



EXPEDITIONARY
LEARNING

Grade 8: Module 2B: Unit 2: Lesson 4

Analyzing How Shakespeare's Play Draws upon Greek Mythology: Part 1



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Long-Term Targets Addressed (Based on NYSP12 ELA CCLS)

I can determine the meaning of words and phrases in a literary text (figurative, connotative, and technical meanings). (RL.8.4)

I can analyze the impact of word choice on meaning and tone (analogies or allusions). (RL.8.4)

I can analyze the connections between modern fiction, myths, traditional stories, or religious works (themes, patterns of events, character types). (RL.8.9)

Supporting Learning Targets

- I can express the gist of the story "Pyramus and Thisbe."
- I can use different strategies to identify the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases in "Pyramus and Thisbe."
- I can analyze the word choice, tone, and meaning in the story "Pyramus and Thisbe."

Ongoing Assessment

- *A Midsummer Night's Dream* structured notes, 4.1.1–87 and 4.1.131–193 (from homework)
- Word Choice, Tone, and Meaning note-catcher: "Pyramus and Thisbe"
- "Pyramus and Thisbe" structured notes



Agenda	Teaching Notes
<ol style="list-style-type: none">Opening<ol style="list-style-type: none">Engaging the Reader: Homework Focus Question (5 minutes)Reviewing Learning Targets (2 minutes)Work Time<ol style="list-style-type: none">Finding the Gist of "Pyramus and Thisbe" (15 minutes)Determining the Meaning of Unfamiliar Words and Phrases (10 minutes)Analyzing Word Choice, Tone, and Meaning (10 minutes)Closing and Assessment<ol style="list-style-type: none">Whole Group Share (3 minutes)Homework<ol style="list-style-type: none">Reread the story "Pyramus and Thisbe" and complete the structured notes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">In this lesson, students read the story "Pyramus and Thisbe," which is the story the mechanicals are rehearsing throughout <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>. Students closely read the text to gain a deeper understanding of the story before they read how the story is performed in the play within the play.To address standard RL.8.4, students analyze the word choice, tone, and meaning. Because of time constraints, students analyze only a small selection of words and phrases for tone and meaning. If you have more time, consider extending this analysis as a whole group discussion and discussing the tone and meaning of words and phrases later in the text. Also consider giving a partially filled-in organizer to students who require more support.Students reread the same text independently for homework, reinforcing the idea that complex texts often require multiple readings.The structured notes for homework are a bit different from the structured notes students have been using for scenes from <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>. Since students will discuss the story for the gist in the lesson, this part of the notes has been removed. As usual, the structured notes have been differentiated; consider providing the supported structured notes for students who need extra reading support.Post: Learning targets.



Lesson Vocabulary	Materials
tragedy, acquaintance, ardour, conversed, lamenting, edifice, appointed, scabbard, ratified, sepulcher.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Pyramus and Thisbe" by Thomas Bulfinch (one per student and one for display)• Equity sticks• Word Choice, Tone, and Meaning note-catcher: "Pyramus and Thisbe" (one per student and one for display)• Word Choice, Tone, and Meaning note-catcher: "Pyramus and Thisbe" Teacher's Guide (for teacher reference)• "Pyramus and Thisbe" structured notes (one per student)• "Pyramus and Thisbe" supported structured notes (optional, for students needing extra reading support)• "Pyramus and Thisbe" Structured Notes Teacher's Guide (for teacher reference)



