

Visual Essay Assignment

DUE DATE: Monday, June 21st

Why are Shakespeare's plays still relevant today?

Shakespeare wrote his plays more than four hundred years ago. As we discovered in our introductory PowerPoint, Elizabethan England was a fascinating place where a queen ruled and people adhered to strict hierarchies. Modern technology and conveniences were unheard of and life was, as political philosopher Thomas Hobbes put it, "Nasty, brutish and short."

Although life has changed a lot since Shakespeare wrote his plays, much has also stayed the same. Many of the main ideas that the play engages with, such as: love, friendship, class, gender, and more, are very familiar to modern readers, and some of the content of the play's plot feels oddly akin to our modern experiences, and it is these similarities that you are going to explore in your next task.

Description of Task

You will create a **Digital Visual Essay** using a suitable program (Google Slides) answering the following question:

How is Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* still relevant today and what can we learn from it?

Thesis: The answer to this question is the thesis for your presentation.

Shakespeare's play is still relevant today because we can relate to and learn...(your idea).

(A lesson we can learn from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* about life and the human condition)

Visual Essay Structure

Please follow the format and content as follows:

1) Slide 1: Title Slide

- a) Your name
- b) The course code
- c) The title of the assignment
- d) Visuals

2) Slide 2: Introduction to the Play

- a) Information about the background of the play (you may need to do a bit of research)
- b) A brief summary of the play (2-3 sentences)
- c) Visuals

3) Slide 3: Your Thesis Statement (also including visuals)

- **Decide on an issue that comes up in the play that you can expand on and relate to our modern world.** Research this issue and briefly explain it and the effects.
- Create your thesis statement

Some examples of issues: (Unrequited love, toxic or abusive friendships and relationships, self-esteem and body image issues, mental health, bullying, class hierarchies, equality, gender norms, unhealthy friendships, body shaming, access to education, prejudice and racism)

4) Slide 4 - 11: Two Subtopics that Prove your Thesis (your subtopics will be the two different ways that your theme is explored in the play). For **each** subtopic include:

Repeat these steps twice (once for each subtopic):

- ☐ Slide 4 (and 8): Title of subtopic (The way in which the theme is explored)
- ☐ Slide 5 (and 9): Scene from the play including a quotation (from the original Shakespearean version) that reflects the subtopic (MLA citation)
- ☐ Slide 6 (and 10): Brief analysis as to how this reflects the subtopic and the theme (What is Shakespeare teaching us about the theme?)
- ☐ 1 example in the modern world that reflects the subtopic (this could be song lyrics, video game themes, books, films, shows, social media platforms etc....)
- ☐ Slide 7 (and 11): Brief description of how these modern examples relate
- ☐ Visuals throughout to enhance your ideas.

5) Slide 12: Concluding Statement about Shakespeare's Overall Relevance – Brief and creative

- Include a references list after or on your concluding slide (MLA format)

[Here is an example of a student assignment.](#)

DO NOT simply read off your slide. The slides should not include too much text, which means the bulk of your analysis will be spoken. You can use notes to help you, but please do not read off of the slide. The slide should have an outline of what you will talk about, but not read directly off of it.

Task List

- ☐ Read Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, complete the activities related to each act, participate in class discussions, watch parts of the film etc...
- ☐ Develop a thesis statement that relates to the modern world
- ☐ Find two specific ways (subtopics) from the play that highlight the thesis
- ☐ Research current events, media, films, shows, games etc...that reflect those subtopics
- ☐ Complete the "focus on lesson learned" steps
- ☐ Choose a digital format (slides, prezzi, powerpoint etc..)
- ☐ Create your Digital Visual Essay according to the information above.

- ☐ Remember that quality, clear concise phrasing is more effective than quantity.
- ☐ Use many visuals throughout your digital essay to enhance the meaning of your work
- ☐ Create a works Cited using MLA format if you are using secondary resources
- ☐ Submit your work to Brightspace
- ☐ Present to the class - TBD