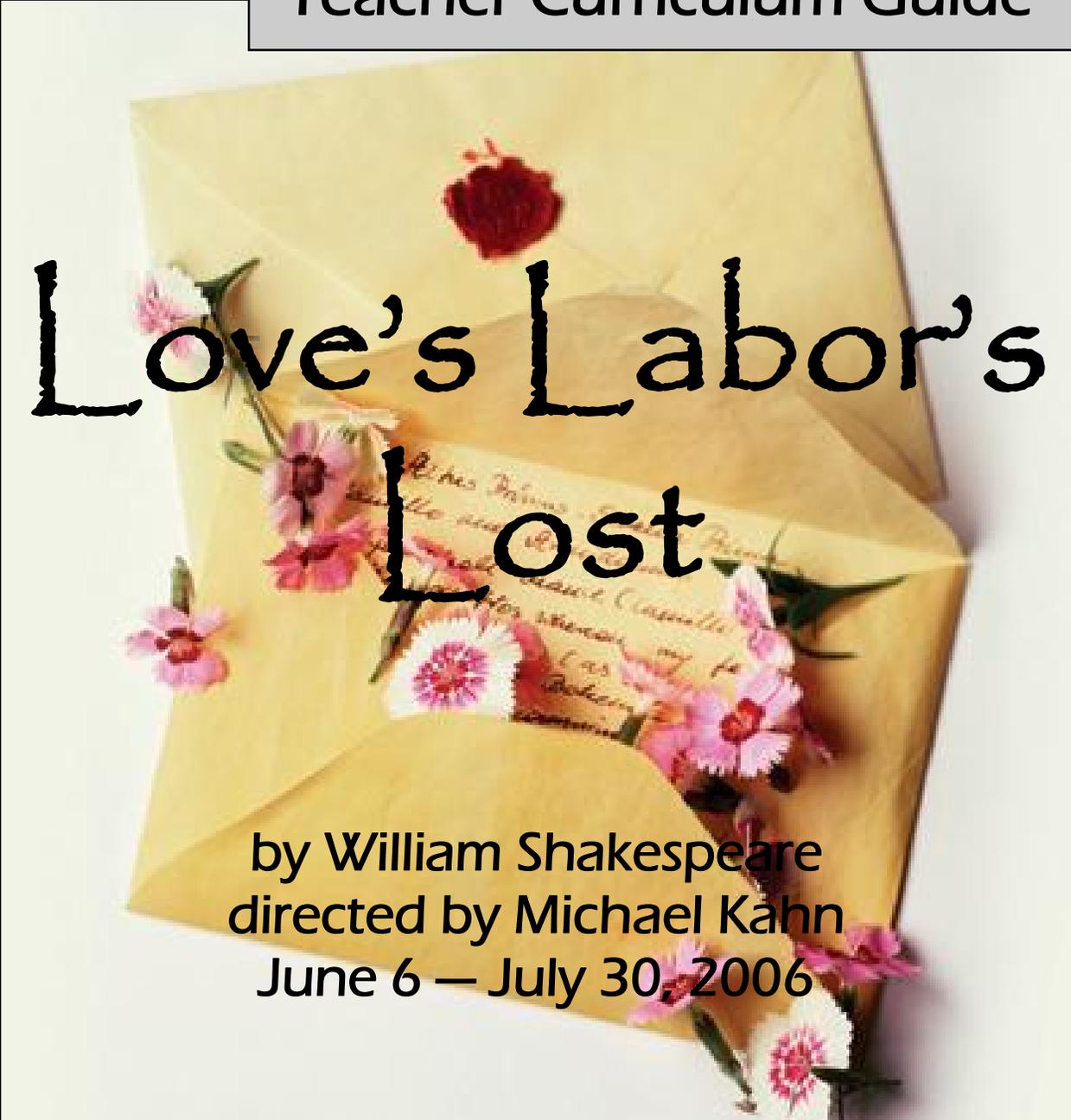


First Folio

Teacher Curriculum Guide



Love's Labor's Lost

by William Shakespeare
directed by Michael Kahn
June 6 – July 30, 2006



**SHAKESPEARE
THEATRE COMPANY**

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Welcome to the Shakespeare Theatre Company's production of *Love's Labor's Lost* by William Shakespeare!

Each season, the Shakespeare Theatre Company presents five plays by William Shakespeare and other classic playwrights. The Education Department continues to work to deepen understanding, appreciation and connection to classic theatre in learners of all ages. One approach is the publication of **First Folio: Teacher Curriculum Guides**.

In the 2005-06 season, the Education Department will publish **First Folio: Teacher Curriculum Guides** for our productions of *Othello*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Don Juan*, *The Persians* and *Love's Labor's Lost*. The Guides provide information and activities to help students form a personal connection to the play before attending the production at the Shakespeare Theatre Company. **First Folio** guides are full of material about the playwrights, their world and the plays they penned. Also included are approaches to explore the plays and productions in the classroom before and after the performance. **First Folio** is designed as a resource both for teachers and students.

The Shakespeare Theatre Company's Education Department provides an array of School, Community, Training and Audience Enrichment programs. A full listing of our programs is available on our website at www.ShakespeareTheatre.org or in our Education Programs Brochure. If you would like more information on how you can participate in other Shakespeare Theatre Company programs, please call the Education Hotline at 202.547.5688.

Enjoy the show!

A Brief History of the Audience

I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged. —Peter Brook, *The Empty Space*



The nature of the audience has changed throughout history, evolving from a participatory crowd to a group of people sitting behind an imaginary line, silently observing the performers. The audience is continually growing and changing. There has always been a need for human beings to communicate their wants, needs, perceptions and disagreements to others. This need to communicate is the foundation of art and the foundation of theatre's relationship to its audience.

In the Beginning

Theatre began as ritual, with tribal dances and festivals celebrating the harvest, marriages, gods, war and basically any other event that warranted a party. People all over the world congregated in villages. It was a participatory kind of theatre, the performers would be joined by the villagers who believed that their lives depended on a successful celebration—the harvest had to be plentiful or the battle victorious, or simply to be in good graces with their god or gods. Sometimes these festivals would last for days and the village proved tireless in their ability to celebrate. Many of these types of festivals survive today in the folk history of areas such as Scandinavia, Asia, Greece and other countries throughout Europe.

It's Greek to Me

The first recorded plays come from the Greeks (fourth and fifth centuries BCE). Their form of theatre began in much the same way as previous forms did. It stemmed from the celebration of the wine harvest and the gods who brought citizens a fruitful harvest—specifically Dionysus, the god of wine. Spectators had a great deal of respect for their gods, and thousands would flock to the theatre to experience a full day of celebration. The day of drama and song made for a lively crowd. Staff-bearers patrolled the aisles to keep the rowdies under control. While theatre was free, your seat was determined by your station in life. The rich had cushioned seats at the front, while the peasants, artisans and women were forced to take seats at the back. In the later years, after a full day of drink, Greek audiences were not above showing disapproval at a less-than-spectacular performance. Stones were thrown, as well as other sloppy objects, hissing was popular and loud groanings of discontent could usher any actor into early retirement.

The Romans, or the inspiration for *Gladiator*

The Romans took the idea of "spectator" an inch or so further. Their theatre (first through third centuries BCE) developed in much the same way as the Greeks; with comedy, tragedy and festivals, but unfortunately

ended with what the Christians called "morally inappropriate" dancing mimes, violent spectator sports such as gladiator fights, and the public executions for which the Romans were famous. The Romans loved violence, and the audience was a lively crowd. Because theatre was free, it was enjoyed by people of every social class. They were vocal, enjoyed hissing bad actors off the stage, and loved to watch criminals meet large ferocious animals, and soon after, enjoyed watching those same criminals meet their death.

The Far East

In Asia, theatre developed in much the same way it has elsewhere, through agricultural festivals and religious worship. The Chinese and Japanese audiences have always been tireless, mainly because their theatre forms, such as the Japanese "Kabuki" and "Noh" plays and Chinese operas, could last anywhere between a full day, if not three days, beginning between six to nine in the morning! In China, the audience was separated; the higher classes sat closer to the action of the play, and the lower classes, generally a louder, more talkative bunch, would be placed in stalls at the back. The audience expected a superior performance, and if it lacked in any way, the audience could stop the production and insist on a different presentation. In Japan, theatre began with all-day rice festivals and temple plays sponsored by priests. These evolved into "street performances" where the performers led the audience on a trip through the village. In theatre houses, the upper classes sat in constructed boxes, and women in disguise (it was not considered proper for a respectable woman to be seen at the theatre) and lower classes would stand below with the "inspector" standing on a high platform in the middle, keeping a strict eye on everyone.

A Couple of Hundred Years Without Art

Tolerance took a holiday during the period of European history known as the Dark Ages. During this time period culture of all kind went on hiatus—most especially that frivolous, godless display of lewd and licentious behavior known as theatre. Fortunately it

reemerged, with some severe restrictions, during the Middle Ages.

Pageant Wagons

Western theatre further developed from the Greek and Roman traditions through the Middle Ages with "Mystery Plays" sponsored by the church. Organized theatre was frowned upon, as it was a place for congregation of the lower classes, encouraging disease and immoral behavior. Church leaders would allow performances of bible scenes, however, for the people who could not read. These productions moved to different locations much like traveling the "stations of the cross." To spread the good word to the broadest section of the population, these plays left the confines of the church building and began to travel on what were known as "pageant wagons." These wagons held one entire location, and a series of wagons hooked together permitted a company to tell an entire story just about anywhere. Troupes of actors would roam the countryside setting up makeshift theatres in inns, pubs, public squares—pretty much anywhere they could park.