Opening	Meeting Students' Needs
<p>A. Engaging the Reader: Homework Focus Question (5 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite students to sit with their Rochester discussion partners. • Have students discuss their answers to the homework focus question. • After a minute, cold call a pair to share their responses to the focus question: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "How are dreams used in the resolution of the events in the play?" • Listen for students to explain something like: "In the play, dreams provide a context for the events that are occurring during the night that was historically the night for lovers. The whimsical behavior of fairies using magic potions occurs when characters are sleeping. The confusion that follows when the characters awake seems to be a dream because nothing that is happening fits what they view as reality. Bottom awakes with the queen of fairies believing she is in love with him and with his head changing from that of an ass back to human. Both characters are so confused by the events that take place when they awake for the second time in the night that they write them off as remnants of a dream. The same is true of the lovers. The conflicts of the night before make no sense to them, so they must have been a dream." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening the lesson by asking students to share their homework makes them accountable for completing it. It also gives you the opportunity to monitor which students are not doing their homework.
<p>B. Reviewing Learning Targets (2 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the learning targets aloud as students follow along silently: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "I can express the gist of the story 'Pyramus and Thisbe.'" * "I can use different strategies to identify the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases in 'Pyramus and Thisbe.'" * "I can analyze the word choice, tone, and meaning in the story 'Pyramus and Thisbe.'" • Remind students that throughout the play, the mechanicals have been rehearsing a play that they will perform at a wedding feast. Tell students this play they are performing is based on a Greek myth titled "Pyramus and Thisbe." Share with students that they will be reading this Greek myth today to help them better understand how Shakespeare used this myth in a different way in <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>. • Remind students that the play <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> is a comedy in which the story has a satisfying ending for the characters and the audience. Explain that the Greek myth "Pyramus and Thisbe" is a <i>tragedy</i>. A tragedy is a story with an unhappy or tragic ending, usually involving the downfall of the main character. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing the key academic vocabulary in learning targets can prepare students for vocabulary they may encounter in the lesson. • Posting learning targets allows students to reference them throughout the lesson to check their understanding. The learning targets also provide a reminder to students and teachers about the intended learning behind a given lesson or activity.



Work Time	Meeting Students' Needs
<p>A. Finding the Gist of “Pyramus and Thisbe” (15 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display and distribute “Pyramus and Thisbe” by Thomas Bulfinch to students. Invite them to silently read along with you as you read the story aloud. • Invite students to silently reread Paragraph 1 for the gist. Ask them to discuss in discussion pairs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * “What is the gist of this paragraph? What is it mostly about?” • Select students to share their responses. Listen for them to explain that the first paragraph is mostly about how Pyramus and Thisbe live in houses that are next to each other and love each other, but they have been forbidden from being together, so they find ways to communicate, such as through a hole in the wall. • Invite students to circle any unfamiliar words in the first paragraph. Select volunteers to share the unfamiliar words they circled and circle them on your displayed text. Ensure the following are circled: <i>acquaintance</i>, <i>ardour</i>, and <i>conversed</i>. Explain that you will come back to the unfamiliar words later. • Invite students to work with discussion partners to find the gist and circle any unfamiliar vocabulary in the remaining paragraphs of the story. Remind students to discuss the gist with their partner before recording it. • Circulate and support students as they read. For those who need more support, ask them to practice telling you the gist of a section before they write it in the margin. • Refocus whole group. Consider using equity sticks to select students to share the gist of the remaining paragraphs. Remind students that the gist is just one's initial sense of what a text is mostly about; it's fine if they don't fully understand yet. Ask: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * “What is this story mostly about? Basically, what happens?” • Cold call students to share their responses with the whole group. Listen for them to explain that Pyramus and Thisbe agree to meet at a tomb, but when Thisbe gets there, she is frightened away by a lioness and drops her veil, which the lioness chews with her bloodied jaws. Pyramus arrives at the meeting place and, finding the bloodied veil, assumes Thisbe has been killed and so kills himself. Thisbe returns to the meeting place to find Pyramus dead and so kills herself. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking students to identify challenging vocabulary helps them monitor their understanding of a complex text. • Hearing a complex text read slowly, fluently, and without interruption or explanation promotes fluency for students; they are hearing a strong reader read the text aloud with accuracy and expression, and are simultaneously looking at and thinking about the words on the printed page. Be sure to set clear expectations that students read along silently in their heads as you read the text aloud. • ELLs may be unfamiliar with more vocabulary words than are mentioned in this lesson. Check for comprehension of general words that most students would know.



