

Ticks and mites and lice and small mice, and handfuls of straw for toilet paper; Elizabethans were scratching all the time.

This show is a listening test. If you hear words today that you aren't sure of, or don't know, guess; 90% of the time you will be right.

Shakespeare! So, what's the big deal? He did write some cool stories; most educated people seem to know a few of them – Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, Macbeth. He also invented, or brought into common use, over a thousand words. These aren't like computer or internet words, these are basic English. Here are just 15: alligator, assassination, bloody, critic, fitful, frugal, generous, laughable, lonely, majestic, monumental, multitudinous, obscene, pious and road. He also coined a ton of phrases; here are 52, the number of years he lived.

If you cannot understand my argument and declare **it's Greek to me**, you are quoting Shakespeare.

If you claim to be **more sinned against than sinning**, you are quoting Shakespeare.

If you acted **more in sorrow than in anger**, even though your property has **vanished into thin air**, or if you suffer from **green-eyed jealousy**, you are quoting Shakespeare.

If you have been **a tower of strength**, and refused to **budge an inch**; **knitted your brows**, and insisted on **fair play**; made **virtue of necessity**, **stood on ceremony**, **danced attendance** on your **lord and master**; had **short shrift** or **cold comfort** or **slept not one wink**, you are quoting Shakespeare.

Even if you've **played fast and loose**, been **hoodwinked**, or **in a pickle**, had **too much of a good thing**, or **laughed yourself into stitches**, you are quoting Shakespeare.

If you know that **it is high time**, and that **that is the long and the short of it**; if you believe **to give the devil his due**, **the game is up**, and **truth will out**, even if it involves your own **flesh and blood**;

if you've **seen better days** while living in a **fool's paradise**,
 or had to **lie low** till the **crack of doom**, because you suspected **foul play**,
 well then it's a **foregone conclusion**, **if the truth were known**,
 that not being **tongue-tied** but rather **having a tongue in your head**,
 you are quoting Shakespeare.

Even if **without rhyme or reason** you bid me **good riddance**
 and **send me packing**;

if you wish I were **dead as a doornail**,

if you think I am an **eyesore**, a **laughing stock**, **the devil incarnate**,
 a **stony-hearted villain**, **bloody-minded**, or a **blinking idiot**,

well then **by Jove, O lord, tut-tut, for goodness sake, but me no buts**,
it is all one to me, you are quoting Shakespeare.

He wrote his 37 plays to make money; that's for sure. He started off
 tending the horses and died a wealthy, land-owning gentleman.

*Shakespeare also made good cash dedicating erotic poetry to rich nobles. In the
 long poem Venus and Adonis, Venus, clasping Adonis in her arms, instructs him
 on how after kissing her on the lips, he should move lower:*

“I'll be a park, and thou shalt be my deer:
 Feed where thou wilt, on mountain or in dale;
 Graze on my lips, and if those hills be dry,
 Stray lower, where the pleasant fountains lie.

He also sucked up to his rich patron with sonnets:

When in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes,
 I all alone beweepe my outcast state,
 And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
 And look upon myself and curse my fate,
 Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
 Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,

Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope,
 With what I most enjoy contented least;
 Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
 Haply I think on thee, and then my state,
 Like to the lark at break of day arising
 From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;
 For thy sweet love remember'd such wealth brings
 That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

The king was the big kahuna to suck up to. In 1603, Elizabeth I died after a 44-year reign and was succeeded by James I. So during the last 13 years of Shakespeare's life James was the King. His company even changed their name to The King's Men. They made big bucks performing at court.

The King is a thickset man of little more than medium height. His skin is remarkably soft and white. His tongue is too large for his mouth making his speech thick and his drinking ungraceful, 'as if eating his drink.' His co-ordination is poor, his doublet ever encrusted with food, his walk a species of jerky shambles-circular in nature, often leaning on a favorite, his fingers ever fiddling about his codpiece. He is highly intellectual and

learned and yet believes in witches; and indeed has been responsible for the torture, hanging and burning of many old women. He wears a padded vest, lives in constant fear of assassination and indeed is one of the most superstitious, complicated neurotics ever to come to the English throne.