Within This Wooden O

During Shakespeare's era—the Elizabethan period—theatre companies were awarded status and privilege based on patronage from wealthy landholders or the royal family. With patronage came money so the companies began building theatres. The theatre of Shakespeare's day was attended by all, was inexpensive, and was known to be an incredibly good time. Surrounding the stage was the lower "pit" where the "groundlings" (or lower classes) congregated and above, octagonally surrounding the pit, were the stalls reserved for the upper classes. If you were stationed in the pit, it was not uncommon to have a goblet of wine dumped on your head—or to be drooled or spat upon by the "more civilized" people above you. Elizabethan audiences did not know what it meant to be quiet for a performance and would talk back to the actors. Thought to be involved in spreading the "black plague," the good time abruptly ended with the closing of the theatres in 1592.

Look at me, look at me...

During the Restoration, theatre became a luxury. For the almost entirely upper class audience, the purpose of going to the theatre was "to see, and to be seen." The stage was a rectangular area between a long hallway of boxes. The best seats in the house were often right on stage! The house lights were up full so the audience could see *each other* better, not the action on stage. The theatre of the Restoration consisted mainly of light, fluffy comedies performed in an oratory style—actors posing, wearing BIG costumes and practically screaming over the din of

the audience. Theatre companies still existed on the patronage of the very wealthy and often performed plays exclusively in the salons of the rich, famous and powerful. A few hundred years later, opera composer Richard Wagner figured out that to focus the audience's attention away from themselves and onto the stage, the lights needed to be off—forcing the audience to watch the performance. Since that time the audience has taken its cue that the performance is about to begin from the lights overhead beginning to dim. This small adjustment in lighting effectively erected a permanent barrier between the action onstage and the audience.

Freud...Tell Me About Your Mother

While dimming the house lights has drastically changed the overall aesthetic of theatre, another modern movement has had even greater impact on theatre in the 20th century. Psycho-analysis—id, ego, super-ego and subconscious desires—made theatre more introspective in its search for truth. As theatre became more psychological, more a representation of real life, the audience felt as if they were eavesdropping. Twentieth century theatregoers spend a great deal of time and thought pondering the psychological motivations of characters. There is now an imaginary wall, called the "fourth wall," separating the performers and the audience. It affects how we view the performance and how actors portray characters—we can observe the people onstage as they relate their problems, fears and desires without them noticing us at all.

Now the Options are Endless

Today, for the audience, just about anything goes. History has shared with us many types of theatre and we, the spectators, bring our own experiences and histories to the event, causing us to react differently to different productions. Unlike movies or television, the actor-audience relationship is a "live" relationship: each is in the other's presence, in the same place at the same time. It is the exchange between the two that gives theatre its unique quality. As audience members we have an obligation to be attentive, allowing the performers to fulfill their obligation—to entertain and enlighten us. There is always a dialogue between audience and performer, whether visual or vocal. All individuals participating in the theatrical event, whether as audience or performer, bring to it a personal background and experience that becomes vital to their response to the interaction. In the same way, participants leave the performance enriched both by their own individual experience and that of the larger community to which they belong for a brief moment within the confines of the theatre walls. We must listen to capture and understand what the performers are trying to communicate, and at the same time, they must listen to us.



On William Shakespeare

No man's life has been the subject of more speculation than William Shakespeare's. For all his fame and celebration, Shakespeare's personal history remains a mystery. There are two primary sources for information on the Bard—his works, and various legal and church documents that have survived from Elizabethan times. Unfortunately, there are many gaps in this information and much room for conjecture.

We know a man named William Shakespeare was baptized at Stratford-upon-Avon on April 26, 1564, and was buried at Holy Trinity Church in Stratford on April 25, 1616. Tradition holds that he was born three days earlier, and that he died on his birthday—April 23—but this is perhaps more romantic myth than fact. Young William was born of John Shakespeare, a glover and leather merchant, and Mary Arden, a landed heiress. William, according to the church register, was the third of eight children in the Shakespeare household, three of whom died in childhood. We assume that Shakespeare went to grammar school, since his father was first a member of the Stratford Council and later high bailiff (the equivalent of town mayor). A grammar school education would have meant that Shakespeare was exposed to the rudiments of Latin rhetoric, logic and literature.

In 1575, John Shakespeare suddenly disappears from Stratford's political records. Some believe that his removal from office necessitated his son's quitting school and taking a position as a butcher's apprentice. Church records tell us that banns (announcements) were published for the marriage of a William Shakespeare to an Ann Whatley in 1582 (there are no records indicating that this arrangement was solemnized, however). On November 27 of the same year a marriage license was granted to 18-year-old William and 26-year-old Anne Hathaway. A daughter, Susanna, was born to the couple six months later. We



The Chandos portrait of Shakespeare, which is the only one known to be produced during his lifetime.

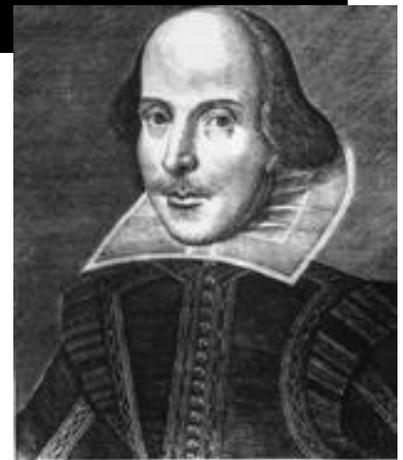
know that twins, Hamnet and Judith, were born soon after and that the twins were baptized. We also know that Hamnet died in childhood at the age of 11, on August 11, 1596. We don't know how the young Shakespeare came to travel to London or how he first came to the stage. One theory holds that young Will was arrested as a poacher (one who hunts illegally on someone

else's property) and escaped to London to avoid prosecution in Stratford. Another holds that he left home to work in the city as a school teacher. Neither is corroborated by contemporary testimony or public record. Whatever the truth may be, it is clear that in the years between 1582 and 1592, William Shakespeare did become involved in the London theatre scene as a principal actor and playwright with one of several repertory companies.

By 1594, Shakespeare was listed as a shareholder in the Lord Chamberlain's Men, one of the most popular acting companies in London. He was a member of this company for the rest of his career, which lasted until approximately 1611. When James I came to the throne in 1603, he issued a royal license to Shakespeare and his fellow players, inviting them to call themselves the King's Men. In 1608, the King's Men leased the Blackfriars Theatre in London. This theatre, which had artificial lighting and was probably heated, served as their winter playhouse. The famous Globe Theatre was their summer performance space.

In 1616 Shakespeare's daughter Judith married Thomas Quiney, the son of a neighbor in Stratford. Her father revised his will six weeks later; within a month he had died. The revised version of William Shakespeare's will bequeathed his house and all the goods therein to his daughter Susanna and her husband Dr. John Hall, leaving Judith and Thomas only a small sum of money; his wife, who survived him, received the couple's second best bed.

In the years since Shakespeare's death, he has risen to the position of patron saint of English literature and drama. In the 1800s especially, his plays were so popular that many refused to believe that an actor from Stratford had written them. To this day some believe that Sir Francis Bacon was the real author of the plays; others choose to believe Edward De Vere, the Earl of Oxford, was the author. Still others would prefer to believe Walter Raleigh or Christopher Marlowe penned the lines attributed to Shakespeare. While most people are content to believe that genius can spring up in any social class or rural setting, the gap between the known facts and the myths that surround Shakespeare's life leaves ample room for speculation.



Portrait of Shakespeare engraved by Martin Droeshout, found on the title page of the First Folio edition of Shakespeare's works, 1623.

ELIZABETHAN ENGLAND

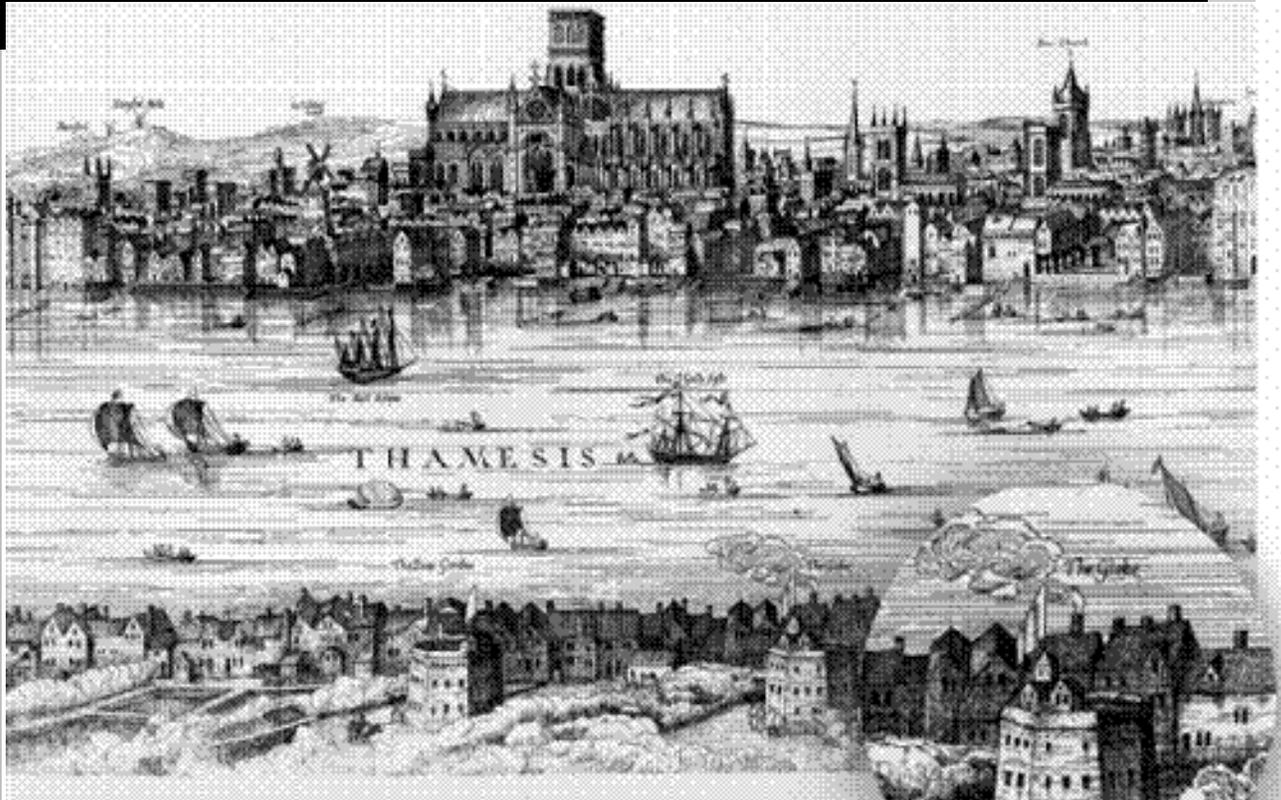


Illustration of London,
Wenceslaus Hollar, 1647.