Work Time (continued)	Meeting Students' Needs
<p>B. Determining the Meaning of Unfamiliar Words and Phrases (10 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus students on the word <i>acquaintance</i> in the first paragraph. Ask: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "Read the sentence around the word. What could you replace this word with?" Select volunteers to share their responses. Listen for students to say something like: "friendship." Ask students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "What do you think the word <i>acquaintance</i> means?" Cold call students to share their responses. Listen for: "It means a friend or a friendship." Emphasize that rather than a close friend, this is more someone you happen to know. Focus students on the word <i>ardour</i> and ask them to repeat the exercise again: to think of a word that could be a substitute to help them figure out what the word means. Listen for students to suggest: "enthusiasm" or "passion." Focus students on the word <i>conversed</i>. Ask: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "What does this word sound like?" Select volunteers to share their responses. Listen for students to explain that <i>conversed</i> sounds like conversation. Ask: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "What do you think conversed means?" Cold call students to share their responses. Listen for students to explain that it means to have a conversation. Focus students on the first sentence of the second paragraph: "Next morning, when Aurora had put out the stars ..." Students may need to be told here that Aurora was the Roman goddess of dawn for this to make sense. If there are any other words students circled as unfamiliar, depending on the time you have, do one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Invite other students to tell them the meaning. – Invite them to look the words up in the dictionary. – Tell them what the word means. Words students may struggle with: <i>lamenting, edifice, appointed, scabbard, ratified, sepulcher.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing academic vocabulary words benefits all students developing academic language. Consider allowing them to grapple with a complex text before explicitly teaching vocabulary. After students have read for the gist, they can identify challenging vocabulary for themselves. Teachers can address student-selected vocabulary as well as predetermined vocabulary upon subsequent encounters with the text. However, in some cases and with some students, pre-teaching selected vocabulary may be necessary. Asking students to identify challenging vocabulary helps them monitor their understanding of a complex text. When students annotate the text by circling these words, it can also provide a formative assessment for the teacher.



Work Time (continued)	Meeting Students' Needs
<p>C. Analyzing Word Choice, Tone, and Meaning (10 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tell students they are now going to analyze some of the word choice, tone, and meaning in the story.• Display and distribute Word Choice, Tone, and Meaning note-catcher: “Pyramus and Thisbe” to students. Invite them to read the directions and questions with you and explain that students are to work in their discussion pairs to complete the note-catcher.• Focus students on the first row, which has been filled in as an example. Do a think-aloud with students to show them how these answers arrived in the first row: “We determined that acquaintance means friendship, and a fruit ripens as it grows sweeter, so I think it means that friendship grew into sweet love. I think the tone is sweet because of the use of the word ‘ripened.’”• Invite students to begin. Remind them to discuss ideas with their discussion partner before recording on their note-catcher.• Circulate to support students in rereading and determining the tone and meaning. As you circulate, probe as needed:<ul style="list-style-type: none">* “What do you think it means? Why? What makes you think that?”* “What tone does that word or phrase suggest?”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Questioning students about parts of the text encourages them to reread the text for further analysis and ultimately allows for a deeper understanding.• Guiding questions provide motivation for student engagement in the topic, and give a purpose to reading a text closely.• Consider giving students who require additional support partially completed organizers.



Closing and Assessment	Meeting Students' Needs
<p>A. Whole Group Share (3 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Go through each question on Word Choice, Tone, and Meaning note-catcher: "Pyramus and Thisbe" and invite students to share their responses. Clarify answers using the Word Choice, Tone, and Meaning note-catcher: "Pyramus and Thisbe" Teacher's Guide.• Invite students to revise their answers where they answered incorrectly.• Distribute the "Pyramus and Thisbe" structured notes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider inviting ELL students to discuss their ideas with other students speaking the same first language to allow for deeper thinking and discussion.
Homework	Meeting Students' Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reread the story "Pyramus and Thisbe" and complete the structured notes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider providing the supported version of the structured notes to students who need help summarizing Shakespeare's dense text and defining key vocabulary words.



