

Puns

1. Introduce a simple definition. (a pun is a form of wordplay)

2. Introduce students to three types of puns used by Shakespeare.

- a. Substitution puns- These puns rely on substituting a similar sounding word with a different meaning.

EX. "Puns are a low form of humor, but I think poetry is verse."
(worse)

" This push/will cheer me ever or disseat me now."
(Cheer is a pun on chair, as in throne. Disseat means "dethrone")

- b. Homonym puns- these puns use homonyms (pale/pail, tail tale,) EX. Thereby hangs a tail. (tale)

- (Double entendre) → c. Double meaning puns- these puns use words that have more than one meaning. (re-tire- new tires retire -quit working) (fair -carnival fair- equitable)
EX "What do you do when your wheels wear out? Re-tire."
EX " What did the boss say when he sold the carnival? It was a fair deal"

Engage students in a brief discussion of puns. Explain that Shakespeare uses puns in his plays. Ask students to think about the following questions as they read and encounter puns. Remind them that many puns are cited and explained in the textual notes.

- What is the effect of puns?
- Are puns always used for comic situations?
- Which characters utter the most puns?
- What is the effect of puns on the other characters?
- What is the effect of puns on the audience?

Handout the worksheet that gives students some practice in reading and thinking about puns. (Humorous Homonyms and Other Puns)

Humorous Homonyms and Other Puns

I. Fill in the blank with a homonym for the underlined word. A homonym is a word that sounds like another word but has a different spelling and meaning: die and dye. Shakespeare used homonyms to make puns.

1. I am too much in the 'son.' _____ (Hamlet 1.2.67)
2. I am but as you would say a cobbler . . . a mender of bad soles. _____
(Julius Caesar 1.1.11)
3. Not til God make men of some other metal than earth. _____
(Much Ado About Nothing 2.1.51)
4. Thereby hangs a tail. _____ (Othello 3.1.8)

II. Some words have more than one meaning: leaves can mean "departs" or "foliage on trees." Double meanings make great puns. For each line, write two meanings of the underlined word or words.

1. There's not a note of mine that's worth the noting. (Much Ado About Nothing 2.3.53)

2. Touchstone Nay, if I keep not my rank —
Rosalind Thou lovest thy old smell. (As You Like It 1.2.100)

3. Ask for me tomorrow, and you shall find me a grave man.
(Romeo and Juliet 3.1.98)

4. A' (Adam) was the first that ever bore arms. (Hamlet 5.1.33)

5. I believe drink gave thee the lie last night. (Macbeth 2.3.37)

6. Our bodies are gardens, to the which our wills are gardeners . . . supply it with one gender of herbs or distract it with many . . . (Othello 1.3.320)

More Puns

For each of the following quotations from Romeo and Juliet, explain the pun. You may need to consult the marginal notes in the play for definitions.

1. Marry, that "marry" is the very theme
I came to talk of. (1.3.67-68)

2. Give me a torch. I am not for this ambling.
Being but heavy I will bear the light. (1.4.11-12)

3. You have dancing shoes
With nimble soles. I have a sole of lead
So stakes me to the ground I cannot move. (1.4. 14-16)

4. Mercutio That dreamers often lie.
Romeo In bed asleep, while they do dream things true. (55-56)

5. Ask for me tomorrow and you shall find me a
grave man. (3.1.94-95)

* Find 3 other puns in R+J. write them in
your comp book and explain them.