1603 was also the year when 30,000 Londoners died of the plague.

The bubonic plague, the purple whip of vengeance, was carried by rats and passed to people by flea bites. A person developed primary buboes in the armpits and groin, which multiplied into many running sores. These, accompanied with sweating, shakes, nausea, chills, high temperatures, vomiting and diarrhea, would cause one to gallop towards a nasty, painful messy death.

London. Morning. Downside a church near East Cheap a large hungry grave stands gaping and, as at a breakfast, hath already swallowed down ten or fifteen lifeless carcasses. Before lunch in another gulp are twice so many devoured. And before the sun takes his rest those numbers are doubled. Sixty, that not many hours before had each his own lodging very delicately furnished, are now thrust all together into one close room, a little, little noisome room not fully 80 foot square. **You who are so in love with yourself, think of this.** That selfsame body of yours which is so pampered, so perfumed, so gaily appareled,

will one day be thrown like a stinking carrion into a rank and rotten grave where those goodly eyes that did shoot forth such amorous glances must be eaten out of your head. You will be fumbled into a muckpit with thirty dead men lying slovenly upon you, and you the undermost of all-yea and perhaps half that number were your enemies, and see how they may be revenged, for the worms that breed out of their putrefying carcasses shall crawl in huge swarms from them and quite devour you.

I don't think we can even imagine the smells of Elizabethan London.

The streets stank of manure, the courtyards of urine, the stairwells of moldering wood and rat droppings, the kitchens of spoiled cabbage and mutton fat; the un-aired parlors of pale dust. The bedrooms retain a funk - that pungently sweet aroma of chamber pots. The stench of sulphur rises from the chimneys, the stench of caustic lyes from the tanneries, and from the slaughterhouse wafts that sweet, sickly stench of congealed blood. The people stink of sweat and unwashed clothes; from their mouths comes the stench of rotting teeth, from their bellies that of

onions, and from their bodies, if they were no longer very young, might come the stench of rancid cheese, sour milk and tumorous disease. The river stinks, the marketplace stink, even the churches stink. The peasant stinks as does the priest, the apprentice as does his master's wife, the whole aristocracy stinks; the King himself is foul, like a rank lion, and the Queen like an old goat, summer and winter.

In such unhealthy times, when people ate a huge variety of meat and drank beer almost continually, and had sex way more than us, life-expectancy was about 42; Shakespeare did well making it to 52, using his last ten years to write many of his great tragedies.

London. Night. Peering out the window. The damp, most insidious of all enemies, swells the wood, furs the kettle, rusts the iron, and rots the stone. The stars reflect themselves in deep pits of stagnant water which lie in the middle of the streets. The dark shadow at the corner where the wine shop stands is likely as not the corpse of a murdered man. Cries of the wounded in night brawls, troops of ruffians, men and woman unspeakably interlaced, lurch down the streets, trolling out old songs, with jewels flashing in their ears, and knives gleaming in their fists. To the north, the outline of Hampstead Forest, contorted and writhing against the sky. Here and there on the hills above London, a stark gallows tree, with a parched or rotting corpse. Danger and insecurity, lust and violence, poetry and filth, roam the narrow pathways of the city, and buzz and stink.

Thank God for the theatre! One could always go to the theatre to enliven one's spirit; but only at risk to one's eternal soul. The clergy despised the theatre, and were not shy about sharing their opinions.

The common haunters of the theatres are the lewdest persons in the land, apt for pilfery, forgeries, or any rogueries, the very scum, rascality, and baggage of the people. Briefly an unclean generation, a spawn of vipers. A play is like a sink in a town, where all the filth doth run.

Nay, many poor, needy creatures, who have scarce cloth for their backs nor food for their bellies will do almost anything to see a play - let wife and children beg!