The age of Shakespeare was a great time in English history. During the reign of Elizabeth I (1558–1603), England emerged as the leading naval and commercial power of the Western world, consolidating this position with the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. Elizabeth I firmly established the Church of England (begun by her father Henry VIII after a dispute with the Pope) during this time. London in the 16th century underwent a dramatic transformation; the population grew 400% between 1500 and 1600, swelling to nearly 200,000 people in the city proper and outlying region by the time an emerging artist from Stratford came to town. A rising merchant middle class was carving out a productive livelihood, and the economy was booming.

During Shakespeare's lifetime, England also experienced a tremendous cultural revival. This so-called English Renaissance found expression in architecture, music, literature and drama. Shakespeare both drew inspiration from and enhanced high and popular culture of the English Renaissance. Popular entertainment during the 16th century tended to be boisterous and often violent. Many men, women and children attended public executions of criminals that took place on a regular basis, and persons of all social classes and genders attended theatre performances. The trade of book-making flourished during the period as public education fueled the appetite for great works in print.

During the years 1590-1593, England suffered from an outbreak of terrible proportions; the bubonic plague or "Black Death" claimed so many lives that English society

stood on the verge of collapse. Many businesses, including theatres, closed, in part to keep people from spreading the disease and in part because of the labor shortage that resulted from such widespread illness and death. Once the epidemic subsided, the theatres reopened and quickly regained their former popularity.

This explosion of commerce and culture lasted throughout Elizabeth's reign and into that of her successor, James I. James' rule brought many changes to English life; the two most pivotal were a bankrupt economy and an intense dissatisfaction from a minority religious group—the Puritans. In September 1642, the Puritan Parliament issued an edict that forbade all stage plays and closed the theatres; an act that effectively brought to a close the Elizabethan Renaissance. Theatres rapidly fell into disrepair and neglect until the Restoration in 1660.

In writing his plays and sonnets, William Shakespeare drew ideas from many different sources. His keen eye for detail and his sharp understanding of human nature enabled him to create some of the most enduring works of drama and poetry ever produced. But his work also provides an insightful commentary on 16th-century English values, life, history and thought.



SHAKE-

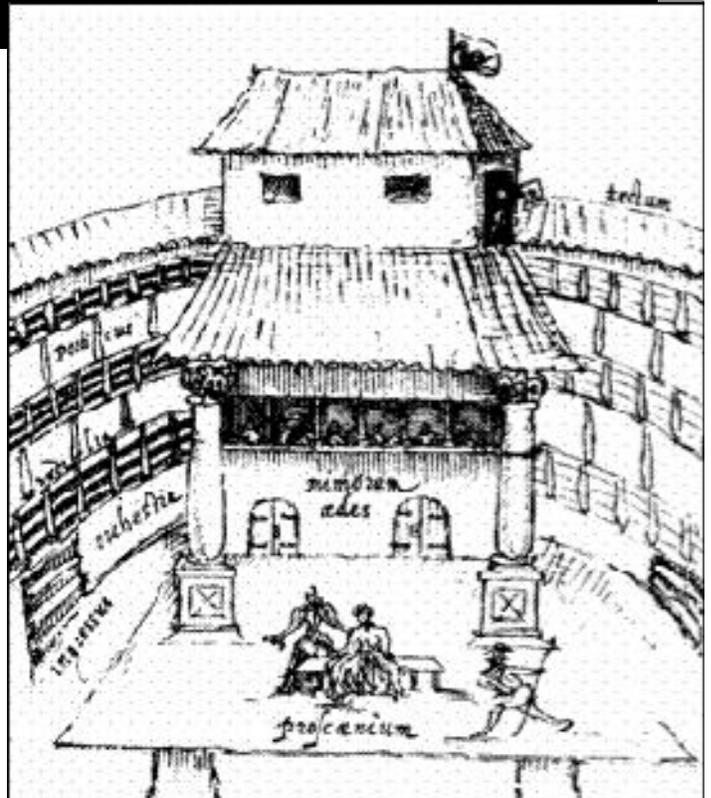
William Shakespeare, in terms of both his life and body of work, is the most written-about author in the history of Western civilization. His canon includes 38 plays, 154 sonnets and two epic narrative poems. During his lifetime, many of his plays were published in what are known as Quarto editions, frequently without receiving the playwright's permission. The Quartos are mostly flawed versions containing added material or missing entire passages from the original works. The first collected edition of Shakespeare's works is called the First Folio and was published after the playwright's death in 1623 by two members of his acting company, John Heminges and Henry Condell. Since then the works of Shakespeare have been studied, analyzed, translated and enjoyed the world over as some of the finest masterpieces of the English language.

Establishing the chronology of Shakespeare's plays is a frustrating and difficult task. It is impossible to know in what order the plays were written because there is no record of the first production date of any of his works. However, scholars have decided upon a specific play chronology based on the following sources of information: 1) several historical events and allusions to those events in the plays; 2) the records of performances of the plays, taken from such places as the diaries of other Shakespeare contemporaries; 3) the publication dates of sources; and 4) the dates that the plays appear in print (remembering that a play was produced immediately after it was written in the Elizabethan age, but may not have been published for years following the first production). Despite the fact that we have an accepted play chronology, we must keep in mind that the dating is conjectural, and there are many who disagree with the order of plays listed on the next page.

Drawing distinctions between Shakespeare's plays and categorizing his works has been a focus of scholars for hundreds of years, and the criteria used to differentiate the plays into types or genres has changed over time.

The distinction between tragedy and comedy became particularly important during Shakespeare's life. During that time writers of tragedy conformed to Aristotle's definition, relating the tale of a great man or woman brought down through hubris or fate. Comedy in this time, much like in our own, descended from the Roman "New Comedy" of Plautus and Terence, which kept away from politics and focused on love, domestic troubles and family affairs.

In the First Folio, some of Shakespeare's plays are divided by their theatrical genre—either Tragedies or Comedies—however, some of the tragedies' protagonists or heroes, like Romeo, Timon or Macbeth, do not easily accommodate Aristotle's definition.



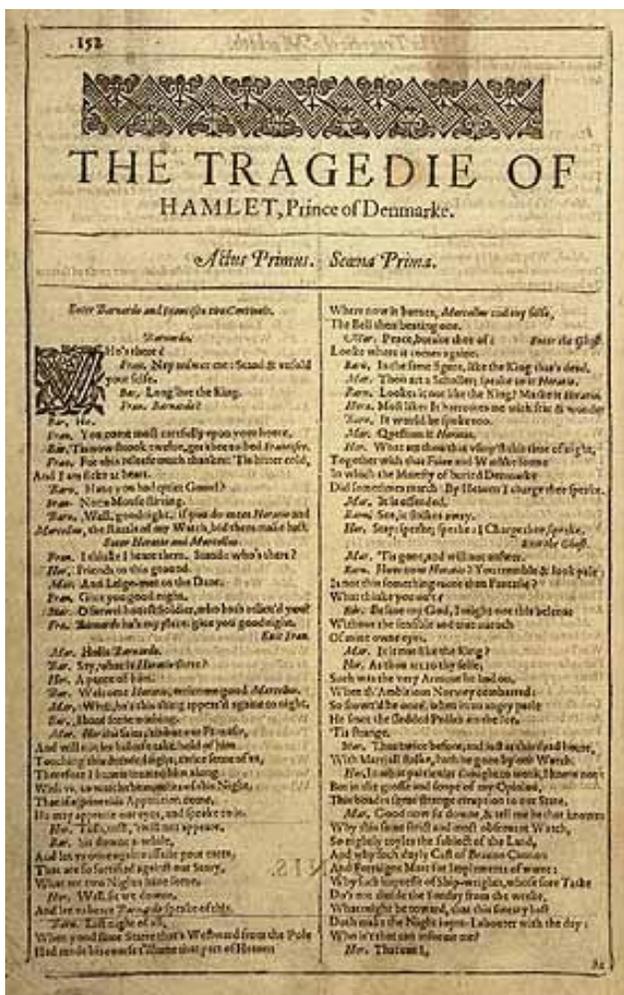
The "Dewitt" sketch of the Swan Theatre is thought to be the only contemporary visual account of an Elizabethan playhouse.

Plays are also categorized in the First Folio as Histories, done so because these works chronicled the lives of English Kings. These plays tended toward tragedy (*Richard II* or *Richard III*, for instance) or comedy (the Falstaff subplots of both parts of *Henry IV* and the Pistol-Fluellen encounters of *Henry V*.) Through the effort to categorize Shakespeare's plays in publication, we can see that his writing style mingled the antagonistic visions of comedy and tragedy in ways that still seem novel and startling. The recognition of this has led scholars since the publication of the First Folio to add additional genres—problem plays, romances, tragicomedies—to help classify the works of Shakespeare. Still other scholars have augmented these genres by grouping the plays chronologically, separating by time periods.

