

Becoming Familiar with the Language of Shakespeare

Before reading *Romeo and Juliet*, familiarize yourself with the following terms. Students often have difficulty with the language in Shakespeare's plays, but if you know some of the commonly used terms beforehand, you should have an easier time.

1. **adieu:** farewell
2. **an:** if ("an you will")
3. **attend:** listen to
4. **ay:** yes
5. **counsel:** advice
6. **decree:** order
7. **discourses:** speaks
8. **dispatch:** kill
9. **doth:** does
10. **e'en:** even
11. **ere:** before
12. **fain:** gladly
13. **foe:** enemy
14. **forswear:** deny
15. **forsworn:** denied
16. **heavy:** sad, depressed
17. **hie:** go
18. **hither:** here
19. **mark:** pay attention to
20. **marry:** by the Virgin Mary, a mild oath meaning "indeed"
21. **methinks:** I think
22. **naught:** nothing
23. **nay:** no
24. **ne'er:** never
25. **o'er:** over
26. **oft:** often
27. **ope:** open
28. **plague:** curse
29. **pray:** beg
30. **privy:** informed
31. **resolve:** plan
32. **sirrah:** used when addressing people of inferior rank, like "boy"
33. **soft:** an exclamation meaning "Wait a minute!"
34. **thee:** you
35. **thither:** there
36. **thou art:** you are
37. **thy:** your
38. **tidings:** news
39. **'tis:** it is
40. **wherefore:** why
41. **whereto:** which
42. **will:** desire
43. **withal:** with
44. **woe:** misery
45. **woo:** chase (as in boy- chase-girl), to court
46. **would:** wish
47. **wrought:** provide