



SPEAK LIKE SHAKESPEARE

TIPS

Shakespeare's language is not so very different from what we speak today. Follow our few simple tips and you will master Shakespeare-Speak in no time.

- 1. Titles:** People referred to each other by titles more often than by names. A man may be referred to as "Sir" or "Sirrah" (less polite) and a woman as "Mistress." There is also the choice of "Good Wife" for a married woman or "Good Man" for a man. If the person is above you in rank, try "My Lord" or "My Lady." Relatives or friends might be "Cousin" and old folk, even if not related, might be Gaffer (male) and Gammer (female). Something like "Prithee, come hither, goodly teacher" would not be amiss.
- 2. Greetings and Farewells:** People of the time were likely to say things like "Good morrow" and "Fare thee well"—phrases we have changed into "good morning" and "farewell." "How now, Cousin?" is like saying, "What's happening, friend?"
- 3. Thou and Thee and Thy and Thine:** "You" is only for referring to the upper class. Unless you are addressing nobility (or your parents and teachers), use "thou" (subject of sentence) or "thee" (object of sentence). "Thou art learning this subject most quickly." "I ask thee to pay attention to thy speech." "Thy" and "thine" are possessives, like "your," with "thy" in front of words starting with consonants and "thine" in front of words starting with vowels. "Thine eagerness to learn thy grammar is most appealing."
- 4. The Verb doth change:** Add "-st" to singular second-person verbs and "-th"/"-eth" to singular third-person verbs. For example, "How dost thou?" "He doth admire thee." "She giveth much homework."
- 5. The well-placed insult or curse:** Shakespeare's time thought insults were a great way to show off how witty you were. They took effort to come up with more imaginative curses and insults. They fill the plays (and there are tons of Shakespeare Insult Generators on the web). Take a look and try them out. At least use "Fie" or "Fie on [whatever is bothering you]" a few times. It's a good, all purpose curse. Or cry out "A pox on thee" if someone upsets you. There is nothing like wishing the plague on your enemies.

**10/10/10 is Speak Like Shakespeare Day.
Celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the San Diego Shakespeare Society**

Raising The Bard

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