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Advanced Placement in
English Literature and Composition

Teaching Unit
Individual Learning Packet

Twelfth Night

by William Shakespeare

Written by Maegdah Shabo

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ISBN-13 978-1-60389-026-7
Reorder No. 302778

Twelfth Night

Objectives

By the end of this Unit, students will be able to:

1. trace the development of the main plot and subplot.
2. analyze the following characters and their relationships to other characters:
 - Olivia,
 - Duke Orsino,
 - Viola/Cesario,
 - Sebastian,
 - Malvolio,
 - Sir Toby,
 - Sir Andrew,
 - Maria, and Feste.
3. identify the conventions of Elizabethan comedy, as illustrated in *Twelfth Night*.
4. analyze Shakespeare's use of language, including:
 - blank verse and prose
 - figurative devices such as metaphor, simile, allusion, personification, place, etc.
 - dramatic conventions such as aside, soliloquy, subplot, etc.
5. trace the following themes in the play:
 - appearances do not always reflect reality
 - role-playing is a part of social life
 - love often resembles madness
6. respond to multiple-choice questions similar to those that appear on the Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition Exam.
7. respond to writing prompts similar to those that appear on the Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition Exam.
8. offer a close reading of *Twelfth Night* and support all assertions and interpretations with direct evidence from the text.

Twelfth Night

Lecture

I. Shakespeare and His Times

William Shakespeare was born in the town of Stratford-on-Avon, England in 1564. Born during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, Shakespeare wrote most of his works during what is known as the *Elizabethan Era* of English history. As well as exemplifying the comedic conventions of the era, *Twelfth Night* also reflects elements of Elizabethan culture.

One important element of Shakespeare's culture to note in interpreting *Twelfth Night* is the nature of the holiday for which it is named. The holiday of "Twelfth Night," signifying the twelfth night of Christmas, is also known as the Feast of the Epiphany. This day commemorates the gifts of the Magi to the infant Jesus and is, ostensibly, the day of his baptism. The feast of Twelfth Night was the most significant holiday of the year, in Elizabethan England—even more important than Christmas. In Shakespeare's time, this holiday was celebrated with excesses of every sort and with role-playing and role reversal. Indulgence in food, drink, and licentious pursuits were commonplace, with a "Lord of Misrule" appointed to organize the festivities. Thus, Shakespeare's play, fraught with role reversals and revelry, is an appropriate tribute to this festive occasion, with Sir Toby Belch a fitting Lord of Misrule.

II. Shakespeare's Use of Language

1. Blank Verse

In all of his plays, the predominant rhythmic and metric pattern Shakespeare uses is *blank verse*—unrhymed iambic pentameter. The following lines, taken from a speech by Duke Orsino, exemplify Shakespeare's use of blank verse:

If music be the food of love, play on;
Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken, and so die.

When a particular character or scene does not use blank verse, it is an important clue to interpreting the character or scene in question. For example, the use of prose may indicate a character's base nature or inferior social rank. Alternatively, changes in verse or meter may signal a shift in plot or atmosphere or simply emphasize important ideas or passages in the play.

For example, in *Twelfth Night*, subordinate characters like Maria, Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and the Clown do not speak in blank verse, and Malvolio does only on occasion. Their dialogues are generally written in prose, signifying their inferior social standing and debased natures.

However, this is not always the case. The more important, aristocratic characters may also speak in prose on occasion. For example, Act II, scene i consists of a dialogue between Sebastian and Antonio—both noble characters—and is written almost entirely in formal prose. In this instance, prose accomplishes the straightforward objective of the scene, which is primarily plot exposition. By contrast, poetry is the preferred medium for emotional or philosophical subject matter, as seen in the Duke's discussion of love from Act I, scene i, mentioned earlier as an example of blank verse.

Hence, in addition to fitting the clear-cut purpose of the scene, the use of prose in Act II, scene i also provides a clue to Sebastian's sensible personality. By contrast with Duke Orsino, whose opening lines discuss love in lofty poetry, Sebastian is established straightaway as a more practical-minded, less emotional character, discussing the death of his sister in prose.

2. Figurative Language and Other Literary Devices

Many of Shakespeare's characters incorporate figurative language into their speech. Figurative language serves many purposes, including adding imagery, variety, depth, and sometimes humor to the ideas expressed in the play. *Twelfth Night* includes examples of various categories of figurative language and other literary devices. Among them are metaphor, simile, allusion, personification, paradox, oxymoron, verbal irony, and pun, as well as the more obscure plocce, metonymy, synecdoche, and chiasmus.

A) METAPHOR

A *metaphor* is a comparison in which one thing is described as another. As distinct from *similes*, metaphors do not use words such as "like" or "as" to signal that a comparison is being made. In the example that follows, from the opening lines in Act I, scene i of *Twelfth Night*, Duke Orsino uses a metaphor describing music as "the food of love." (Note that the connection between love and music is extended throughout the play.)