As for the Players, do they not maintain bawdry, insinuate foolery and renew the remembrance of heathen idolatry? Nay, are they rather not the plain devourers of maiden virginity and chastity? For proof whereof but mark the running and flocking to the Theatres, daily and hourly, time and tide, to see plays; where such wanton gestures, such bawdy speeches, such laughing and fleering, such kissing and bussing, such winking and glancing of wanton eyes is used, tis wonderful to behold. The cause of plagues is sin. The cause of sin is plays. Therefore, the cause of plagues are plays!

The theatres were sometimes closed because of the plague, but normally they were packed.

We come upon a crowd, a mass of people pressing as near the silken rope as they dare. We're shouldered by apprentices; tailors; fishwives; horse dealers; starving scholars; maid in their whimples; orange girls; bawdy tapsters; sober citizens; and a pack of little ragamuffins such as always haunt the outskirts of a crowd, screaming and scrambling among the people's feet-all the ruffraff of London are

here, some with mouths gaping a yard wide; all rigged out as vigorously as their purse or stations allow; here in fur and broadcloth, there in tatters with their feet kept from the ice by a dishcloth bound about them. Once inside we witness a dramatic performance with a black man waving his arms and vociferating and a woman laid white on a bed. The main press standing opposite the stage, laughing when an actor trips, or when bored, tossing an orange peel upon the ice which a dog scrambles for. But oh, the astonishing, sinuous melody of the words, spoken with extreme speed and daring agility of tongue, like sailors singing in the beer gardens of Wapping. The passions, the tears, the Moor strangles the woman in her bed. The life of man ends in a grave.

The audience wouldn't know that Desdemona was to die, that Othello would strangle her in her bed. They would have been devastated.

If one had more primal tastes in entertainment, one could visit the Paris Gardens, on the South Bank and just within earshot of the Globe Theatre. The Paris Gardens was the biggest venue for bear baiting in London, an entertainment Queen Elizabeth quite enjoyed.

The baited bear, tied to the stake. Its dirty coat needs brushing. Dried mud and spume. Pale dust. Big clumsy fists. Men bring dogs through the gate. Leather collars with spikes. Loose them and fight. The bear wanders around the stake. It knows it can't get away. Dogs on three sides. Chains. Fur in the mouth. Flesh and blood. Strips of skin. Teeth scraping bone. The bear crushes one of the skulls. Big feet slithering in dog's brain. Round the stake. On and on. The key in the warder's pocket. Howls. Roars. Men baiting the beast. On and on and on.

And later, the bear raises its great arm. The paw with a broken razor. And it looks as if it is making a gesture -- it wasn't: only pain or weariness, or the sun, or brushing away the sweat - but it looks as if it's making a gesture to the crowd, asking for one sign of grace, one no. And the crowd roars, for more blood, more pain, more beasts huddled together, tearing flesh and treading in loving blood.

Next comes Harry Hunks, the blinded bear. The sport is to bait with whips. Slash, slash. It can't see but it can hear. It grabs the whips. Catches some of them. Brakes them. Slashes back at the men. Slash Slash. And finally, they send an ape round on a horse. It looks like a thin hairy man or a child. You can see the pale skin under its arm when it jumps. Its teeth. The dogs tear it to pieces. The crowd howls. London.

Where did Shakespeare get all his characters for his plays? London!. All of his plays, at their core are really about London. Shakespeare stole from everyone; all actors do. I think Shakespeare stole Sir Andrew Aquecheek, the foolish knight in Twelfth Night, from Thomas Dekker, a fellow playwright and pamphleteer. Dekker's pamphlet, "A Gull's Hornbook" – or what I might rename "A fool's instructional manual" was very popular. Here it is, vacuumed to about 25%.

If your worm-eaten father be dead and hath left you 500 pound a year to keep you and an Irish horse-boy like a gentleman, listen to this...

