

## *Appreciating Shakespeare's Language*

When Shakespeare wrote his sonnets and plays, the language he used was popular and would have been easily recognized by seventeenth century audiences. However, in the twenty-first century, we have a more difficult time comprehending the words Shakespeare used. What we must remember is that Shakespeare's words can be easily "translated" into modern English, and once we become familiar with these words, it becomes easier to read and understand the language, and then we are able to appreciate the story Shakespeare is trying to tell.

Below is a list of common words found in Shakespeare's works, along with a modern "translation" of the word or phrase.

*Directions: Working with a partner, choose from the following three scenarios to write a scene between two people using modern day English. Each character must have at least 10 lines. Next, using the words below, "translate" your scene into the Old English language that Shakespeare would have used.*

*Scenario #1: Write a scene in which two girls (or boys) have a crush on the same boy (or girl), but don't know it. In the scene, either have the girls (boys) discover their problem, or have them talk about the same boy (girl) and never figure it out.*

*Scenario #2: Write a scene in which a teenager wants to borrow his parents' car to go to the movies with his friends. The parents oppose the idea, and the teenager tries to persuade them.*

*Scenario #3: Write a scene in which a teenager is applying for his/her first job at a popular clothing store. Write a dialogue between the store manager and the teenager that might occur during the interview process.*

*Once you have written your 20-line scenes in Shakespeare's language, present your scene in front of the class for an exercise in public speaking and performance, but most importantly, training your eyes and ears to the beauty of the language!*

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|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. mark: pay attention to             | 23. stay!: wait!    |
| 2. attend: listen to                  | 24. hie: go         |
| 3. nay: no                            | 25. tidings: news   |
| 4. withal: with                       | 26. pray: beg       |
| 5. discourses: speaks                 | 27. decree: order   |
| 6. an: if                             | 28. resolve: plan   |
| 7. will: desire                       | 29. foe: enemy      |
| 8. thither: there                     | 30. coz: cousin     |
| 9. anon: at once                      | 31. hither: here    |
| 10. thy: your                         | 32. plague: curse   |
| 11. thou art: you are                 | 33. adieu: goodbye  |
| 12. woo: to court a woman/man         | 34. woe: grief      |
| 13. soft: hush                        | 35. heavy: sad      |
| 14. methinks: I think                 | 36. counsel: advice |
| 15. dispatch: to send away or to kill | 37. thee: you       |
| 16. nought: nothing                   | 38. sirrah: fellow  |
| 17. marry: of course; indeed          | 39. would: wish     |
| 18. good-den or do-den: Good Evening  | 40. doth: does      |
| 19. hap: lucky                        |                     |
| 20. maid: an unmarried young girl     |                     |
| 21. humor: mood or moisture           |                     |
| 22. wot: know                         |                     |