The first period, pre-1594 including *Richard III* and *The Comedy of Errors*, has its roots in Roman and medieval drama—the construction of the plays, while good, is obvious and shows the author's hand more so than his later works. The second period, 1594-1600 including *Henry V* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, shows more growth in style and a less-labored construction. The histories of this period are considered Shakespeare's best, portraying the lives of royalty in human terms. He also begins the interweaving of genres that would become one of his stylistic signatures. His comedies mature in this period, developing deeper characterization and subjects than previously seen in his work.

The third period, 1600-1608 including *Macbeth* and *King Lear*, includes the great tragedies—the principal works that would earn Shakespeare his fame in later centuries. The comedies of this period show Shakespeare at a literary crossroads—they are often darker and without the clear comic resolution of previous comedies—hence the term “problem plays” to describe them. The fourth period, post-1608 including *The Winter’s Tale* and *The Tempest*, encompasses what have been referred to as the romances or tragicomedies. Shakespeare at the end of his career seemed preoccupied with themes of redemption. The writing is more serious yet more lyrical, and the plays show Shakespeare at his most symbolic. Scholars argue whether this period owes more to Shakespeare’s maturity as a playwright or merely signifies a changing trend in Elizabethan theatre.

It is important for scholars, teachers and students to keep in mind that these “genre” classifications were not determined by Shakespeare during the writing of each play but imposed after his death to help readers better understand his work.



First Folio title page of *Hamlet*

SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

First Performed	Title
1590-91	<i>Henry VI, Part II</i>
1590-91	<i>Henry VI, Part III</i>
1591-92	<i>Henry VI, Part I</i>
1592-93	<i>Richard III</i>
1592-93	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>
1593-94	<i>Titus Andronicus</i>
1593-94	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>
1594-95	<i>The Two Gentlemen of Verona</i>
1594-95	<i>Love's Labour's Lost</i>
1594-95	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>
1595-96	<i>Richard II</i>
1595-96	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>
1596-97	<i>King John</i>
1596-97	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>
1597-98	<i>Henry IV, Part I</i>
1597-98	<i>Henry IV, Part II</i>
1598-99	<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>
1598-99	<i>Henry V</i>
1599-1600	<i>Julius Caesar</i>
1599-1600	<i>As You Like It</i>
1599-1600	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
1600-01	<i>Hamlet</i>
1600-01	<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>
1601-02	<i>Troilus and Cressida</i>
1602-03	<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>
1604-05	<i>Measure for Measure</i>
1604-05	<i>Othello</i>
1605-06	<i>King Lear</i>
1605-06	<i>Macbeth</i>
1606-07	<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>
1607-08	<i>Coriolanus</i>
1607-08	<i>Timon of Athens</i>
1608-09	<i>Pericles</i>
1609-10	<i>Cymbeline</i>
1610-11	<i>The Winter's Tale</i>
1611-12	<i>The Tempest</i>
1612-13	<i>Henry VIII</i>
1612-13	<i>The Two Noble Kinsmen*</i>

* *The Two Noble Kinsmen* is listed although a few scholars do not believe it is an original Shakespeare work. The majority of the play was probably written by John Fletcher, Shakespeare's close friend who succeeded him as foremost dramatist for the King's Men.



During the Elizabethan period, “English” was a relatively young language (only about 160 years old) combining Latin, French and Anglo-Saxon. There was no dictionary or standardized literacy education. People in Shakespeare’s London spoke much more than they read, causing the rules of grammar and spelling to be quite fluid. Writers created new words daily and poets expressed themselves in a new form of writing known as blank verse, first appearing in 1557 in *Certain Bokes of Virgiles Aenis* by the Earl of Surrey:

They whistled all, with fixed face attent
When Prince Aeneas from the royal seat
Thus gan to speak, O Queene, it is thy will,
I should renew a woe can not be told:

(Book II, 1-4)

That the verse was “blank” simply meant that the poetry did not rhyme, allowing rhyme-less poets such as Virgil and Ovid to be translated and Elizabethan playwrights to emulate the natural rhythms of English speech within iambic pentameter.

A typical line of verse from this time contains five units of meter or feet. Each foot contains two syllables. When the first syllable is unstressed and the second syllable is stressed (dee DUM), it is an iamb (iambic meaning push, persistency or determination). The prefix penta means five, as in the five-sided shape—a pentagon. Iambic pentameter is therefore one line of poetry consisting of five forward-moving feet.

It was this new tradition of blank verse in iambic pentameter that Shakespeare inherited as he embarked on his career as playwright and poet. Similar to the human heartbeat, a horse gallop or the beat of a piece of music, iambic pentameter drives and supports Shakespeare’s verse, moving the language along in a forward flow that emulates the natural speech and rhythms of life. Here is a standard line of verse in iambic pentameter from *Romeo and Juliet*.

But soft! What light through yonder window breaks?
(II.ii.2)

If we were to say the rhythm and not the words, it would sound like this:

dee DUM dee DUM dee DUM dee DUM dee DUM

When we scan a piece of text (marking it with a ‘ for the unstressed and / for stressed), we simply tap out the rhythm of the line, based on dee DUM dee DUM dee DUM dee DUM, to see if the line is structured in iambic pentameter:

‘ / ‘ / ‘ / ‘ / ‘ / ‘ / ‘ /
But soft! What light through yonder window breaks?
(II.ii.2)

Embracing the rules of this new verse, Shakespeare’s early writing operated almost entirely within strict iambic pentameter.

Prose in Shakespeare’s work is not in iambic pentameter and relies more heavily on other literary devices for its speed and rhythm. These devices include: antithesis (setting opposite words against each other), lists (series of actions or descriptive words that build to a climax) and puns (the use or misuse of a word to mean another word). Shakespeare used prose to express conversation between the lower classes, like the Mechanicals in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, or familiar or intimate scenes, as with Henry and Katherine at the end of *Henry V*. He also utilized prose to express madness or vulgarity, as in the nunnery scene of *Hamlet*. The exact meaning of a shift from verse to prose is not constant, but it always signals a change in the situation, characters or tone of a scene. Only *Much Ado About Nothing* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* rely almost entirely on prose.

In the following passage from *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, note antithesis in Ford’s comparison of himself with Page and of other men’s possessions with Mistress Ford, see the list of things Ford would rather trust others with than his “wife with herself” and observe the pun on “effect”:

Ford

Page is an ass, a secure ass; he will trust his wife, he will not be jealous. I will rather trust a Fleming with my butter, Parson Hugh the Welshman with my cheese, an Irishman with my aqua-vitae bottle, or a thief to walk my ambling gelding, than my wife with herself. Then she plots, then she ruminates, then she devises; and what they think in their hearts they may effect, they will break their hearts but they will effect. God be praised for my jealousy!

(II.ii.300-314)

Shakespeare's Life and Works	Events in Western History	Events in Western Art, Science & Culture
<p>1564 William Shakespeare born to John and Mary Shakespeare in Stratford-Upon-Avon.</p> <p>1570 John Shakespeare first applies for a family coat of arms. His application is denied.</p>	<p>1558 Queen Elizabeth I takes the throne.</p> <p>1562 A series of civil wars between Catholics and Protestants, known as the Wars of Religion, begin in France.</p> <p>1564 John Calvin, an influential Protestant leader during the Reformation, dies. An outbreak of the plague devastates London.</p> <p>1568 A revolt of the Spanish-ruled Netherlands against Philip II, King of Spain, begins the Eighty Years War.</p>	<p>1540 Michelangelo finishes painting <i>The Last Judgment</i>.</p> <p>1543 Copernicus' heliocentric theory, claiming the sun is the center of the universe, is first published.</p> <p>1564 Christopher "Kit" Marlowe born.</p> <p>1565 Arthur Golding translates Ovid's <i>Metamorphoses</i>. The text later influenced Shakespeare's work.</p> <p>1567 Richard Burbage, a tragedian who portrayed many of Shakespeare's characters, born.</p> <p>1572 Poet John Donne born. Playwright Ben Jonson born.</p> <p>1576 The first permanent theatre in England, The Theatre, is built.</p>
<p>1582 William Shakespeare marries Anne Hathaway.</p> <p>1583 Shakespeare's daughter Susanna born.</p> <p>1585 Shakespeare's twins Judith and Hamnet born.</p> <p>1587 Shakespeare goes to London to pursue life in the theatre.</p> <p>1593 Shakespeare writes <i>Venus and Adonis</i>. Also begins writing the <i>Sonnets</i>.</p> <p>1594 Shakespeare becomes a founding member of the Lord Chamberlain's Men.</p> <p>1596 Hamnet Shakespeare dies at age 11.</p> <p>1597 Shakespeare purchases New Place in Stratford.</p> <p>1599 Shakespeare's family is granted a coat of arms.</p> <p>1601 Shakespeare's father dies.</p>	<p>1580 Sir Frances Drake circumnavigates the Earth.</p> <p>1586 Mary Queen of Scots is tried for treason and executed by beheading.</p> <p>1588 The British Navy defeats the Spanish Armada, avoiding a long war between England and Spain.</p> <p>1589 The Wars of Religion end when Henry of Navarre ascends to the throne to become King Henry IV of France.</p> <p>1598 Philip II of Spain dies. The French Protestants are permitted to freely practice their religion by the Edict of Nantes.</p>	<p>1577 Raphael Holinshed publishes <i>The Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland</i>, which becomes Shakespeare's primary source for the history plays.</p> <p>1580 Thomas Middleton, a playwright who collaboratively wrote many plays, born.</p> <p>1588 Marlowe's play <i>Dr. Faustus</i> first produced.</p> <p>1590 Marlowe's play <i>The Jew of Malta</i> first produced; it influenced Shakespeare's <i>The Merchant of Venice</i>.</p> <p>1592 Thomas Kyd's <i>The Spanish Tragedy</i> first produced. It influenced Shakespeare's <i>Hamlet</i>.</p> <p>1597 The Theatre permanently closes due to the expiration of its lease.</p> <p>1599 The Globe Theatre is built on Bankside from the timbers of The Theatre.</p>
<p>1603 The Lord Chamberlain's Men are renamed the King's Men. They perform at the Court of King James I more than any other company.</p> <p>1605 Shakespeare purchases more land in Stratford.</p> <p>1608 The King's Men begin playing at the Blackfriars Theatre, a prominent indoor theatre.</p> <p>1609 Shakespeare's <i>Sonnets</i> published.</p> <p>1616 In March, Shakespeare, apparently ill, revises his will. On April 23rd he dies and is buried at Holy Trinity Church, Stratford.</p> <p>1623 Shakespeare's <i>First Folio</i> published.</p>	<p>1601 The Earl of Essex attempts to rebel against Queen Elizabeth, fails and is executed.</p> <p>1603 Sir Walter Raleigh is arrested, tried and imprisoned for disobeying the Queen by secretly marrying one of her maids of honor. Queen Elizabeth dies. King James VI of Scotland, son of Mary Queen of Scots, becomes King James I of England. The plague once again ravages London.</p> <p>1604 England establishes a peace treaty with Spain.</p> <p>1607 Jamestown, one of the first English colonies in the Americas, is founded.</p> <p>1610 King Henry IV of France is murdered. He is succeeded by his son, Louis XIII.</p> <p>1618 The Protestant German princes and their foreign supporters begin their struggle against the Holy Roman Empire. This marks the start of the Thirty Years War.</p>	<p>1603 The "Scientific Revolution" begins with Johann Kepler's recordings of planetary movements and Galileo Galilei's perfection of the telescope.</p> <p>1606 Ben Jonson's play <i>Volpone</i> is written.</p> <p>1607 Burbage leases the Blackfriars Theatre for indoor performances.</p> <p>1611 The King James Bible first published.</p> <p>1616 Ben Jonson's <i>Workes</i> published in folio.</p>