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Supporting Materials



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“Pyramus and Thisbe” by Thomas Bulfinch

Pyramus was the handsomest youth, and Thisbe the fairest maiden, in all Babylonia, where Semiramis reigned. Their parents occupied adjoining houses; and neighbourhood brought the young people together, and acquaintance ripened into love. They would gladly have married, but their parents forbade. One thing, however, they could not forbid—that love should glow with equal ardour in the bosoms of both. They conversed by signs and glances, and the fire burned more intensely for being covered up. In the wall that parted the two houses there was a crack, caused by some fault in the structure. No one had remarked it before, but the lovers discovered it. What will not love discover! It afforded a passage to the voice; and tender messages used to pass backward and forward through the gap. As they stood, Pyramus on this side, Thisbe on that, their breaths would mingle. “Cruel wall,” they said, “why do you keep two lovers apart? But we will not be ungrateful. We owe you, we confess, the privilege of transmitting loving words to willing ears.” Such words they uttered on different sides of the wall; and when night came and they must say farewell, they pressed their lips upon the wall, she on her side, he on his, as they could come no nearer.

Next morning, when Aurora had put out the stars, and the sun had melted the frost from the grass, they met at the accustomed spot. Then, after lamenting their hard fate, they agreed that next night, when all was still, they would slip away from the watchful eyes, leave their dwellings and walk out into the fields; and to insure a meeting, repair to a well-known edifice standing without the city’s bounds, called the Tomb of Ninus, and that the one who came first should await the other at the foot of a certain tree. It was a white mulberry tree, and stood near a cool spring. All was agreed on, and they waited impatiently for the sun to go down beneath the waters and night to rise up from them. Then cautiously Thisbe stole forth, unobserved by the family, her head covered with a veil, made her way to the monument and sat down under the tree. As she sat alone in the dim light of the evening she descried a lioness, her jaws reeking with recent slaughter, approaching the fountain to slake her thirst. Thisbe fled at the sight, and sought refuge in the hollow of a rock. As she fled she dropped her veil. The lioness after drinking at the spring turned to retreat to the woods, and seeing the veil on the ground, tossed and rent it with her bloody mouth.

“Pyramus and Thisbe” by Thomas Bulfinch

Pyramus, having been delayed, now approached the place of meeting. He saw in the sand the footsteps of the lion, and the colour fled from his cheeks at the sight. Presently he found the veil all rent and bloody. “O hapless girl,” said he, “I have been the cause of thy death! Thou, more worthy of life than I, hast fallen the first victim. I will follow. I am the guilty cause, in tempting thee forth to a place of such peril, and not being myself on the spot to guard thee. Come forth, ye lions, from the rocks, and tear this guilty body with your teeth.” He took up the veil, carried it with him to the appointed tree, and covered it with kisses and with tears. “My blood also shall stain your texture,” said he, and drawing his sword plunged it into his heart. The blood spurted from the wound, and tinged the white mulberries of the tree all red; and sinking into the earth reached the roots, so that the red colour mounted through the trunk to the fruit.

By this time Thisbe, still trembling with fear, yet wishing not to disappoint her lover, stepped cautiously forth, looking anxiously for the youth, eager to tell him the danger she had escaped. When she came to the spot and saw the changed colour of the mulberries she doubted whether it was the same place. While she hesitated she saw the form of one struggling in the agonies of death. She started back, a shudder ran through her frame as a ripple on the face of the still water when a sudden breeze sweeps over it. But as soon as she recognized her lover, she screamed and beat her breast, embracing the lifeless body, pouring tears into its wounds, and imprinting kisses on the cold lips. “O Pyramus,” she cried, “what has done this? Answer me, Pyramus; it is your own Thisbe that speaks. Hear me, dearest, and lift that drooping head!” At the name of Thisbe Pyramus opened his eyes, then closed them again. She saw her veil stained blood and the scabbard empty of its sword. “Thy own hand has slain thee, and for my sake,” she said. “I too can be brave for once, and my love is as strong as thine. I will follow thee in death, for I have been the cause; and death which alone could part us shall not prevent my joining thee. And ye, unhappy parents of us both, deny us not our united request. As love and death have joined us, let one tomb contain us. And thou, tree, retain the marks of slaughter. Let thy berries still serve for memorials of our blood.” So saying she plunged the sword into her breast. Her parents ratified her wish, the gods also ratified it. The two bodies were buried in one sepulchre, and the tree ever after brought forth purple berries, as it does to this day.



