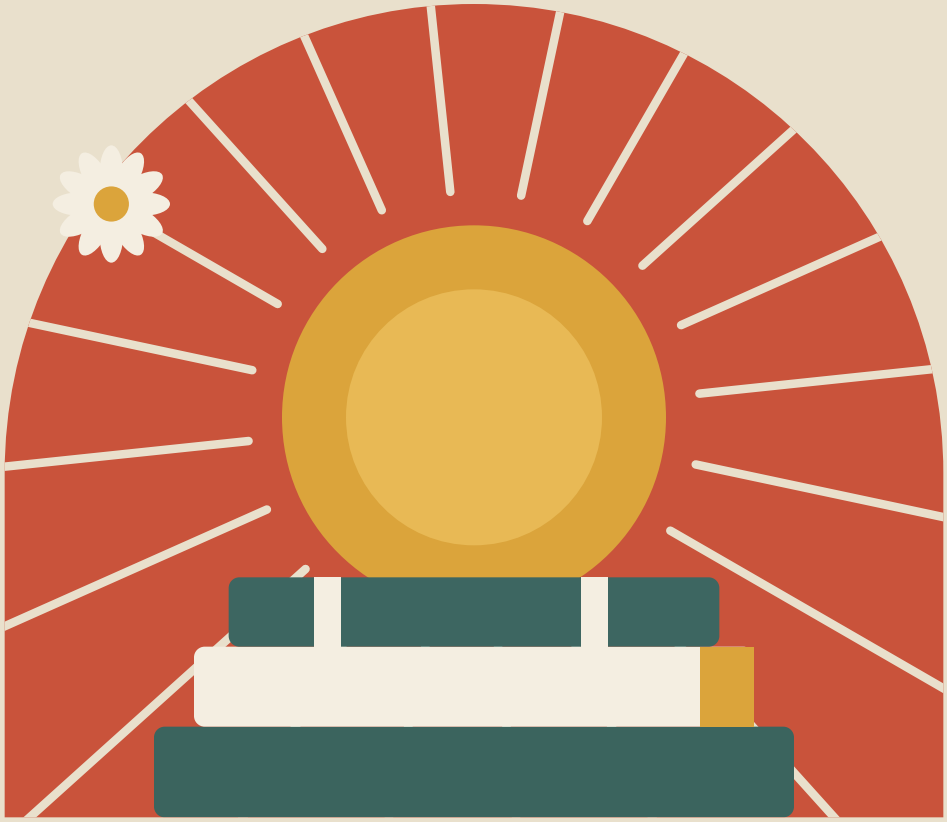
THE FOURFOLD PARENT GUIDES



Shakespeare in Nine Plays

PARENT GUIDE

A Fourfold study of comedy, history and tragedy

GRADES 7–12

TEACH IT WITH CONFIDENCE

BUILT ON THE FOURFOLD METHOD · GINA GLENN STEFFY

WRITING IN THIS COURSE

Writing

What Commit looks like, and how to help your student say it well

Every unit ends with Commit: your student says it in their own words, usually in writing. Here's what to expect, and some starters for when the page stays blank.

WHAT COMMIT LOOKS LIKE

Level or kind	What they write	Your expectation
Middle school	Maps, cards, labels, a quote copied and explained, a rally speech	They can explain what happens and quote one line correctly
High school	An analytical paragraph for each play, plus a short brief or dissent	A claim, a quoted line with act and scene, and an explanation

SENTENCE STARTERS FOR THE FIVE COMMON TOPICS

Topic	The question it asks	Starters
Definition	What is it? What does this word really mean?	"___ means..." "A real ___ is..."
Compare & Contrast	How is it like or unlike something else?	"Both ___ and ___..." "Unlike ___, ___..."
Circumstance	What was happening around it?	"Because it was ___, ..." "At the time, ..."
Relationship	What caused it, and what did it cause?	"___ led to ___ because..." "As a result, ..."
Authority	Who says so, and how would they know?	"According to ___, ..." "I trust this because..."

STARTERS FOR THIS COURSE

- "When ___ says '___' (Act _, Scene _), it shows..."
- "The audience knows ___, but ___ does not, so..."
- "Shakespeare's ___ differs from history because..."

