



## Words, Words, Words.

As we all know, the most difficult aspect students face when confronting any Shakespeare play is the language. That is why many savvy teachers take that anxiety and head it off at the pass with some enjoyable, creative language activities.

The following words from Michael LoMonico's *The Shakespeare Book of Lists* (**NewPage Books**) are some of the thorniest words in the plays. There are a variety of ways to use this list. One idea is to have students get together in pairs, take any contemporary idea, and alternate writing dialogue which includes at least one of the "Troublesome Words" in each sentence. After they have written about ten lines each, ask each group to read their scene aloud. Another approach might be for individual students to write a short story for homework using a minimum of twenty different words from the list. Or students might be asked to memorize several of the words and improvise a scene employing as many of them as they can. You can certainly create other stimulating lessons, but whatever you do with this list, don't merely use it as a vocabulary quiz. If you want to make your students enjoy the play, let them discover how friendly these words can be. ■

## 80 Troublesome Words Used in the Plays

Zounds! Perchance thou hast felt like a common recreant when asked to anatomize a Shakespeare play. Anon, thou shalt toss off that coil, and with great dispatch, avoid feeling like a fustian caitiff.

If you're going to read or see a Shakespeare play, there are some words that come up again and again and might confuse you. Some of these are now archaic or arcane, and some are still in modern use but their meaning has changed. Knowing the following words and their modern translations will turn the beginning reader into an instant expert.

Addition—title	Halter—noose
Affined—bound by duty	Heavy—sorrowful
Alarum—call to arms with trumpets	Honest—chaste, pure
Anatomize—to analyze in detail	Housewife—hussy, prostitute
Ancient—ensign	Impeach—dishonor
Anon—until later	List—listen
Arrant—absolute	Mayhap—maybe
Aroint—begone	Mess—meal, food
Assail—to make amorous siege to	Mew—confine
Attend—to await	Minister—servant
Aye—yes	Moiety—portion
Baffle—to hang up (a person) by the heels as a mark of disgrace	Morrow—day
Baggage—strumpet, prostitute	Nay—no
Balk—to disregard	Ne'er—never
Barm—the froth on ale	Office—service or favor
Belike—maybe	Of—often
Blank—a target	Passing—surprisingly, exceedingly
Bolted—refined	Perchance—maybe
Brach—bitch hound	Perforce—of necessity
Brake—bushes	Politician—schemer
Brave—fine, handsome	Post—messenger
Bum—backside, buttocks	Power—army
Caitiff—a wretched humble person	Prithee—I pray thee (please)
Catch—song	Quest—a jury
Character—handwriting	Recreant—coward
Chuck—term of endearment, chick	Resolve—to answer; reply to
Clout—a piece of white cloth	Soundly—plainly
Cog—to deceive	Stale—harlot
Coil—trouble	Subscription—loyalty, allegiance
Cousin—any close relative	Tax—to criticize; to accuse
Descant—improvise	Troth—belief
Dispatch—to hurry	Teem—to give birth
E'en—evening	Tucket—trumpet flourish
Enow—enough	Verge—edge, circumference
Fare-thee-well—goodbye	Verily—truly
Fie—a curse	Want—lack
Fustian—wretched	Welkin—sky
Got—begot	Well-a-day—alas
Grammarcy—thank you	Wherefore—why
	Yea—yes
	Zounds—by his (Christ's) wounds