

Teaching Shakespeare

Use the following texts along with the tips at the end of this resource as a way of introducing children to Shakespeare through poetry.

Cauldron bubble and Double, double, toil and trouble.



Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.
Fillet of a fenny snake,
In the cauldron boil and bake;
Eye of newt and toe of frog,
Wool of bat and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork and blind-worm's sting,
Lizard's leg and howlet's wing,
For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.

Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.
Cool it with a baboon's blood,
Then the charm is firm and good.

– The witches, *Macbeth*

The isle is full of noises

Be not afeard. The isle is full of noises,
Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.
Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
Will hum about mine ears, and sometime voices
That, if I then had waked after long sleep
Will make me sleep again; and then in dreaming
The clouds methought would open and show riches
Ready to drop upon me, that when I waked
I cried to dream again

– Caliban, *The Tempest*

Love spell

Flower of this purple dye,
Hit with Cupid's archery,
Sink in apple of his eye.
When his love he doth espy,
Let her shine as gloriously
As the Venus of the sky.

– Oberon, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*



Mischievous sprite

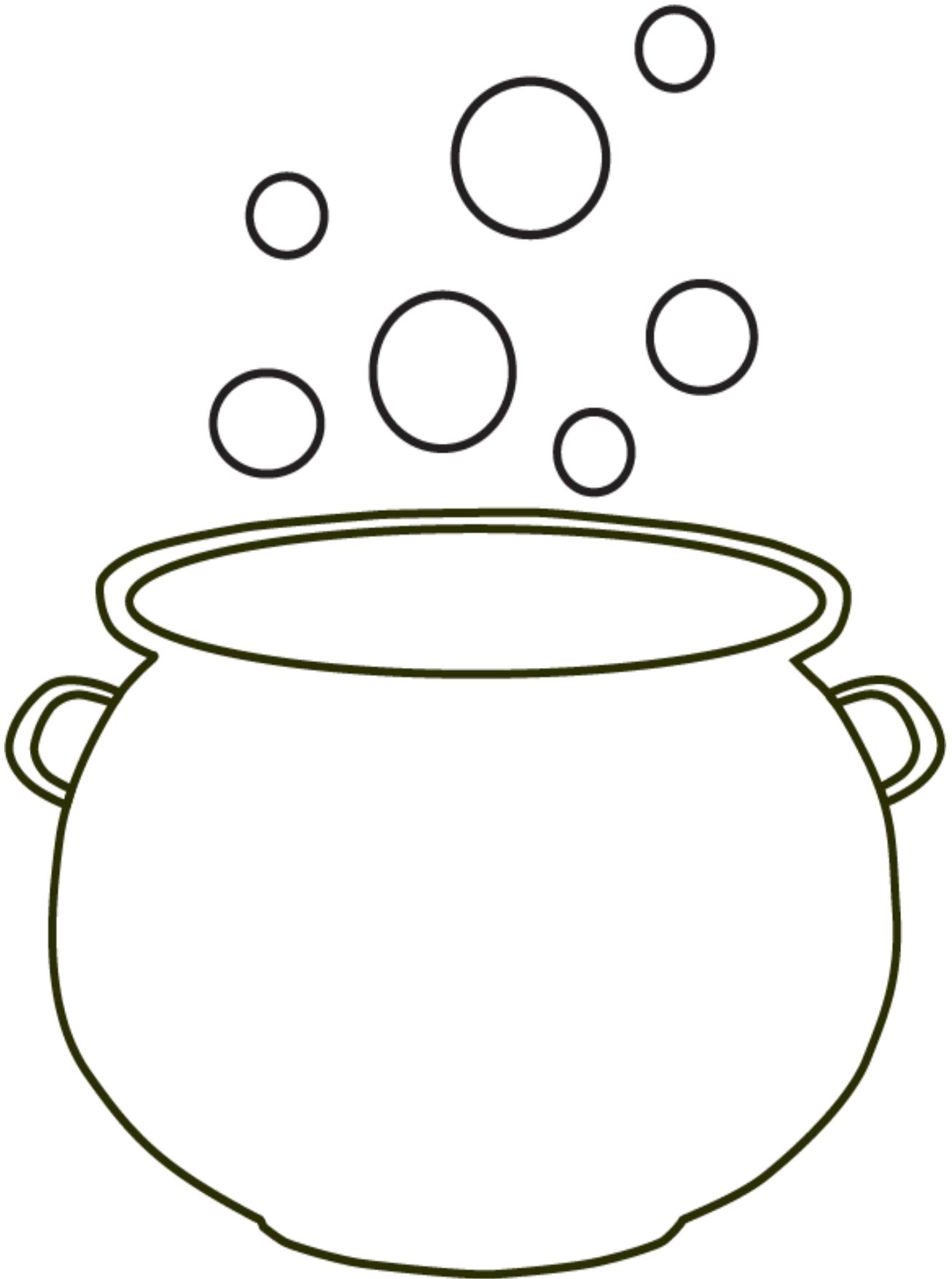
FAIRY

Either I mistake your shape and making quite,
Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite
Called Robin Goodfellow. Are not you he
That frights the maidens of the villagery,
Skim milk, and sometimes labour in the quern
And bootless make the breathless huswife churn,
And sometime make the drink to bear no barm,
Mislead night wanderers, laughing at their harm?
Those that "Hobgoblin" call you and "sweet Puck,"
You do their work, and they shall have good luck.
Are not you he?

ROBIN

Thou speakest aright.
I am that merry wanderer of the night.
I jest to Oberon and make him smile
When I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile,
Neighing in likeness of a filly foal.
And sometime lurk I in a gossip's bowl
In very likeness of a roasted crab,
And, when she drinks, against her lips I bob
And on her withered dewlap pour the ale.
The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,
Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh me;
Then slip I from her bum, down topples she
