

# Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*

GOAL: to write about 400-500 words a week. These words can be written in response to general comprehension questions, to deeper questions, essay questions, or they can be written as personal reflections on the text. Some comprehension questions can lead to longer answers. Feel free. **The goal is not to answer all the questions but to respond with thoughtful content and to improve your writing by practicing every week.**

## Key terms

- |                     |                       |                       |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. pun              | 7. mistaken identity  | 14. mockery           |
| 2. stereotype       | 8. melodrama          | 15. soliloquy         |
| 3. masculine/femine | 9. melancholy         | 16. role reversal     |
| 4. metaphor         | 10. dramatic irony    | 17. mistaken identity |
| 5. simile           | 11. situational irony | 18. deception         |
| 6. classism         | 12. conflict          | 19. idiocy            |
|                     | 13. setup             |                       |

## ACT I SCENE i

1. The Duke has a very famous speech, in the beginning of the play, about love. How is the Duke feeling about love as the play opens? Why is it ridiculous for a Duke to behave this way?
3. What news does Valentine bring the Duke? How does the Duke react to this news?

## ACT I SCENE ii

1. What does Viola think has happened to her brother? How does the captain give her some hope about Sebastian?
3. What do Viola and Olivia seem to have in common?
4. What plan does Viola propose to the captain?

## ACT I SCENE iii

1. What kind of person does Sir Toby appear to be? Why?
2. What does Sir Toby say to Sir Andrew to keep him from leaving?
3. Prove that Maria is unhappy with Sir Toby and that Sir Andrew isn't very smart.

## ACT I SCENE iv

2. How do we know that the Duke has really fallen for Viola, his new page/messenger boy?
3. What does the Duke ask Viola to do for him?
4. Why does the Duke argue that Viola is better suited for the task than an older servant? Where is there humour in this?

5. How does Viola feel about performing the task for the Duke? What is revealed about Viola's feelings for the Duke?

#### ACT I SCENE v

1. In the beginning of this scene Maria is arguing with Feste (the Fool) over his long absence. What does Feste suggest about Maria and Sir Toby in order to shut her up?
  - 1a. Explain how Olivia is behaving absurdly.
2. Why doesn't Olivia want to see Feste or have him around?
3. What does Feste say when Olivia asks her servants to take him away?
4. What does Feste say he can prove if Olivia gives him a chance to?
5. How does Feste win his argument?
6. What does Malvolio think of Feste? How does Feste feel about Malvolio?
7. Who is waiting at the gate to see Olivia, and who keeps him there rather than send him away?
8. Who does Olivia send to the gate to get rid of the stranger?
9. What state is Sir Toby in when he returns from the gate to see Olivia? Who does Olivia ask to look after him and why is this funny?
10. When Malvolio returns, why does he say he is unable to get rid of the stranger?
11. How does Malvolio describe the person at the gate to Olivia?
12. What does Olivia ask "Cesario" to do with his speech?
13. Why do you think Viola might want to see Olivia's face?
14. What does Viola think of Olivia?
15. How does Olivia respond to what "Cesario" has to say about the Duke's love?
16. Once Olivia is alone, what does she admit has caught her off-guard?
17. What does Olivia send Malvolio to do and why do you suppose she does this?

#### ACT II SCENE i

1. This scene provides additional dramatic irony in the play. What does this mean and how is it so?
2. How might the introduction of Sebastian be important to later events in the play?
3. Where does Sebastian intend to go?
4. Why can't Antonio go with him?

#### ACT II SCENE ii

1. How does Viola react when Malvolio catches up to her and wishes to return the ring to her?
2. What realization does Viola make once Malvolio exits? How does she feel about this?

#### ACT II SCENE iii

1. What time of day is it when the scene opens with Sir Toby and Sir Andrew?
2. What mood is Sir Toby in? What mood is Sir Andrew in? How easily is Sir Andrew's mood changed?
3. Why does Maria enter and what does she warn them of?
4. What does Malvolio want with the three? How does he act towards them?
5. What threat does Malvolio issue to Maria?
6. What scheme does Maria devise once Malvolio exits? What is the ultimate purpose of the plan?
7. Why do you think Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and Maria dislike Malvolio so much?
8. What opinion does Sir Toby hold for Maria at the end of the scene?

