



ACTIVITIES: KEY STAGE 4 & 5 LANGUAGE

Article: “Some are born great...”

Find the article on Malvolio on the Playing Shakespeare site. The author emphasises the contrasting ways in which he can be viewed by an audience. If you were directing the play, describe how you would present the scenes of Malvolio’s punishment and how you would direct the actor playing him to behave during the final scene when the cruel trick played on him is exposed.

Article: To Verse Or Not To Verse

Find the article on verse on the Playing Shakespeare site. The article describes the way in which blank verse and prose are used in the play. Pick out moments from the play when true feelings are expressed through blank verse and moments where true feelings are hidden through the use of prose. Compare your findings with those selected by other students.

Article: Love, Loss, Identity and the Sea

Find the article on love and the sea on the Playing Shakespeare site. The article discusses the different ways love is presented in the play and the way this interacts with each character’s identity. Describe how identity is affected by love for some of the characters in the play. Compare your ideas with those of fellow students.

Article: Cross Dressing in Twelfth Night

Find the article by Dr Farah Karim-Cooper on Cross-dressing in Shakespeare’s time. One of the aspects considered is the way that in Elizabethan England people from different classes were quite strictly controlled in the clothes they could wear.

- Use this aspect of the article to further your thinking about the Elizabethan context of the play particularly the impact on an audience of Malvolio’s appearing before Olivia in his unlikely clothing.
- How does an appreciation of the context in which Twelfth Night was written add to our understanding of the impact Malvolio’s appearance in yellow stockings on an audience in Shakespeare’s time? (AO4)

Another aspect considered is the way that cross-dressing was a feature of festivals such as Twelfth Night. Use these ideas to think more about the way in which Viola’s cross-dressing would be seen by the contemporary audience.

- Compare the way in which Viola’s decision to adopt male dress parallels the way in which Rosalind in ‘As You Like It’ makes the same decision in order to feel safe in the forest when she is banished. Show how this initial decision leads to comedy through mistaken identity in both plays. (AO3 AO4)