

# CREATIVE ARTS learning springboards



## Shakespeare's natural world: dandelions

### Golden Lads in Fear No More the Heat of the Sun

**Aim:** Shakespeare's metaphors come alive through understanding plants

In Act 4 Scene 2 of Shakespeare's play Cymbeline, a burial song is sung by the King's two sons in which dandelions are referred to as Golden Lads. This song is often spoken or read at funerals as it is found to be comforting:

*Fear no more the heat o' th' sun  
Nor the furious winter's rages;  
Thou thy worldly task hast done,  
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages,  
Golden lads and girls all must,  
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.*

What image comes to mind when the 'golden lads and girls' all 'come to dust'?



In John Keats' poem, 'I stood tip-toe upon a little hill', the 'dust' of the dandelions (or the clocks – the seed-heads) are described as 'down' – the softest of duck feathers:

*'...the soft rustle of a maiden's gown  
Fanning away the dandelion's down'*

#### Activity:

- Shakespeare's lines are written in iambic pentameter or 10 syllables. Try to deliver them in a 'rap' form, noticing that the alternate lines rhyme for 4 lines, and the final 2 rhyme with each other.
- Work out which letters Shakespeare missed out and replaced with apostrophes; use logic! Why did he do this?
- See also the Literacy Learning Springboard – Iambic pentameter

#### Success criteria:

- ✓ I can describe the characteristics of plants used by Shakespeare, other poets and authors.
- ✓ I can use plant metaphors in my own writing.

## Dog rose or eglantine

### Oberon describes the bank where Titania sleeps

**Aim:** Shakespeare's metaphors come alive through understanding plants: using visualisation for memory and dramatic connection

Work through Oberon's speech from Act 2 Scene 1 in A Midsummer Night's Dream, listing all the flowers he names when he tells Puck where to find Titania. Collect or draw images of the plants, and place them in the order they are mentioned:

*I know a bank where the wild thyme blows  
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,  
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,  
With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine:  
There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,  
Lulled in these flowers with dances and delight.*



#### Activity:

- With the pictures in front of them, pupils should attempt to learn the speech. Remember the lines usually have 10 syllables (do they all, in this speech?) and in this case the lines rhyme in pairs, known as couplets. See how much easier it is to learn the speech when using the flowers as memory aids.
- Search online or visit the Royal Shakespeare Company website to discover more about this play.
- Write a design brief for Titania's costume, look at movement, flowers, colours, textures – all referenced in the extract. Make a drawing of the ideas.
- See also Creative Arts Learning Springboard - Theatre masks and costumes

#### Success criteria:

- ✓ I can memorise verse through visualisation of plants.
- ✓ I can use plants as an inspiration for creativity in costume.

