

SHAKESPEARE'S LANGUAGE

When asked the number-one challenge with Shakespeare's works, modern-day audiences will almost always respond: "the language." It's true that the language does sound different to our ears and that Shakespeare uses phrases we no longer use in our everyday speech. But think of this: There are phrases that we use today that would baffle Shakespeare, should he magically time-travel to this day and age. That's because language (especially English) is constantly transforming.

Can you match these original quotes from *Hamlet* to their modern-day translations?

**Come, come, and sit you down. You shall not budge.
You go not till I set you up a glass
Where you may see the inmost part of you.**
Hamlet, Act 3, scene 4

**To be, or not to be, that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them.**
Hamlet, Act 3, scene 1

Oh, what a rogue and peasant slave I am!
Hamlet, Act 2, scene 2

**How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world!**
Hamlet, Act 1, scene 2

**This above all: to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.**
Polonius, Act 1, scene 3

**When sorrows come, they come not single spies
But in battalions.**
Claudius, Act 4, scene 5

Oh, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
Ophelia, Act 3, scene 1

**If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart
Absent thee from felicity a while,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain
To tell my story.**
Hamlet, Act 5, scene 2

When bad things happen, they don't happen one at a time, they happen in multitudes.

Come here and sit down. Don't move. You're not leaving until you look in this mirror—take a good look at your soul and see what you've done.

If you ever loved me, please stay sad for a while. Endure the pain of living with my death a while longer so you can tell the world the truth about what happened to me.

The most important thing is to be true to yourself because if you do, then you'll never be fake with anyone else.

He used to be brilliant; madness has ruined him.

The question is whether it's better to be alive or dead. Is it better to suffer life's painful events or to just avoid it all by dying?

Everything in life seems so tiring, dull and useless.

Ugh! I am so out of control, and such a worthless person.

See Brush Up Your Shakespeare on page 56.