> **WHEN THE PAGE STAYS BLANK**
>
> *Ask your student to say it out loud first. Write down what they say, then have them write it in their own hand and improve one sentence.*

AFTER THE WORK IS DONE

Responding

Five minutes a week, not an evening of grading

Level or kind	Check for	A good note sounds like
Middle school	A correct quote and an explanation in their own words	"You found the best line. What does 'wherefore' really mean?"
High school	A quoted line, cited by act and scene, that proves the claim	"Strong claim. Explain how the quote proves it in one more sentence."

THE RULE OF ONE

Point out one thing done well and one thing to try next time. Never more than one correction at a time. Students who get one clear next step improve fastest.

RUBRIC FOR PARAGRAPHS AND ESSAYS

	4	3	2	1
Claim	Clear, specific and arguable	Clear but general	Vague or only a topic	Missing
Evidence	Two or more specific details, named	One specific detail	General or from memory	None
Reasoning	Explains how each detail proves the claim	Explains one	Restates the evidence	Missing
Own words	Clearly the student's voice	Mostly their own	Close to the source	Copied

Add the four rows for a score out of 16. Use it for the longer pieces, not every short answer.

GRADING TIP

Read once for the claim and once for the evidence. Most growth comes from the Reasoning row: ask your student to explain out loud how each example proves the claim, then write down what they said.

FOR THIS COURSE

The quote isn't the proof; the explanation is. After every quoted line, ask your student to write one sentence that begins, "This shows..."

Lesson 1

A Midsummer Night's Dream

THE BIG QUESTION

What happens to a story when the audience knows something the characters don't?

WHAT YOUR STUDENT READS

- Act 3, Scene 2, from Puck's "Captain of our fairy band" through "Lord, what fools these mortals be!" If your student needs help with the language, read the play across four sittings: Act 1, Act 2, Act 3, and Acts 4–5.

BEFORE YOU START

- [ ] Read the background and who's who together.
- [ ] Index cards for four name cards and a Puck token; two colored pens.
- [ ] Find the scene link on the bonus page if you'd like to watch a performance.

> **OPEN WITH (READ ALOUD)**
>
> *Four young lovers run into an enchanted forest, and a fairy with a love potion makes everything worse. Today we map the mess.*

1 GATHER

Check the reading with a few quick questions. Don't re-teach it.

1. Who loves whom at the start of Act 3, Scene 2?
2. What mistake did Puck make?
3. What does Puck think of the mortals?

2 TEST

Who Knows What?

In the book: What does Helena think the two young men are doing on purpose? What does the audience know about the love potion that she doesn't?

How to help: Read Helena's lines aloud together. Ask "Is she right to be angry? What doesn't she know?"

Listen for: Helena thinks all three are mocking her; the audience knows about the potion, which is why her anger is funny.

Lesson 1

Connect, Commit and the hands-on work

3 CONNECT

Relationship

In the book: When has an audience known something a character missed? Name a scene from another book or film and explain what knowing early does to the joke. Use the Common Topic: Relationship.

Ask: Name a scene from a book or film where you knew something a character didn't. What did knowing early do to the joke?

4 COMMIT

Your student answers these in their own words, without looking:

- What dramatic irony is, with an example from this scene
- Which arrow on the love map changed, and why
- What I made or performed, and the choice I made

A STRONG ANSWER SOUNDS LIKE

"Dramatic irony is when the audience knows something a character doesn't. Helena thinks Lysander and Demetrius are mocking her, but we know Puck's potion made them fall for her, so her fury is funny instead of sad."

TRY IT AND GOING FURTHER

Try it: Make four name cards and a Puck token. Draw arrows for who loves whom before the scene, then in a second color after Puck enchants Demetrius. Move the tokens as two volunteers read Puck and Oberon.

Middle school: Complete the love map on the worksheet and explain one changed arrow out loud in 30 seconds.

High school: Write a paragraph explaining how dramatic irony makes Act 3, Scene 2 funny. Quote one line from Helena and one from Puck.

ANSWER KEY

Before Puck's fix in 3.2: Lysander (already enchanted in 2.2) loves Helena; Demetrius loves Hermia; Hermia loves Lysander; Helena loves Demetrius. After Oberon's potion, Demetrius also loves Helena. The arrow Puck helps change is Demetrius's, from Hermia to Helena.

> **WRITING SKILL THIS LESSON: EXPLAINING DRAMATIC IRONY**
>
> *Write what the audience knows and what the character doesn't, then why it's funny.*

> **WATCH FOR**
>
> *Losing track of the lovers. Build the card map before any discussion.*

MY NOTES FOR THIS LESSON