Synopsis of *Love's Labor's Lost*

King Ferdinand of Navarre and his lords Berowne, Longaville and Dumaine have sworn an oath to live and study together for three years. In the interest of scholarly pursuits, the men vow to fast, to sleep only three hours a night and, most importantly, to abstain from the company of women. Berowne questions the severity of the oath but signs the contract despite his reservations. Constable Dull, the local officer, arrives with his prisoner Costard. Costard has been apprehended for consorting with the country maid Jaquenetta, thereby breaking the new law against socializing with women. King Ferdinand orders that Costard be put in the custody of Don Adriano de Armado, a Spaniard known for his boasting.

As Don Armado confesses to his servant Moth that he is in love with Jaquenetta, Constable Dull arrives with Costard and Jaquenetta. He delivers Costard to Armado's custody and leaves to take Jaquenetta to the park where she will be employed as a dairymaid. Before Jaquenetta is led out, Armado makes plans to meet her at her lodge. Moth takes Costard away to prison.

The Princess of France arrives with her ladies, Rosaline, Katherine and Maria. King Ferdinand greets them but will not allow them inside his court. The Princess tells the King that she has come on behalf of her father to collect the repayment of a loan. The King denies receiving the money, and the Princess calls for her servant Boyet to retrieve the receipt. Boyet informs the Princess that they will not be able to get the receipt until the next day. In the meantime, the ladies set up tents in the field and King Ferdinand assures them they will be well treated. Berowne and Rosaline share a few words, while Longaville and Dumaine show interest in Maria and Katherine. After the King and his lords leave, Boyet remarks on how the King seemed to be taken with the Princess.

Don Armado frees Costard from prison in exchange for delivering a love letter to Jaquenetta. As Costard is about to leave he runs into Berowne who asks him to deliver a letter to Rosaline. Costard leaves to deliver the letters, and Berowne confesses his love for Rosaline. Costard finds the Princess and her ladies hunting and mistakenly gives the letter from Armado to the ladies.

The pretentious schoolmaster Holofernes, the church cleric Nathaniel and Constable Dull are discussing the deer shot by the Princess when Costard and Jaquenetta arrive. Jaquenetta asks Holofernes to read the letter sent by Don Armado. As Holofernes reads, he discovers it is the letter from Berowne meant for Rosaline. Holofernes tells them to deliver the letter to King Ferdinand.

Berowne is composing another sonnet to Rosaline when he sees the King and decides to eavesdrop on him. The King is reading a letter that he has composed to the Princess when he overhears Longaville entering. The King hides as Longaville professes his love for Maria; Longaville, in turn, hides and overhears Dumaine



Photo by Carol Rosegg

Alene Dawson, Libby Christophersen, Enid Graham and Melissa Bowen in the Shakespeare Theatre Company's 1994-95 production of *Love's Labor's Lost*.

profess his love for Katherine. One by one, the men come forward to scold those they have overheard. Berowne is the last to step out and rebuke the men for their betrayal. As he is admonishing them, Costard enters with the letter. Berowne's own love is found out, and he admits his guilt to the others. Berowne then convinces the men that they must give up their oaths in order to truly find themselves, and the lords set off to woo the ladies with dances, masques and entertainment. The King orders Armado to provide entertainment. Armado consults with Holofernes who suggests a pageant of the Nine Worthies.

The ladies are showing each other the presents sent to them by the lords when Boyet enters to tell them that the King and his men are coming disguised as Russians to court the ladies. The Princess decides to foil their plan by having each lady wear a mask and exchange the gifts sent to them. Each lady will wear another's gift so that the King and his lords will mistake their love for another. The men arrive and entertain and dance with the ladies, and then one by one they break off to woo their respective loves. Once the men leave, the women discuss what the men said and determine to ridicule them for their mistakes when they return. The King and his men return and are mocked by the ladies. Costard enters and introduces the pageant of the Nine Worthies.

The pageant is interrupted by Costard's announcement that Jaquenetta is pregnant by Armado. Armado challenges Costard to a duel but is interrupted by the messenger, Mercade, bringing news of the King of France's death. The Princess must leave that same night. The King tries to continue wooing and proposes marriage, but he is reprimanded by the Princess for breaking his first oath. The Princess states that if he will spend a full year in a remote hermitage, away from worldly pleasures, she will have him. Each woman in turn gives similar ultimatums, to which the men agree. The performers return to sing a final song after which everyone goes their separate ways. 

The Commedia Connection



Photo by Gerry Goodstein, 2004.

Mandy Olsen as Jacquenetta and Eric Hoffmann as Don Adriano de Armado in *Love's Labor's Lost* at The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey. Jacquenetta and Don Armado are based on *commedia* stock characters.

Throughout history, writers have based some of their finest works on stories that have already been written or performed. William Shakespeare was no exception. Shakespeare often “borrowed” story lines from other authors as inspiration for his plays. Shakespeare used many popular stories to fuel his plot lines, including Roman plays by Terence, Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and Holinshed’s *Chronicles*, and he even sought inspiration from the Bible. Another important source from which he may have derived his characters is tales from the rich Italian tradition of *commedia dell’arte*.

Commedia dell’arte began as Italian street theatre, and its origins can be traced back as far as the 14th century. *Commedia* plays were presented by troupes of actors traveling together from town to town performing in public spaces, squares, fields or markets. Unlike Shakespeare’s plays, *commedia* plays were improvised around an outline with stock characters and comic bits called *lazzi*. Plot lines and characters from *commedia* can be found in many popular forms of entertainment even today. Stock characters in *commedia* included servants, masters, lovers and merchants. These characters are the heart

again in different story lines. Most *commedia* performances included 8 to 10 stock characters.

One example of a *commedia* stock character found in *Love’s Labor’s Lost* is the *Innamorati*, or the Lovers. The Lovers in *commedia* plays are wealthy nobles who will do anything, no matter how silly or ridiculous, to win the affections of their love interest. In *commedia*, the Lovers do not wear masks like most of the other characters. They are true leading men and ladies, wearing the most fashionable clothing of the day and speaking in flowery poetry. In *Love’s Labor’s Lost* we find not one but four sets of lovers fitting into this *commedia* stock character description. Lovers in *commedia* often express their love for one another through letters and poems. The Lovers in *Love’s Labor’s Lost* do the same, which creates some wonderful comic moments.

There are also some middle class stock characters in *commedia* who appear in *Love’s Labor’s Lost*, including *Il Dottore* and *Il Capitano*. These characters care about their own social advancement above all else. They will often do anything to make money or create the façade that they are smarter or braver than they really are. *Il Capitano*, or the Captain, is best

described as a cowardly soldier. He often pretends that he is a very brave man who has fought in numerous battles; in reality, he is a coward and would probably run in fear if he were ever forced to actually fight someone. *Il Capitano* often speaks in a Spanish dialect, wears a striped tunic with golden buttons and a feathered hat, and he carries a long sword. He is also usually unmasked. The Captain commonly pursues beautiful women who are totally out of his league and would never return his affections. Don Armado is a classic *Il Capitano* character in nearly everything he says and does. Armado sees himself as a great warrior yet gives no evidence to support this image. He pretends to be a great man and a great soldier and pursues the beautiful Jaquenetta with reckless abandon. She, of course, has no interest in him and his dreams of wooing her go unfulfilled. Much like *Il Capitano*, Armado is seen as a big joke and a fool to everyone around him and serves as a great source for laughs.