#### ACT II SCENE iv

1. What warning does the Duke give "Cesario" regarding love?

2. What opinion on older women and marriage does the Duke hold? How might this reflect Shakespeare's own opinions?
3. What does the Duke send "Cesario" back to tell Olivia? What does this reveal about the nature of the Duke's love?
4. What opinions on women and love does the Duke express to "Cesario"?
5. How does "Cesario" respond to these opinions? What is amusing about "Cesario's" argument?

#### ACT II SCENE v

1. What does Maria tell Sir Toby, Fabian, and Sir Andrew to do?
2. What is Malvolio daydreaming about even before he picks up the letter?
3. Why does Malvolio believe the letter is to him?
4. What things does Maria put in the letter to help make Malvolio look like an idiot to Olivia?
5. Why will doing these things make Malvolio look like a fool?

#### ACT III SCENE i

1. Why do Viola and Feste seem to get along so well?
2. What is Olivia so concerned with that she keeps asking Cesario to tell her?
3. What does Olivia reveal to "Cesario" and how does "Cesario" respond?
4. Why does Olivia ask "Cesario" to come back?

#### ACT III SCENE ii

1. Why does Sir Andrew tell Sir Toby he is going to leave?
2. How do Sir Toby and Fabian convince him to stay?
3. What do Sir Toby and Fabian send Sir Andrew off to do?
4. What is revealed about Sir Toby's 'friendship' with Sir Andrew?
5. What does Sir Toby plan to do with the letter?

#### ACT III SCENE iii

1. Why does Antonio risk going to Illyria to find Sebastian?
2. Why is Antonio in danger in Illyria?
3. Where does Antonio tell Sebastian to meet him?
4. Why does Antonio give Sebastian his purse?

#### ACT III SCENE iv

1. Why does Olivia want to see Malvolio?
2. What does Maria tell Olivia about Malvolio?
3. How does Olivia respond to this "new" Malvolio?
4. Who does Olivia ask to look after Malvolio? How might this be a bad thing for Malvolio?
5. How do Sir Toby, Maria, and Fabian treat Malvolio?
6. What does Sir Toby say they're going to do to Malvolio?
7. What does Sir Toby tell Andrew he thinks of his letter? What does he really think?
8. What does Olivia ask "Cesario" to do for her?
9. What does "Cesario" ask Olivia to do?
10. How does Viola respond to Sir Toby's challenge from Sir Andrew?
11. How does Sir Toby describe Sir Andrew to Viola?
12. What does Sir Toby tell Sir Andrew about his confrontation with Viola?
13. What does Sir Andrew tell Sir Toby to tell Viola in response to this? Does he do this?
14. What happens when Antonio enters and Sir Andrew and Viola are drawn on one another? Why is this?

15. What do the officers do to Antonio when they see him?
16. How does Viola react to Antonio's questions?
17. What does Viola begin to think once Antonio is taken away?
18. What does Sir Toby think of Viola's treatment of Antonio?
19. What does Sir Andrew decide because of this?
20. What "bet" does Sir Toby make at the end of the scene?

#### ACT IV SCENE i

1. What is the problem between Feste and Sebastian?
2. What happens when Sir Andrew "catches up" with Sebastian?
3. How does Sir Toby become involved?
4. What happens when Olivia sees Sir Toby and Sebastian?
5. What does Olivia ask Sebastian and how does he respond?

#### ACT IV SCENE ii

1. Who does Feste dress up as and pretend to be?
2. How does Feste worsen things for Malvolio?
3. What does Sir Toby realize and become afraid of?
4. What does Malvolio ask Feste for?
5. How would you describe Malvolio's frame of mind?

#### ACT IV SCENE iii

1. What does Sebastian think of Olivia and his situation?
2. What proposition does Olivia offer and how does Sebastian respond?
3. Why might it make sense for Sebastian to respond this way?

#### ACT V SCENE i

1. When Antonio tells the Duke that he rescued "Cesario" from the sea how does the Duke respond?
2. What does the Duke say to "Cesario" when Olivia calls "Cesario" her husband?
3. What does Sir Andrew say when he enters? Why is this confusing to everyone?
4. How does Olivia react when she learns who she's really married to?
5. How does the Duke react when he realizes "Cesario" is really a woman?
6. What does Malvolio say in his letter to Olivia?
7. How does Olivia put two-and-two together to figure out what has really happened to Malvolio?
8. What happens with Sir Toby and Maria? Why?
9. How does the play end? Is it comical? Explain.