

## 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.

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