First, have the softest largest down bed; and never rise till your belly grumbles. Midday slumbers are golden: they make the body fat, the skin fair, the flesh plump, delicate and tender. They make a russet colour on the cheeks of young maids and cause lusty courage to rise up in young men. Besides they save us the price of breakfast and

preserve our clothes; for while we are warm in our beds, our clothes are not worn.

Next, walk up and down your chamber in a bare shirt or stark naked. If the morning thrust her frosty fingers into your bosom pinching you black and blue with her nails made of ice, creep into the chimney corner and toast yourself till the fat dew of your body trickles down your sides. For then you may say that "You live by the sweat of your brows!"

Then dress yourself. Good clothes are the embroidered trappings of pride. The Spanish slop, the skippers galligaskin, the Switzer's blistered cod piece, the Danish sleeve, the French standing collar, your stiff necked rebatoes, your stockings and your shoes.

For your hair, never allow a comb to fasten its teeth there, but let it grow bushy like a forest or some wilderness, lest those six footed creatures that breed in it are hunted to death, and that delicate pleasure of scratching be taken from you. Besides a head all hid in hair, gives to even the most wicked face, sweet proportion. And put feathers in your hair as do gallants in their hats, for then none can accuse you of sleeping in a field like a beggar, for your feathers prove you have lain on the softest down bed.

Next, to Paul's walk go. But be sure to pick an hour when the main shoal of Islanders are swimming up and down. Be sure to walk in the middle where you may publish your fine suit of clothes. If perchance you should meet a knight of your acquaintance, do not name him Sir such-and-such, but call out Ned or Jack, as this will mightily impress everyone. Before leaving Pauls set your watch by the clock, and if you are hungry you must off to the ordinary. Go in a coach, if possible, to hide from your creditors. Being arrived in the room, walk up and down as scornfully and carelessly as possible. Select some

friend, dressed worse than you, to walk up and down with you. If you but make noise, and laugh in the fashion and have a sour face to promise quarrelling, you shall be much observed. Talk as loud as you can, no matter to what purpose. If you have languages, this is an excellent occasion to show them; if not get some fragments of French or small parcels of Italian, to fling about the table. Never be silent but say how often this lady hath sent her coach for you, or how often you have sweat in the tennis-court with that great lord. After manfully devouring your stewed mutton, goose, or woodcocks, you must ask some special friend of yours to talk with you in the withdrawing room, where you may enquire about which new poems or pamphlets a man might think best to wipe his tail with? In asking this, you may abuse the works of any man, deprave his writings, which you cannot equal, and purchase in time the terrible name of severe critic. Next to dice, and if you lose not your suit of clothes, you must to the theatre.

Once you have paid your pennies to enter, stay not with the groundlings with their garlic sausage and stink, nor go not to the balconies where much new satin is dammed by being smothered in darkness, but advance yourself to the throne of the stage, where like a feathered ostrich you may ignore the hoots and hisses of the scarecrows who spit at you, yea who throw dirt even in your teeth: for by sitting on the stage the essential parts of the gallant are perfectly revealed -good clothes, a proportional leg, a white hand, a tolerable beard.

On the stage you can so rail against the author that you can force him to know you. For doth not the fool, the Justice-of-the-Peace, the cuckold, the captain, the Lord Mayor's son, the stinkard, or the sweet smelling courtier, have equal voice in the play's life and death? Be sure to laugh so high that all the house may hear it during the

saddest scenes of the terriblest tragedy. If the writer perchance be a fellow that hath flirted with your mistress, or hath epigrammed you, or hath brought your red beard or your little legs on stage, you may disgrace him worse than stabbing him in the tavern, if during the middle of the play you rise with screwed and discontented face from your stool and be gone. And sneak not away, but draw what troop you can with you. The actors will thank you for allowing them elbow-room. And to conclude hoard up what play scraps you can for the ordinary, the tavern, or your mistress. Then to the tavern.