If music be the food of love, play on;
Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken, and so die.

In another example, taken from Act II, scene ii, Viola describes the fickleness of women's affections in metaphoric terms.

How easy is it for the proper-false
In women's waxen hearts to leave their forms!

Both examples demonstrate one of the key functions of metaphor: calling on sensory experiences to bring descriptions to life. In Orsino's metaphor, love is compared to music—something that can be experienced through the sense of hearing. Viola's metaphor, by contrast, appeals to the sense of sight. Her words invite the audience to visualize hearts made of wax, conforming to encompass whatever figure is impressed upon them. The effect, in both cases, is a memorable description that appeals to the senses to reinforce the message.

B) SIMILE

Among the most frequently used varieties of figurative language, similes, like metaphors, are comparisons. Unlike metaphors, however, similes generally use words such as “like” or “as” to explicitly denote that a comparison is being made.

The following passage, from Act I, scene ii, contains an example of simile in bold.

CAPTAIN:

Like Arion on the dolphin's back,
I saw him hold acquaintance with the waves
So long as I could see.

In the above passage, the Captain describes to Viola how Sebastian survived the shipwreck. Using simile, the Captain compares Sebastian to the legendary figure of Arion. This use of simile helps the audience to visualize a scene that took place offstage.

Another example of simile is spoken by Viola (acting as Cesario) in Act II, scene iv:

She never told her love,
But let **concealment, like a worm i' the bud,**
Feed on her damask cheek: she pined in thought;
And with a green and yellow melancholy
She sat like patience on a monument,
Smiling at grief. Was not this love indeed?

Here, Viola gives life to her description of concealed love—a condition she knows all too well—by using simile. She compares the masking of affections to “a worm i' the bud,” which feeds on the lover like a parasite and drains her of vitality and happiness. In the second simile, she compares the persistence of the sorrowful lover to the personified idea of patience “smiling at grief.”

As with the example of simile from Act I, these similes aid the audience in visualizing something they cannot see on stage—in this case, the internal state of the unhappy lover.

C) ALLUSION

Shakespeare makes frequent use of *allusion*: a reference to a person, place, myth, event, etc., which is not part of the story, but which the author expects the reader to recognize. Allusions can serve a variety of functions. They are generally used to create associations, which in turn may alter the audience's view of a character or event or simply supply sensory details.

In the following example, used earlier as an illustration of simile, the Captain compares Sebastian, riding the waves on a piece of the ship's mast, to "Arion on the dolphin's back":

Like **Arion on the dolphin's back**,
I saw him hold acquaintance with the waves
So long as I could see.

By making this allusion to the legendary Greek poet Arion, who was said to have been rescued from drowning in the sea by a dolphin, the Captain lends a mythical quality to his description of the incident.

The allusion that follows is found in Act I, scene iv of the play:

Duke Orsino:
For they shall yet belie thy happy years,
That say thou art a man: **Diana's lip**
Is not more smooth and rubious...

Here, Viola's lips are compared to those of the Roman goddess of the moon, Diana. The comparison to Diana adds emphasis and a sense of grandeur to the Duke's description.

The Duke uses another allusion in Act V, scene I, to describe his predicament.

Why should I not, had I the heart to do it,
Like to **the Egyptian thief** at point of death,
Kill what I love?

In this allusion, Orsino compares himself to Thyamis, an Egyptian robber who was willing to kill his captive lover to prevent his enemies from taking her. This allusion adds intensity to the feelings Orsino expresses and elevates his plight to the status of a legendary crisis, rather than a simple rejection.

D) PERSONIFICATION

Personification is a figure of speech in which an object, abstract idea, or animal is given human characteristics. This technique may be used for a variety of effects. In the example below, which comes from Act III, scene i, Feste attributes blame to words and promises, condemning them in terms generally reserved for people.

But indeed **words are very rascals**
since **bonds disgraced them...**
words are grown so false,
I am loath to prove reason with them.

Rather than blaming human beings for their misdeeds, the Clown facetiously describes words and bonds as false, disgraceful rascals. Thus, he indirectly criticizes the human tendency to shirk blame and responsibility with this use of personification. In this situation, personification achieves an ironic and humorous effect.

E) PARADOX

A paradoxical statement is one that appears self-contradictory, yet is truthful. The following example is spoken by Olivia in Act III, scene i:

A murderous guilt shows not itself more soon
Than love that would seem hid: **love's night is noon.**

As demonstrated in this instance, paradoxes usually propose universal truths that are in some way ironic. In this case, the irony lies in the fact that by attempting one thing, one accomplishes the opposite. That is, by attempting to conceal one's love, as under the cover of *night*, one makes it plain as *noon*.

In this example, Shakespeare uses paradox to emphasize the related motifs of illusions and concealed love. By proposing the truism, "love's night is noon," he invites the audience to reflect on this statement—and the motifs reflected therein—and test the paradox by applying it to their own experiences.