Il Dottore, or the Doctor, is another stock character that appears in *Love's Labor's Lost*. *Il Dottore* can be a medical doctor, lawyer or professor, who is unbearably pompous and loves to hear himself talk. He quotes Latin, usually incorrectly, but speaks with the utmost confidence despite his flubs. The Doctor is usually obese and wears a white collar, a black coat and a black half-mask with a long warty nose. In *Love's Labors Lost*, Holofernes is a typical *Il Dottore* character, although *Il Dottore's* role is usually a father to one of the Lovers, which Holofernes is not. Holofernes serves as an educational figure to the Princess of France and her ladies in waiting. Holofernes purports to be a teacher and an expert on all subjects when, in reality, he knows very little. And much like *Il Dottore*, Holofernes drones on and on about subjects that are of no interest to the ladies. Holofernes makes endless lists in his speeches, using upwards of 10 adjectives in a single monologue to describe something.

This too is a characteristic of *Il Dottore's* speech.

Finally there are the characters of the servant class, including *Arlecchino*, *Pedrolino* and *Colombina* whose types are found in *Love's Labor's Lost*. The servant characters in *commedia* are often mischievous and cause problems for their masters. In *Love's Labor's Lost*,

Costard is a classic copy of the *Arlecchino* character—a witty servant who also serves as an errand boy for his wealthy master. He is very intelligent and witty but can always be counted on to make little mistakes that create chaos, such as sending a love note to the wrong person. In *commedia*, *Arlecchino* (also called Harlequin) wears a multi-colored patchwork costume and a snub-nosed mask. The classic *Arlecchino* character is often hungry and will do anything to get a bite to eat.



Watercolor of *Il Dottore* by Maurice Sand, 1862.

Jaquenetta resembles a character known as *Colombina*, a female equivalent to *Arlecchino*. She is often very beautiful and the subject of love and lust from several characters in the story. *Colombina* wears a patched, multi-colored dress much like *Arlecchino's* costume. She is either unmasked or wears a small black mask that just covers her eyes. *Arlecchino* and *Colombina* are often each other's love interest in a *commedia* play, which reflects Costard and Jaquenetta's relationship in *Love's Labor's Lost*.

Finally, Moth, Don Armado's faithful servant, bears similarities to a character called *Pedrolino*. This character is similar to *Arlecchino* and *Colombina* but often lacks their wit and bold courage. Usually, *Pedrolino* is the less-capable servant to *Il Capitano*, which is the exact relationship between Moth and Don Armado. *Pedrolino* is usually youthful and cute, the subject of mockery by the other characters because of his size. *Pedrolino* has a white powdered face instead of a mask and wears baggy white clothing that is clearly too big for him. In *Love's Labor's Lost*, the characters decide to cast the small-statured Moth as Hercules in the pageant of the Nine Worthies, much to the amusement of the audience.

The beauty of stock characters is that they contain universal qualities or stereotypes that nearly everyone can recognize—and are often borrowed by writers in subsequent time periods. Therefore it makes sense that Shakespeare would use stock characters like the ones found in *commedia dell'arte* to tell help illuminate the ideas and themes of his plays. **S**



Watercolor of *Il Capitano* by Maurice Sand, 1862.

Language in *Love's Labor's Lost* —

a

Fantastical

B

Folger Shakespeare Library



Title page of *Love's Labor's Lost*, 1598 revision.

Elocution:

Power of speech; art of public speaking.

Euphuism:

Highly elaborate and artificial writing style, named after John Lyly's *Euphues*. It was very popular in England in the 1580s, when Shakespeare was first beginning to write his plays.

John Lyly:

(born c.1554, died 1606) English author; known chiefly for wordy romances, including *Euphues*, *The Anatomy of Wit* and *Euphues and His England*, both in affected style.

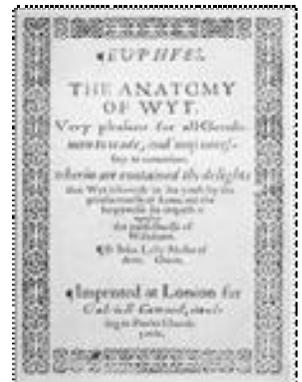
In *Much Ado about Nothing*, Benedick speaks of Claudio falling in love, complaining he "was wont to speak plain and to the purpose, like an honest man and a soldier, and now is he turn'd orthography—his words are a very fantastical banquet, just so many strange dishes" (2.3.1821). Men falling in love and losing their skills of elocution is not a new story to any audience, and in *Love's Labor's Lost* Shakespeare uses this plot device repeatedly. One of the funniest moments of this play is Moth's observation, "They have been at a great feast of languages, and stol'n the scraps" (5.1.36-37). Nearly all of the men in the play have their hearts stolen and consequently become extravagantly poetical. Love has

taught them "to rhyme and be melancholy" (4.3.14). Scholars and audiences often comment that the language of *Love's Labor's Lost* is difficult to understand due to the excess of puns, dated jokes and verbal acrobatics. However, when you remove the language and comic devices, you are left with a straightforward plot with little dramatic tension. The play seems to be about language itself, and the plot and characters there to give it voice. Russ MacDonald writes in *Shakespeare and the Arts of Language*, "Shakespeare devotes virtually every scene of this play to an exploration, much of it conducted ironically, of the problem of appropriate expression." The dramatic tension, and therefore the comedy, comes from each person's struggle to express themselves well. The men first use language to avoid love and then as their means to advance it. The clowns employ puns and wordplay to communicate the concrete and everyday objects of the physical world rather than abstract feelings. For Holofernes and Armado, the "thinking" men, words are both the means and the end. They revel in their use of language, and to that end abuse it. The women are the standard-bearers of language in the play, fully in command of their words and mocking everyone else's use or misuse. With all of these language styles converging in one play, one could easily dismiss this play as "overwritten," but reviewing the many comic dishes at this "feast of languages," the audience is "stuffed" full with laughter.

The lovers occupy most of the play with over-the-top, excessively flowery dialogue. Scholars agree that Shakespeare was most likely parodying the artificial elegance of Euphuism, an Elizabethan style of writing first started by John Lyly that used excessive poetic devices.

Here is an example of the "elegant" language from *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit* by John Lyly:

The sun shineth upon the dunghill and is not corrupted, the diamond lieth in the fire and is not consumed, the crystal toucheth the toad and is not poisoned, the bird Trochilus liveth by the mouth of the crocodile and is not spoiled, a perfect wit is never bewitched with lewdness, neither enticed with lasciviousness. Is it not common that the holm tree spingeth amidst the beech? That the ivy spreadeth upon the hard stones? That the soft featherbed breaketh the hard blade? If experience have not taught you this you have lived long and learned little; or if your moist brain have forgot it you have learned much and profited nothing. But it may be that you measure my affections by your own fancies, and knowing yourself either too simple to raise the siege by policy or too weak to resist the assault by prowess, you deem me of as little wit as yourself or of less force, either of small capacity or of no courage.



Berowne himself admits they speak with “taffeta phrases, silken terms precise, / Three pil’d hyperboles,” that only work to put off the ladies further. Each of the men decides to write a sonnet to his love in order to express his true feelings. A sonnet is a poem consisting of 14 lines in iambic pentameter. English sonnets rhyme according to this scheme: *abab cdcd efef gg*, while the rhyme scheme for Italian sonnets is slightly different, though still strict. Dumaine has the hardest time conforming to the form:

On a day, alack the day!
 Love, whose month is ever May,
 Spied a blossom passing fair
 Playing in the wanton air:
 Through the velvet leaves the wind,
 All unseen, ’gan passage find;
 That the lover, sick to death,
 Wish’d himself the heaven’s breath.
 Air, quoth he, thy cheeks may blow;
 Air, would I might triumph so!
 But alack! my hand is sworn
 Ne’er to pluck thee from thy thorn:
 Vow, alack! for youth unmeet,
 Youth so apt to pluck a sweet.
 Do not call it sin in me,
 That I am forsworn for thee;
 Thou for whom e’en Jove would swear
 Juno but an Ethiop were;
 And deny himself for Jove,
 Turning mortal for thy love. (IV.iii.99-118)

The comedy arises from these feeble attempts at poetry. Shakespeare alludes to his own sonnet writing and that of the great Renaissance sonneteer Petrarch, who wrote romantic poems to a mystery woman in the mid-1300s. The gentlemen must learn that love is not won by their “taffeta phrases” as the princess explains early in the play. By the end of the play the men learn to use language responsibly,

losing the need to woo with wordy poetry. The ladies have taught them not to “trust to speeches penn’d, / Nor to the motion of a schoolboy’s tongue, / ...Nor woo in rhyme, like a blind harper’s song!” (5.2.402-5)

One of Shakespeare’s favorite comedic techniques is the pun, and, while almost all of the characters try their hand at them, the clowns have the most success using puns to entertain. One place where puns tend to work best is in the master-servant relationship of Armado and Moth. With so many out-dated references, a reader or audience member could spend more time in the footnotes trying to figure out what everything means. Experience tells us that explaining a joke is rarely funny. Samuel Johnson later wrote that Shakespeare’s love of the pun was “the fatal Cleopatra for which he lost the world, and was content to lose it.”

The most comedy in the play is mined from the simplest of characters. Amidst the verbal cacophony, the small moments of Dull and Costard are what audiences connect with the most. At the end of the Nine Worthies rehearsal, Holofernes says “Via, Goodman Dull! thou hast spoken no word all this while.” Dull responds, “Nor understood none neither, sir” (5.1.149-51). This seems, however, to be Shakespeare’s intention. Silence is also the lesson the lovers must learn. They are so busy making linguistic fools of themselves, they very nearly lose the love they are after. Love’s labor is lost in all of the noise. Finally, the play ends not with a joyous quadruple wedding but a somber promise of devotion and silence as Berowne is ordered to care for the “speechless sick.” So must they all fast after gorging on the banquet of words. 