To choose a tavern enquire out whose masters are most drunk (for that confirms their wholesome wines.) Confine not yourself to any one particular liquor, but partake of all. It is not fitting a man should trouble his head with sucking at one grape, but that he may be able to drink any stranger drunk in his own element. Keep a boy in fee who underhand shall proclaim you in every room what a gallant fellow you are, how much you spend yearly in taverns, what a great gamester, what witty discourse you maintain at table, what gentlewomen or citizen's wives you can have sup with you at any time. Thus all will admire you and think it paradise to be merely in your acquaintance

When the spirit of wine and tobacco walks in your brain, the tavern-door being shut upon your back, hire that boy to be as a lantern to your feet to light you on your way home. On all the way, especially near some gate, talk of none but lords and ladies. Haply, it will be blown abroad that you swam through such an ocean of wine, that you danced so much money away, it will be known, and you will be held in great estimation. The only danger is if you owe money and your creditors hear of these tales, for they will be thundering at your chamber door the next morning. To counter this, send out your horse boy for your apothecary. He will contrive such tales of your

sickness, that they will be driven into their holes like foxes. Well that is it.

A day in my life!

*I found this next speech 35 years ago in a short novel by Anthony Burgess called **Nothing Like the Sun** - an intriguing theory about Shakespeare's love life. Many people, including Anthony Burgess, believe that the politically motivated punishment, described in the piece, motivated Shakespeare to write *The Merchant of Venice*.*

There were crowds scurrying west, roaring, chewing bread and bits of garlic sausage, some armed with bottles against the summer heat, the plebs, the commons, the mob.

The nobles in their carriages move with some difficulty over the cobbles of the narrow streets with its toppling shops and houses; they could hear the confusion of the horses' feet, feeling their coaches jostled by the jeering crowds. The footmen shout abuse at those who come near enough to scare the horses or finger the gleaming brass and polished harness. The coachmen lash out! There are cries of pain and growls, but the underdog remains under.

At Tyburn they draw the curtains back to let light in, and a grim holiday vision appears; a whole clutter of noble's coaches, on some of which the gaily and richly dressed have climbed to the roof or ousted the footmen from their seat. The sober citizens sit, more soberly, inside their coaches. All wait.

There is the tree. Crouched on the platform the hangman's assistant is securing plank with busy hammer. The hangman himself, masked, with brawny arms folded, struts like an actor, but an actor who needs no glory of words.

From afar comes a roar. The hurdles are approaching, dragged over dry ground, raising a coughing dust. One of the draggers, with a toothless idiot's face, greets friends from a black and panting mouth. There are jeers. Men spit on the still figures roped to the hurdles. A young woman in front begins to jump, partly to see better, partly in a transport of expectancy. A child is lifted onto his father's shoulders.

Other of the hangman's assistants bring a great metal bowl with four steaming kettles. The crowd cheers as the near boiling water is splashed into the bowl. One kettle carrier makes as though he will pour a scalding stream over the spectators nearest the tree; they retreat in a scurry, screaming their laughter to his grin.

The hurdles have reached the end of their journey. And now, Tinoco. A foreign and heathen name...he is to be first. A dark, shivering man has his shirt stripped from him as he is roughly untied from the hurdle. Stumbling, falling in fear, and all to the crowd's laughter, he is made to mount the ladder, rung by slow trembling rung. Behind him, the hanger waits on a narrow crude podium. He is a young man, muscular; his mouth opens with some ribald pleasantries to his victim as he secures the hempen noose about his neck. The lips of the victim move as in prayer, the hands seek to join in prayer, but cannot, of a sudden the noose is tightened; over the momentary inbreathed silence of the crowd the choking desperation of the hanged can clearly be heard. The second assistant pulls the ladder away sharply. The legs dangle, and the bulging eyes blink. Here is art: the hangman approaches with his knife, fire in the sunlight, and before the neck can crack, rips downward from the heart to the groin in one slash, quickly changes the knife from right to left, then plunges a mottled fist inside the body. The first assistant takes the bloody knife from his master and wipes it with care on a clean cloth, all the while his eyes on the artistry of the drawing. The right hand

withdraws, dripping, holding up for all to see, a heart in its fatty wrappings; then the left hand plunges to reappear all coiled and clotted with entrails. The crowd roars; the girl in front leaps and claps; the child on his father's shoulders thumbsucks, indifferent, understanding nothing of all this - the adult world.

