

WILL'S WORD WARRIORS



This warrior booklet belongs to:

SHAKESPEARE
WEEK

WILL'S WORD WARRIOR



Greetings youngling!

This booklet is full of fun and exciting ways to think about words and will give you an idea of how clever William Shakespeare was in the way he put words together.

Although Shakespeare lived over four hundred years ago, his plays and poems are still shared and enjoyed by people every day, all over the world. So why is he still so popular? We can think of three main reasons:

- They tell great stories, full of drama and atmosphere.
- They have fascinating characters.
- They contain some of the best poetry in the English language.

But there's a fourth reason – the characters use language in really exciting ways.

Shakespeare teaches us how to be creative and daring in our use of language. He invented new words and put old words together in unexpected ways. He was a real warrior in his use of words.

That's what this booklet is about. It tells you some of the ways that Shakespeare used language and shows how you can be a word warrior too.

Good fortune, friends!



Everyday Words

Some of the things we say to each other every day were said using different words in Shakespeare's time. Here are some examples from *Romeo and Juliet*:



Draw a scene where Romeo and Juliet greet each other. Include speech bubbles.



Two words that were often used in Shakespeare's day were **apparel** and **visage**, which mean **clothes** and **face**. Can you rewrite these sentences using words that Shakespeare would have used?

She is in her best clothes.

Let me see your face.

FUN FACT

Nowadays we use the word fortnight to mean two weeks (or fourteen nights). In Shakespeare's time people said **sennight** (seven nights) for **week**.

False Friends

False friends are people you thought you knew well, but who turn out to be completely different. Language has false friends too, and because English vocabulary has changed so much since the 17th century, you will find false friends throughout Shakespeare.

If one character describes another as **naughty**, the meaning is much stronger than today. The person is being really horrible. In *King Lear*, the Duke of Gloucester calls Regan a “naughty lady” when she begins to torture him. He means she is truly evil.

If someone says they are **undone**, it doesn't mean they need to do up their buttons. It means they have been destroyed or ruined by something that has happened. In *Romeo and Juliet*, the Nurse begins to tell Juliet that Romeo has killed Tybalt by saying, “We are undone, lady we are undone”.

Take a look at the words in the table. We've included the meanings from Shakespeare's time, can you add in the modern-day meanings?

Word	Shakespeare's meaning	Modern-day meaning
awful	awe-inspiring	
bully	fine fellow	
glass	mirror	
cornet	type of trumpet	
dart	pointed weapon	

FUN FACT

Revolve did not mean to turn round and round. It meant **think deeply**. In *Twelfth Night*, Malvolio picks up a letter that says, “If this fall into thy hand, revolve”.

When the herald Mountjoy comes to see King Henry V, he says, “You know me by my habit”. What is the correct meaning? Circle the one you think is the correct meaning.*

- He can't stop scratching his nose.
- He's dressed like a monk.
- He's wearing special clothes that show he is a herald.



Idioms

When you join words together in a sentence, each word usually has a clear and separate meaning. If you say “I like cats and dogs”, you're obviously talking about two different kinds of animal. But if you say “It's raining cats and dogs”, it means that it's raining very heavily – there are no animals to be seen at all! When we can't work out the sense of a sentence from the meanings of its individual words, we say there is an idiom.

Many modern idioms are first found in Shakespeare. Here are two examples of language that can't be taken literally:

In *The Tempest*, Prospero tells Ferdinand and Miranda that the dancers they have just seen are spirits who have suddenly vanished and have, “melted into air, into thin air”.

“Break the ice” is first recorded in *Troilus and Cressida*. When people find it difficult to talk to each other, and there's an awkward silence, someone who gets the conversation going is said to “break the ice”.

FUN FACT

In *Macbeth*, the porter hears a loud knocking at the gate of Macbeth's castle, and calls out, “Knock, knock, knock! Who's there?” Today, there are thousands of “knock” jokes.

On a piece of paper, write a short dialogue where someone who doesn't know this idiom gets into a muddle, thinking that it means breaking the ice on the surface of a pond.

Choose one of the following idioms from Shakespeare and draw two pictures – one showing the idiomatic sense, the other where the words keep their separate meaning.

- I haven't slept a wink (from *Cymbeline*)
- We laughed ourselves into stitches (from *Twelfth Night*)
- My mum made a dish fit for the gods (from *Julius Caesar*)



Making New Words

About a thousand words that we use today were first recorded in Shakespeare's poems and plays. Often he was simply the first to write them down, but he also invented words to say something he had in his head. We can be just as creative today. If you're not sure how to do it, you can learn a lot from seeing how Shakespeare did it.

Here are some of the words first found in Shakespeare: **fairyland** (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), **amazing** (*Richard II*), **birthplace** (*Coriolanus*), **blood-stained** (*Titus Andronicus*) and **squander** (*The Merchant of Venice*).