And "Tailor!" cries and falls into a cough,
And then the whole choir hold their hips and loffe
And waxen in their mirth and neeze and swear
A merrier hour was never wasted there.

– Fairy and Robin, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*



1

Cauldron bubble (EYFS/KS1) Share the witches' spell from *Macbeth* above with the children. Tell them that they are going to concoct their own class spell. Take them on a nature hunt around the school grounds to take photographs of 'ingredients' for their spell – they might choose weeds, beetles or even birds. Print out the photographs and stick them on a large paper cauldron. What magic do the children think that their spell might create?

2

Double, double, toil and trouble (KS1) Ask the children to identify the rhyming words in the witches' spell from *Macbeth* above. Explain that the spell is written in rhyming couplets. Challenge the children to work in pairs to create their own rhyming couplets about ingredients in a witch's spell. Put the couplets together to create a class poem using the cauldron template.

3

The isle is full of noises (KS1/LKS2) As a class, read Caliban's speech from *The Tempest*. Explain that Caliban lives on a magical island, and that the instruments he hears playing are invisible and mysterious. Challenge the children to identify which words in Caliban's speech describe how the music sounds. Provide groups of children with a range of instruments and ask them to compose their own interpretation of the music that Caliban hears, bearing the words of the speech in mind.

4

Love spell (LKS2) Read Oberon's speech from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with the children. Explain that Oberon is dropping a love potion made from a flower into a young man's eyes as he sleeps. Can the children identify the imperative (bossy) verbs in the speech? Challenge the children to write their own short love spells where the lines begin with imperative verbs.

5

Mischievous sprite (UKS2) Ask pairs of children to search through the conversation between the Fairy and Robin in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, making a list of the mischievous things that Robin Goodfellow (aka Puck) gets up to. Encourage them to look up unfamiliar vocabulary to help them understand the meaning of the speeches. Now ask them to write their own list poem about a modern-day mischievous sprite! What kind of trouble might it cause?