The ruined body is hoisted as the noose is loosened, and then is plunked on the platform. The hangman throws the heart and the guts into the steaming bowl, freeing his arms from encrustations with quick fingers, drying them, unwashed on a towel. The crowd moans its pleasure, its excitement, for are there not two more victims to come? The hangman is handed a hatchet, squat and crude compared to that artist's instrument, but sharp as it cracks through the bone for quartering - the arms, the legs, the head. The gaping torso is upheld a moment, then all the pieces of the man are shoved into a basket.

Next comes Ferrara, gross and heavy, the flesh shaking on his hairy chest, his three chins wobbling to the crowd's pleasure, his eyes rolling like those of some insentient doll. Here is comedy, a sort of Kemp. Ferrara squeals like a pig, going, "No, no, no, no!", as he is thrust up the ladder, groaning dismally from his belly's depths as the noose goes about his no-neck. This time the hangman is a fraction too slow with his knife; Ferrara is dead already as the point pierces. But there is a great fat heart, crammed like a goose's liver, dripping treason, treason, treason; the entrails are endless, an eternity of pink sausage; the crowd is a-roar with delight at the fatness of the chopped limbs.

And finally, the crowning course of this rich dinner. Dr. Roderigo Lopez, physician to the queen, Jew, Machiavel, small and black, and chattering like an ape. Let him not be granted the least dignity in his

dying: strip all off. There's a fair sized thursday for thee; mark, he is like all foreigners for the appurtenances of lust. Lopez prays aloud in a high screaming voice, then in ridiculous foreigner's English: I love deKvin. Ass mosh ass I loff Zhessoss Krist-"

The crowd splits their sides with laughter but are, at the same time, most indignant; this naked foreign monkey saying the Holy Name, screaming with that smart filthy rod, of his love for the Queen. Draw! Draw! Draw! The hangman's hands reek. Then he goes for the body with his hatchet as he would mince it fine.

The crowd is sated, spent, purged, cleansed, splitting up into decent family groups, proceeding to the quiet of their houses.

A year later, with this execution still fresh in the minds of the public, Shakespeare has Shylock the Jew, speak from The Merchant of Venice about his need for revenge, his need for a pound of Antonio's flesh.

He hath disgraced me and hindered me half a million, laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies and what's his reason? I am a Jew.

Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions?— fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is?

If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh?

If you poison us, do we not die?

And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?

If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that.

If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge.

If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example?

Why, revenge.

The villainy you teach me I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.

So Shakespeare wrote stories his audiences would relate to. He couldn't amaze them with digital effects or green screens, so he created new words instead. Listen how he describes the night before the battle of Agincourt in Henry V.

Now entertain conjecture of a time,
When creeping murmur and the pouring dark
Fills the wide vessel of the universe.
From camp to camp, through the foul womb of night,
The hum of either army stilly sounds,
That the fixed sentinals almost receive
The secret whispers of each other's watch.
Fire answers fire, and through their paly flames
Each battle sees the other's umbered face.
Steed threatens steed, in high and boastful neighs
Piercing the night's dull ear; and from the tents
The armorers accomplishing the knights,
With busy hammers closing rivets up,
Give dreadful note of preparation.
The country cocks do crow, the clocks do toll
And the third hour of drowsy morning name.
Proud of their numbers and secure in soul,
The confidant and over-lusty French
Do the low-rated English play at dice;
And chide the cripple tardy-gaited night