Word Choice, Tone, and Meaning:
“Pyramus and Thisbe” Note-catcher

Name: _____

Date: _____

Directions:

1. Reread the text.
2. Read the quote in the first column.
3. What does it mean? Discuss the meaning. Record it in the middle column.
4. Look at the words that have been used. Choose one word to describe the tone.

Quotation	Meaning?	Tone?
“... and acquaintance ripened into love.”	<i>Their friendship grew into sweet love.</i>	<i>Sweet.</i>
“... that love should glow with equal ardour ...”		
“... and the fire burned more intensely for being covered up.”		
“It afforded a passage to the voice; and tender messages used to pass backward and forward through the gap.”		
“... she descried a lioness, her jaws reeking with recent slaughter ...”		

Word Choice, Tone, and Meaning Note-catcher
"Pyramus and Thisbe" Teacher's Guide

Name: _____

Date: _____

Directions:

1. Reread the text.
2. Read the quote in the first column.
3. What does it mean? Discuss the meaning. Record it in the middle column.
4. Look at the words that have been used. Choose one word to describe the tone.

Quotation	Meaning?	Tone?
"... and acquaintance ripened into love."	<i>Their friendship grew into sweet love.</i>	<i>Sweet</i>
"... that love should glow with equal ardour ..."	<i>Both were equally passionate about each other.</i>	<i>Romantic</i>
"... and the fire burned more intensely for being covered up."	<i>The passion grew because they had to hide their love for each other.</i>	<i>Triumphant</i>
"It afforded a passage to the voice; and tender messages used to pass backward and forward through the gap."	<i>They spoke to each other tenderly through the gap in the wall.</i>	<i>Tender</i>
"... she descried a lioness, her jaws reeking with recent slaughter ..."	<i>The lioness had blood on her jaws from a recent killing.</i>	<i>Disgusted</i>



“Pyramus and Thisbe” Structured Notes

Name: _____

Date: _____

Focus question: How is the Greek myth “Pyramus and Thisbe” related to the story of the young lovers in A Midsummer Night’s Dream?

Vocabulary

Word	Definition	Context clues: How did you figure out this word?
forbade		
uttered		
dwellings		
descried		
slake		
ratified		



“Pyramus and Thisbe” Supported Structured Notes

Name: _____

Date: _____

Focus question: How is the Greek myth “Pyramus and Thisbe” related to the story of the young lovers in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*?

Vocabulary

Word	Definition	Context clues: How did you figure out this word?
forbade	Didn’t let them	
uttered	Spoke	
dwellings	Places where they live	
descried	Saw	
slake	Quenched	
ratified	Granted/agreed to	

“Pyramus and Thisbe” Structured Notes Teacher’s Guide
(for Teacher Reference)

Name: _____

Date: _____

Focus question: How is the Greek myth “Pyramus and Thisbe” related to the story of the young lovers in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*?

*Both the story “Pyramus and Thisbe” and the love story in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* start with two people who are in love but are forbidden to be together by their parents. In both stories, the lovers make a plan to be together despite their parents’ wishes.*

Vocabulary

Word	Definition	Context clues: How did you figure out this word?
forbade	Didn’t let them	
uttered	Spoke	
dwelling	Places where they live	
descried	Saw	
slake	Quenched	
ratified	Granted/agreed to	