The Shakespeare Film Co, photo by Laurie Sparham.

Kenneth Branagh, Matthew Lillard, Alessandro Nivola and Adrian Lester as the four lords in the film *Love's Labor's Lost* (2000).

DUTY VS. DESIRE



Photo by Carol Rosegg

Jason Patrick Bowcutt, Dallas Roberts, Sean Pratt and Michael Medico swear an oath as the four lords in the Shakespeare Theatre Company's 1994-95 production of *Love's Labor's Lost*.

In *Love's Labor's Lost*, the four lords begin the play by swearing an oath to each other. They commit themselves to a life of study, vowing to sacrifice worldly pleasures in pursuit of academic glory and fame. They promise to study day and night, eat little, sleep less and see no women for three years. With the arrival of four ladies to the court, the men quickly forget their promised sacrifice. Their desire for the women overwhelms their desire for study, and they devote themselves entirely to the pursuit of their loves. At the end of the play, when tragedy brings a dark shadow over the young couples, the men are again forced to make an oath of sacrifice. They promise to prove their love by living a life of service for a year, while the women mourn the King of France's death. As the oaths increase in seriousness from the beginning of the play to the end, the men learn about the importance of making promises and the consequences of breaking them.

What is an oath? What does it mean to break it, both in Shakespeare's time and our own? Most of us have felt the conflict between our duty to keep a promise and the desires that make us break it. Whether it's a promise to finish a homework assignment before going out with friends, or a promise to take care of a pet everyday, we all make commitments to ourselves and others that we may be tempted to break. Despite the four lords' commitment to their studies and their duty to each other, they each let their desire for the women make them break faith.

Breaking an oath, or falsely swearing, is called "being forsworn." An oath is a sacred promise, made with God or another holy or revered being as a witness. Breaking an oath has more severe consequences than breaking an everyday promise. Today, people take sacred oaths, often as part of their profession. Doctors take the Hippocratic Oath, swearing to do everything they can to help a patient. The President and other officials take an Oath of Office, promising to serve the people of their

country. Witnesses in court swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Breaking an oath has serious consequences. Lying under oath is called perjury, and doctors and public service officials can be stripped of their titles if they break their sacred oaths. In Shakespeare's time, breaking an oath made with God as a witness was a serious matter—being forsworn would severely damage a gentleman's honor. In *Love's Labor's Lost*, even though the four lords solemnize their first oath of study by signing their names in an official book, they do not take their formal bond seriously. When they break their oaths, they look to Berowne to provide them with a way to excuse themselves from this breach of promise. Berowne convinces them that study without passion is meaningless—and that therefore they must pursue the women. With that reasoning, the men throw off their duty in pursuit of their desire.

The men then swear their undying love to the ladies—but the ladies, knowing of the lords' lax attitude toward their previous oath, cannot take them seriously. The ladies make fun of the lords by disguising themselves and tricking the lords into swearing their love to the wrong ladies. The lords are doubly forsworn, having previously broken their oaths of duty and now having made oaths of love to the wrong women.

At the end of the play, the ladies force the lords to take their oaths more seriously. Even though the lords have been unable to keep their oaths throughout the events of the play, they each make an immediate offer of marriage—the most solemn vow of love. Instead of accepting their offers of marriage right away, the ladies ask the lords to take more time to think about the consequences before jumping into another oath. The lords promise to live a year of service and sacrifice to prove their love. This time, we hope the lords can uphold their end of the agreement—living a year of duty to achieve their life's desires. 

Playing

Within

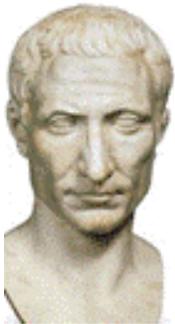
the Play

The “play-within-a-play” is a theatrical device often used to parody, highlight or examine characters and themes of the greater play. The first example of a play within a play was Thomas Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy* written in 1587, preceding *Love’s Labor’s Lost* by about 10 years. This device was used by Shakespeare in several plays: Hamlet uses the play at the Danish court to reveal his uncle’s guilt; in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Duke Theseus and Hippolyta’s marriage is celebrated with a performance of *Pyramus and Thisbe* by the rude mechanicals; and the betrothal of Miranda and Ferdinand is celebrated in *The Tempest* with a pageant of the muses. In *Love’s Labor’s Lost*, the play-within-a-play is the pageant of the Nine Worthies. The performers, like the rude

mechanicals of *Midsummer*, are men of a lower station: schoolmaster, curate, swain, page and attendant. Their audience is the King of Navarre, the Princess of France and the lords and ladies who attend them.

The Nine Worthies were first written of together in the 14th-century French epic poem *Voeux du Paon (Vows of the Peacock)* by Jean de Longuyon. They were nine historical or legendary figures meant to represent the embodiment of the ideal, chivalrous warrior. Three of the Worthies came from the Ancient Era: Hector of Troy, Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar. Three came from the Old Testament: David, Joshua and Judas Maccabeus, and the final three from the Christian Era: King Arthur, Charlemagne and Godfrey of Bouillon.

The Worthies from the Ancient Era:



Bust of Julius Caesar, military and political leader of Ancient Rome (100-44 BCE).



Mosaic of Alexander the Great, military conqueror of Ancient Greece (356-328 BCE).



The death of Greek mythological hero Hector of Troy, painted by Peter Paul Rubens.

The Worthies from the Old Testament:



Biblical illustration of Joshua, successor to Moses, who led the Israelites into Canaan in the Old Testament.



Judas Maccabeus, who led the Jews in a revolt against the Seleucid Empire in 165 BCE. This event is remembered in the celebration of Hanukkah.



Michaelangelo’s *David*, the most famous image of the Biblical defeater of Goliath.

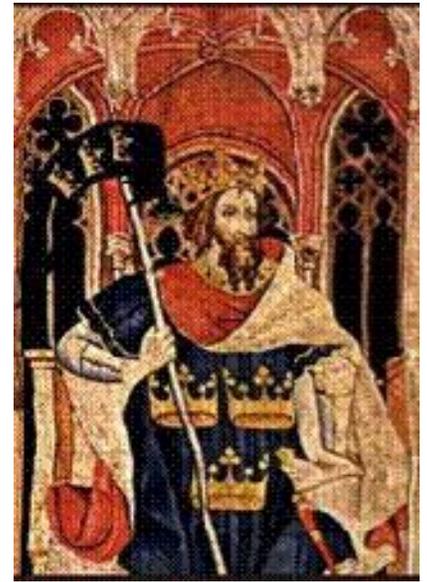
The Worthies from the Christian Era:



Portrait of Charlemagne, who brought Christianity to Europe, painted by Albrecht Durer in 1512 CE.



Godfrey of Bouillon, who led the First Crusade to Jerusalem in 1096 CE.



King Arthur, the legendary English ideal of kingship in war and peace.

The Worthies were a popular subject for Renaissance plays and poetry. *The Parlement of the Three Ages* is the most famous example, though it was written anonymously. The Worthies were conquering heroes, mostly of royal birth.

In the pageant of the Nine Worthies, the performers have large shoes to fill. They are the clowns in the play, attempting to portray history's great warriors and heroes. While the performers are gravely serious about their roles, their blunders are a great source of comedy for both audiences: the King, Princess and their attendants, as well as the larger audience of the play *Love's Labor's Lost*. Within the play, the noble audience is not willing to give them a chance to perform. The players can barely get a sentence out before the heckling begins. Shakespeare, as a playwright, was constantly examining his own craft in his plays. The device of the play-within-the-play may give us an example of what Shakespeare's company and other actors had to endure 400 years ago.

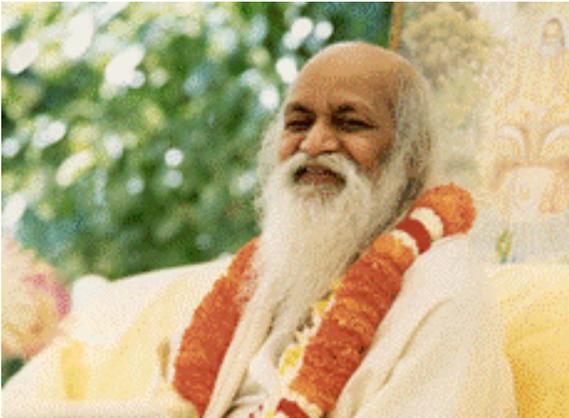
While plays-within-the-play in other comedies are successful celebrations of marriage, the pageant of the Nine Worthies proves to be a somewhat awkward choice. In addition to receiving severe heckling from the nobles, the pageant of the Nine Worthies is never completed. It is first interrupted by the announcement that Jacquenetta is pregnant and then by the news of the King of France's death. Perhaps the execution of the play-within-the-play in *Love's Labor's Lost* reflects the awkward romance of the lovers. Like the pageant, the lovers' courtship is interrupted. The players conclude their piece with two songs: a dialogue between Spring and Winter, representing both life and death, happiness and sadness. Perhaps Shakespeare interrupted the pageant of the Nine Worthies to heighten the sense of incompleteness at the end of *Love's Labor's Lost*, a play that he chooses to end without the happy resolution of a traditional comedy.



Everybody's Looking

Something

en.wikipedia.org



Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, spiritual leader.

"My mission in the world is spiritual regeneration—to regenerate every man everywhere into the values of the spirit. The values of the wholeness of life are pure consciousness, absolute bliss, absolute bliss consciousness, which is the reservoir of all wisdom, the ocean of happiness, eternal life." — Maharishi Mahesh Yogi

In *Love's Labor's Lost*, the King of Navarre and his male companions, Berowne, Longaville and Dumaine, undertake a radical quest for knowledge. In order to concentrate on self improvement through rigorous study, the four men vow that for three years, they will not see, speak to or be with a woman, will fast once per week and sleep only three hours per night. Although they all agree to these conditions, Berowne predicts that they all will break their vows. Several modern productions of the play (including this Shakespeare Theatre Company production) have compared the men to the once trendy devotees of *Transcendental Meditation* and spiritual leaders of the East.

