

## Asking questions

As in modern English, the verb is inverted in order to ask a question:

*Are you?      Have you?      Did you?      Would you?*

With the second person singular following this rule:

*Art thou?      Hast thou?      Dost thou?      Wouldst thou?      Etc.*

### Exercises

1. Work with a partner to ask the following questions in Elizabethan grammar:

- Who are you?
- What do you do?
- Have you been here long?
- Where are you going next?
- Why are you asking me questions?
  
- Then make up two questions of your own.

2. Write out the following quotations, substituting the familiar forms for those in brackets:

- (Do you) think because (you are) virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?
- How (do you) like this tune?
- (Will you) go to bed, Malvolio?
- (Talk you) of nothing but ladies?
- (Have you) forgot yourself?
- How now, (are you) mad?

3. With a partner, script a brief game of verbal tennis, where opponents must 'bat' a question, which can only be replied to by another question.

- No statements, exclamations, repetitions or non-sequiturs are allowed! When you are satisfied with your exchanges, re-script the game using the familiar forms.

Here are some possible exchanges:

- What are you doing here? [be careful with the Elizabethan form here]
- Do you know?
- How should I?
- Didn't you ask?
- Who should I ask?                      Etc.etc.

**Thee** was used when the person was the object of the sentence:

*I give thee an apple. I defy thee. I love thee.*

This originally matched with 'me'. So where you would say "He gave me an apple," "He defies me", or "He loves me", you substitute 'thee' when it is applied to 'you.'

'Thy' is the possessive, meaning 'your':

*"This is thy doing." "I wish thy heart were mine." "It is thy love I want."*

This originally matched with 'my'. So if you wanted to say This is my doing, I wish my heart were his or It is my love he wants, you substitute 'thy' when it is applied to 'you.'

**Thine** is also possessive and used in the same sense as 'mine'.

*This apple is now thine; All I have is thine;*

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## Exercises

1. Write out the following sentences, filling in the correct form:

Thou            thee            thy            thine

- \_\_\_\_\_ hast done me wrong.
- I have never lied to \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ knowest my heart is \_\_\_\_\_.
- Why dost \_\_\_\_\_ not believe me?
- If only \_\_\_\_\_ love were as constant as mine, \_\_\_\_\_ wouldst feel the anguish that I do.
- \_\_\_\_\_ dost not know what I have suffered.
- I have suffered agonies for \_\_\_\_\_
- Wilt \_\_\_\_\_ not see that my heart is truly \_\_\_\_\_?
- I give \_\_\_\_\_ this jewel, as a token.
- Please take it, so it will be always \_\_\_\_\_.
- It is only \_\_\_\_\_ love that I desire; \_\_\_\_\_ kisses and \_\_\_\_\_ fond words.

# SHAKESPEARE'S GRAMMAR

## Using the familiar form as the object of a sentence

You have learned how to use the familiar form 'thou' as the subject of a sentence, and how to use it in questions. When it becomes the object of a sentence it changes.

When you use 'I' as a sentence object, it becomes 'me'; you would not say 'He gave the book to I', but 'He gave the book to me'. The familiar form follows this pattern.

*'He gave the book to thee' (not 'He gave the book to thou').*

### Exercise

1. Write out the following sentences, filling in the correct form:

- The girls wish to dance with \_\_\_\_\_
- I am making a drawing of \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ hast the picture I made for \_\_\_\_\_
- Poor fool, I can only pity \_\_\_\_\_
- Hast \_\_\_\_\_ the letter I gave to \_\_\_\_\_?

This is also true of the possessive forms. To indicate belonging, we would say,

*'This is my book,' or perhaps, 'This book is mine.'*

In the familiar form, this becomes

*'This is thy book' or 'This book is thine.'*

### Exercise

1. Write out the following sentences, filling in the correct form:

- Thou hast written this letter, for this is \_\_\_\_\_ hand.
- I am returning this kerchief, for it is \_\_\_\_\_
- Wilt thou swear this is \_\_\_\_\_ horse?
- When did this noble beast become \_\_\_\_\_?
- Thou hast given \_\_\_\_\_ heart to me, yet still it is \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Complete the Elizabethan letter below (or write one of your own) showing that you have understood all the uses of the familiar form.

*My dearest coz*

\_\_\_\_\_ knowest how well I esteem \_\_\_\_\_ wisdom, and therefore I make bold to ask for \_\_\_\_\_ advice. I am in love, but know not how to find whether or not my love is returned. If these feelings were \_\_\_\_\_, what wouldst \_\_\_\_\_ do? I can go no longer without sleep or food, but must know if my sentiments are returned. Hast \_\_\_\_\_ ever felt these pangs of desire? If so, \_\_\_\_\_ wilt know in what need I stand of \_\_\_\_\_ best comfort.

*In hope and expectation,*

Ever \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