Who like a foul and ugly witch doth limp
So tediously away. The poor condemned English
Like sacrifices, by their watchful fires
Sit patiently and inly ruminate
The morning's danger; O, now, who will behold
The Royal captain of this ruined band
Walking from watch to watch, from tent to tent,
Let him cry, 'Praise and glory on his head!'
For forth he goes and visits all his host,
Bids them good morrow with a modest smile
And calls them brothers, friends, and countrymen.
Upon his royal face there is note
How dread an army hath enrouned him;
Nor doth he dedicate one jot of colour
Upon the weary and all-watched night,
But freshly looks, and overbears attaint
With cheerful semblance and sweet majesty;
That every wretch, pining and pale before,
Beholding him, plucks comfort from his looks.
A largess universal, like the sun.
His liberal eye doth give to every one,
Thawing cold fear, that mean and gentle all
Behold, as may unworthiness define,
A little touch of Harry in the night.

Shakespeare made money with sex, violence and patriotism, just like filmmakers today. Remember the film, Band of Brothers? They got the phrase from Shakespeare, from Henry V, the morning before the battle of Agincourt. Someone wishes for more men and Henry responds with:

What's he that wishes so?

My cousin Westmoreland? No, my fair cousin:

If we are mark'd to die, we are enow

To do our country loss; and if to live,

The fewer men, the greater share of honour.

God's will! I pray thee, wish not one man more.

By Jove, I am not covetous for gold,

Nor care I who doth feed upon my cost;

It yearns me not if men my garments wear;

Such outward things dwell not in my desires:

But if it be a sin to covet honour,

I am the most offending soul alive.

No, faith, my coz, wish not a man from England:

Rather proclaim it, Westmoreland, through my host,

That he which hath no stomach to this fight,
Let him depart; his passport shall be made
And crowns for convoy put into his purse:
We would not die in that man's company
That fears his fellowship to die with us.
This day is called the feast of Crispian:
He that outlives this day, and comes safe home,
Will stand a tip-toe when the day is named,
And rouse him at the name of Crispian.
He that shall live this day, and see old age,
Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbours,
And say 'To-morrow is Saint Crispian:'
Then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars.
And say 'These wounds I had on Crispin's day.'
Old men forget: yet all shall be forgot,
But he'll remember with advantages
What feats he did that day: then shall our names
Familiar in his mouth as household words

Harry the king, Bedford and Exeter,
Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester,
Be in their flowing cups freshly remember'd.
This story shall the good man teach his son;
And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,
From this day to the ending of the world,
But we in it shall be remember'd;
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
For he to-day that sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile,
This day shall gentle his condition:
And gentlemen in England now a-bed
Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,
And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day.

Good speech, eh?

This show, this version of it, is on my website and anyone is welcome to shape the material, to create their own show. My purpose has always been to encourage young people to practice new words and new ways of using them, by playing “vacuumed” Shakespeare aloud. Practicing aloud develops a skill that distinguishes leaders across almost all professions. Shakespeare provides so many useful words to learn, to practice, to learn to invent, to amaze others with the accuracy and creativity of your thoughts. Practice Shakespeare Out Loud, always bearing in mind what Hamlet, himself, tells the actors:

Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly* on the tongue. But if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief* the town crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently, for in the very torrent, tempest, and (as I may say) whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire a smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious* periwig pated* fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumbshows and noise. Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor. Suit the action to the word, the word to the action, with this special observance, that you overstep not the modesty of nature. For any thing so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature: to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the

very age and body of the time* his form and pressure.* Now this overdone, or come tardy off,* though it make the unskillful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve, the censure* of the which one* must in your allowance overweigh a whole theatre of others. O, there be players that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly, that neither having the accent of Christians, nor the gait* of Christian, pagan, nor no man, have so strutted and bellowed that I have thought some of nature's journeymen* had made men and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably. Look to't, I pray thee....and I thank thee.