The Maharishi was an Indian teacher of mysticism and spiritual knowledge. In 1957, he began sharing his practice of *Transcendental Meditation*, a way for the conscious mind to fathom the whole range of its existence. His practices were not a set of beliefs, a philosophy, a lifestyle or a religion. It was developed as a mental technique, practiced to achieve a state of bliss and higher wisdom. The Maharishi and his practice became famous in the 1960s and paved the way for today's American popularity of health food, yoga and mind-body awareness.

In the play, the king and his men attempt to cut themselves off from the world to study. They vow to stay away from women (to avoid the temptations of the flesh), to fast (to avoid gluttony) and to stay awake (in order to be smarter, better, more conscious and more whole). Certainly there is much to be gained from reading, writing and the pursuit of knowledge. But what is knowledge without experience? Knowledge can be transformed into

wisdom only when combined with experience. Shakespeare seems to challenge his audience through his protagonists' search to find a balance between thinking and feeling. The four men start their quest in search of knowledge; they set out to develop the intellect by abandoning romantic pursuits and the poisons of the flesh. Of course, one by one they fall prey to their desires. Their experience of women and of love alters their course. While the end of the play turns to tragedy and loss, it sends the men on the path to wisdom.

As humanity continues to make advancements in science, health and technology, the individual is allowed more opportunity to reflect. The world certainly offers a wealth of knowledge, but is it enough? What do the quick fix fads promise? Why is there is no shortage of self-help material in the bookstores? People want to be happy. They seek successful relationships and meaningful lives. The fads and the self-help books promise balance and well being. But the "wisdom" is often offered as *The Seven Rules of This* or *The 12 Steps to That*. Reading and attending a workshop is mental and intellectual. It is half of the key. Exercising, experimenting and connecting to other people is the other half. Perhaps the point of the play is that social interaction validates and augments one's education. Self awareness and a connection to the world at large through personal relationships and contemplative study together make the key that opens the door to wisdom and a meaningful life. The King of Navarre makes a mistake in avoiding women to find deep meaning in his life. It is the attraction to a woman that sets him on the path to wisdom. 

Classroom Connections

Before the performance...

What Would You Give Up to Pursue a Goal?

At the beginning of the play, the four lords make a pact to pursue academics for three years. Ask students what they would be willing to give up to pursue a goal. Ask students to journal about any conflict they experience in their own lives between professional, academic or athletic goals and their family, love or personal lives. Ask students to share their journal entries and discuss their opinions about their life's priorities. Do students believe that the four lords in *Love's Labor's Lost* should stay committed to their goal, or should they give up their oath to pursue their "true love?"

Write Your Own Sonnet

Shakespeare's sonnets are poems of 14 lines in iambic pentameter consisting of three quatrains and a couplet. The rhyme scheme goes: *abab cdcd efef gg*. Ask your class to come up with seven pairs of rhyming words together. Then ask everyone to write their own sonnet using the same rhymes and see what kinds of different sonnets are created!

Word / Play

Shakespeare shows his love of language in *Love's Labor's Lost*, which is full of wordplay and verbal artistry. The longest word in Shakespeare's canon, "honorificabilitudinitatibus," is found in this play. In addition, Shakespeare invented some 1,700 words in his lifetime, including "manager," "assassin," "gentle" and "pale." There was no dictionary to standardize language in Shakespeare's time, and he freely created new and original words to express the images he wanted to capture in his plays. However, without a dictionary, how can we know the meaning of a word we have never heard before? When watching one of Shakespeare's plays, we can get clues to a word's meaning by paying attention to the actors' movements. Students can engage in this process by using original sounds and movements to express their own images. Ask students to focus on an image in their minds, then have them create a new word for it. Next, each student should develop a movement that physically expresses their word. Have students share their words and movements with the class and let classmates try to guess the meaning of each new word.

Getting Caught: Secret Crush/Love Notes

In *Love's Labor's Lost*, the King of Navarre, Berowne, Longaville and Dumaine are only able to communicate with their love interests by sending them secret notes and poems. Ask students to write their names down on strips of paper, place those strips of paper in a box and draw one name out of the box. Then, over the course of three weeks, ask each student to write three poems about the person they selected. Each poem should be at least two lines in length and can be in any style they wish. After writing each poem (one per week), the students should find either a messenger or another way of sending this poem to the person they selected in secret. After the students have received their three poems, ask them to guess the identity of their secret author. If guessed correctly, discuss what about the style, content or delivery method of the poem indicated who was the author.

Page to Stage: When Would You Set It?

After reading the play or reviewing the synopsis, ask the class to summarize what happens in the play. The summary should be as concise as possible, but include the key events of the plot. After the summary, begin a discussion about what the play is about. What is interesting or meaningful about the play? What themes or issues are important to the students? Note that when a contemporary director approaches a production of Shakespeare, he or she has two primary responsibilities: to the playwright and to the audience. The director needs to make the production relevant for a contemporary audience while remaining true to the intentions of the playwright. Based on what the students said was interesting or meaningful, ask students to develop an idea for the setting of *Love's Labor's Lost*. Students can focus on a specific time period, location or world event. How does the design of a play help communicate the meaning of the play?

Classroom Connections

...After the performance

What Does It Mean to Break an Oath?

“What fool is not so wise / To lose an oath to win a paradise?” (Act 4, Scene 3)

Love’s Labor’s Lost begins with the main characters swearing an oath to study together for three years while fasting and refusing the company of women. Within a day, all the men have broken this oath. By the end of the play, all the men desire to take the oath of marriage, but this play does not have a typical happy ending wedding scene. Instead, the men are forced into another oath of waiting a year for their beloveds. Do you think they will be able to keep this oath? Have the men changed from the beginning of the play? What sort of oaths do we take today? What are the consequences when we break them?

Create Your Own Nine Worthies

At the end of *Love’s Labor’s Lost*, several of the characters perform a play about the Nine Worthies. The Worthies were heroes who excelled in wars and were chivalrous to their fellow man. Who would you consider to be a “Worthy” today? Divide the class into small groups. Ask each group to brainstorm modern-day heroes and decide on their own Nine Worthies. They should then create a play, pageant or song to honor them.

Duty vs. Desire

In *Love’s Labor’s Lost*, several characters are forced to make difficult decisions between giving in to their desires and fulfilling important obligations. For example, the King of Navarre, Berowne, Longaville and Dumaine are faced with a choice between fulfilling their oaths to study and abstaining from the company of women or giving in to their love for the Princess and her attendants. Ask students to write about a time in their own lives when they had to decide between doing something they wanted to do versus doing something they were required or obligated to do. In the end, what did they choose to do? What were the consequences of the choice that they made? If they had the chance to relive the situation, would they make the same decision? Why or why not?

One Year Later

Love’s Labor’s Lost does not end like a traditional comedy. The lords and ladies are forced to part ways and must delay their marriage prospects for a year. Ask students to brainstorm ideas for a sequel to *Love’s Labor’s Lost* that takes place one year after the play ends. Students can put together a treatment for a Hollywood script. Is the sequel a romantic comedy? Is it a serious drama? A reality show? Their plotline should answer the questions: What happened during the year when the lovers were separated? Do they reunite? What happens next? Students should title their script and present their pitch to the class.

“Wise and Loving”

Henry David Thoreau was a 19th-century author and philosopher who wrote the following quote:

“Man is continually saying to woman, ‘Why will you not be more wise?’ Woman is continually saying to man, ‘Why will you not be more loving?’ It is not in their wills to be wise or to be loving; but, unless each is both wise and loving, there can be neither wisdom nor love.”

Ask the students to explain what the quote means to them. Ask students to discuss how Thoreau’s quote relates to *Love’s Labor’s Lost*.

Wearing Masks

When the king and his men pay a visit to the ladies disguised as Russians, the ladies turn the tables on them with disguises of their own—they all wear masks to confuse the men and mock them for their game. When the men return as themselves, the women continue to bait them with their own words, delighting in the men’s confusion. The men were wooing in earnest, hoping to win the hearts of the ladies. The ladies thought the men were merely having fun. Why did the men feel the need to visit the ladies disguised? How would the story change if the men had not come disguised but as themselves?

Love's Labor's Lost

Resource List

Books or Essays on *Love's Labor's Lost*

- Carroll, William. *The Great Feast of Language: A Reading of Love's Labour's Lost*. Princeton University Press, 1976.
- Charney, Maurice. *Shakespearean Comedy*. New York Literary Forum, 1980.
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- Epstein, Norrie. *The Friendly Shakespeare*. Penguin Books, 1993.
- Gibson, Janet and Rex Gibson. *Discovering Shakespeare's Language*. Cambridge University Press, 1999.
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- Kermode, Frank. *Shakespeare's Language*. Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 2000.
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- Pritchard, R. E. *Shakespeare's England*. Sutton Publishing Limited, 1999.
- Papp, Joseph and Elizabeth Kirkland. *Shakespeare Alive*. Bantam Books, 1988.
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- www.bardweb.net—*The Shakespeare Resource Center*.
- www.sgc.umd.edu—*Shakespeare's Globe Center USA*.
- hrsbstaff.ednet.ns.ca/engramja/Svtour.html—*Shakespeare: A Virtual Field Trip*.
- renaissance.dm.net/compendium/home.html—*Life in Elizabethan England*.
- www.shakespeare.org.uk—*Shakespeare Birthplace Trust*.