Once you know how to use a prefix or suffix, you can start using them in new ways, just as Shakespeare did. Today, if someone doesn't want to stay friends with you online, you can be "unfriended". What might you say if someone took your bike away? Or your socks? Make two drawings of your own made-up words, one using **un-**, the other using **-less**.

FUN FACT

In *Love's Labour's Lost*, the schoolteacher Holofernes uses seven un- words to call Constable Dull stupid, "His undressed, unpolished, uneducated, unpruned, untrained, or rather, unlettered, or ratherest, unconfirmed fashion".

Two of Shakespeare's favourite ways of making new words were to add letters at the beginning and end of existing words:

A prefix (before the word) such as **un** means **not**, as in "uncomfortable" and "unsafe". Some of his coinages* are striking. When Richard II is forced to give his crown to Henry Bolingbroke, he says he has been "unkinged".

A suffix (after the word) such as **less** means **without**, as in "noiseless" or "useless". In *Troilus and Cressida*, when Ajax decides not to speak to anyone, Thersites calls him "languageless".

Imagine you are Shakespeare. You've just coined **catlike** in *As You Like It* to describe how a lioness is looking at a sleeping man, "with catlike watch". Now you want to describe someone creeping up the stairs like a mouse. On a piece of paper, draw a picture and label it with your new word.



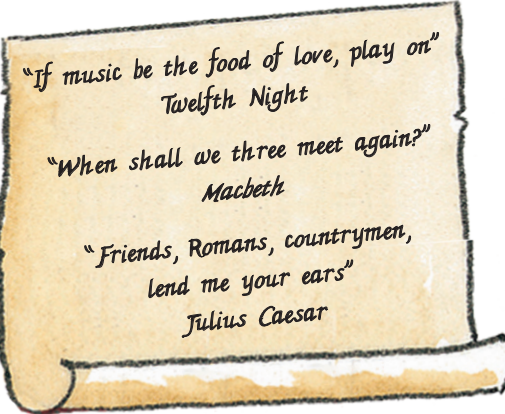
Playing with Quotations

The names of some of Shakespeare's plays are very famous. Most people have heard of *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* or *Romeo and Juliet*. And some of the lines he wrote are also very famous, so people use them all the time. When Juliet says she loves Romeo even though his surname is Montague (the name of her family's enemies), she asks herself, "What's in a name?" You'll hear people ask that question in all sorts of situations today.

People who know Shakespeare love to quote from him and they might playfully change the words. If four friends have met up, they might leave by saying, "When shall we four meet again?" mimicking the witches from *Macbeth*.

The same thing happens with play titles, such as with *Much Ado About Nothing*. **Ado** means a fuss or commotion, so you might find a newspaper reporting an argument about video games with a headline of "Much ado about games".

Here are three famous quotations from Shakespeare:



People sometimes play with Hamlet's question, "To be or not to be". An article on food had the headline, "To diet or not to diet". Choose your own verb to fill in the blanks and draw a picture showing "To ---- or not to ----"

To _____ or not to _____

On a separate piece of paper, write a short story that finishes with the words, "All's well that ends well".



*Coinage means the invention of a new word or phrase.

Find Shakespeare's Words

All of the words below appeared for the first time in one of Shakespeare's plays.
Can you find them in the word search?

LONELY, EXCELLENT, BEDROOM, LEAPFROG, GLOOMY, ZANY,
AMAZEMENT, HINT, FAIRYLAND, SWAGGER

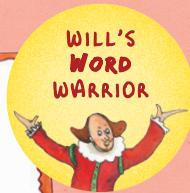


E	K	I	H	G	Q	I	P	E	U	T	M	B	C	Y
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Y	N	A	Z	E	R	B	I	E	V	L	E	Z	E	O
B	P	F	I	V	M	A	Y	M	O	L	A	R	A	L
Z	T	W	T	R	U	V	K	N	L	X	E	T	P	G
P	N	F	H	V	Y	R	E	E	T	G	O	Q	F	I
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S	Z	K	O	X	I	S	T	F	D	W	V	A	V	Z
R	A	U	B	V	R	D	I	X	P	B	C	I	G	Z
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M	A	Y	M	M	P	R	E	A	B	D	M	S	M	O
X	W	Y	X	S	T	X	H	L	Z	N	R	U	B	J



WELL DONE!

You've completed all the activities
in this booklet and you are now a
WILL'S WORD WARRIOR!



If you enjoyed this booklet and want to find out more about Shakespeare then go to our website at: www.shakespeareweek.org.uk and click on Kids' Zone where you will find lots more fun things to do. If you want to read some of Shakespeare's plays and stories then you could check out Marcia Williams' retellings at www.walker.co.uk. Marcia drew all the funny cartoons in this booklet.

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