In this case, however, the paradox also serves a comic purpose. Olivia's assertion, while it may often be true in other cases, is clearly false in her situation—she uses this paradox to propose that perhaps Cesario is attempting to hide his love for her. However, as the audience knows, Cesario is in fact Viola, who is in love with the Duke. In light of these facts, the paradox not only achieves humor, but also adds another layer to the motif of illusions.

F) OXYMORON

A term or phrase that is apparently self-contradictory is called an *oxymoron*. See, for example, the following admonition from Duke Orsino to Viola (as Cesario), taken from Act II, scene iv:

Come hither, boy: if ever thou shalt love,
In the **sweet pangs** of it remember me...

The phrase *sweet pangs* is an oxymoron; outside of the context of this creative description of love, the experience of *pangs* would not be described as pleasant or *sweet*. This use of oxymoron underlines the complexity and irony inherent in love, communicating the peculiar mixture of pleasure and pain that can accompany a passionate attachment.

G) VERBAL IRONY

Verbal irony occurs when there is a discrepancy between what is said and what is really meant. This device is sometimes used in a disdainful, sarcastic way. However, verbal irony can also be used inoffensively, purely for the sake of humor.

An example of verbal irony occurs in Act II, scene iii of *Twelfth Night*, when Sir Toby calls the diminutive Maria "Penthesilea." Here, Sir Toby affectionately teases Maria about her small stature, calling her by the name of an Amazonian queen.

H) PUN

A *pun* is an expression that utilizes two distinctly different meanings of the same word or phrase to achieve emphasis or humor. Puns are a common element of Elizabethan comedy, appearing often in witty banter. Below is an example of a pun from *Twelfth Night*.

MARIA:

Ay, but you must **confine** yourself within
the modest limits of order.

SIR TOBY:

Confine? I'll **confine** myself no finer than
I am: these clothes are good enough to drink in;
and so be these boots too: an they be not, let them
hang themselves in their own straps.

In this bit of dialogue from Act I, scene iii, Maria uses the word *confine* to mean *comport* or *behave*. Sir Toby jokingly uses the word *confine* with an alternative meaning—'dress.'

Note that *Twelfth Night* also contains *imperfect puns*, which employ the same technique, but with similar-sounding—not identical—words or phrases. An example of an imperfect pun from the play is spoken by Sir Toby Belch in Act I, scene v, follows.

OLIVIA:

Cousin, cousin, how have you come so early
by this **lethargy**?

SIR TOBY:

Lechery! I defy lechery.

I) PLOCE

Ploce is the repetition of a word or phrase for emphasis, extension of meaning, or humor. Like puns, instances of ploce often involve different uses of the same word. However, ploce does not utilize sharply contrasting word meanings. In the example that follows, taken from Act III, scene i, the second use of the word *wanton* adds a new dimension to the word, but not an entirely different meaning.

VIOLA:

Nay, that's certain; they that dally nicely
with words may quickly make them **wanton**.

CLOWN:

I would, therefore, my sister had had no name, sir.

VIOLA:
Why, man?

CLOWN:
Why, sir, her name's a word; and to dally with that
word might make my sister **wanton**.

In Viola's use of the word *wanton*, it signifies carelessness. In response, however, the Clown uses *wanton* to denote sexual indiscretion. In this case, *plote* is used for humorous effect.

J) METONYMY

Metonymy is the use of a related item to stand for the thing being discussed. In the following example from Act I, scene iv, Duke Orsino uses the word *pipe* and the phrase *the maiden's organ* as synonyms for *voice*:

...thy small pipe
Is as **the maiden's organ**, shrill and sound...

This use of metonymy adds a visual element to the description of Viola's voice. By describing the voice in concrete terms, as a pipe and an organ, the Duke implies that it is not only the sound of Viola's voice that is feminine, but also the appearance of her throat.

K) SYNECDOCHE

Occasionally a part of something is used to represent the whole—this is called *synecdoche*.

An example of synecdoche occurs in the following excerpt from a dialogue between Duke Orsino and Viola (as Cesario) in Act II, scene iv:

ORSINO:
My life upon't, young though thou art, **thine eye**
Hath stay'd upon some favour that **it loves**:
Hath it not, boy?

When read literally, this passage implies that it is only Viola's *eye* that is in love—not the rest of her. However, in this use of figurative language, the eye in fact represents the entire person.

In addition to adding novelty and imagery to the description, this use of synecdoche adds a layer of meaning to the passage, emphasizing the importance of physical attraction to the Duke. In this dialogue, he speaks of the *eye* as the source of love, rather than the heart or mind, reducing the beloved to the status of *some favour* that is visually pleasing.

L) CHIASMUS

The term *chiasmus* refers to the use of two consecutive phrases in which the second is an inverted version of the first. Shakespeare is a master of this technique, which is exemplified in the following quote from Act I, scene v of *Twelfth Night*:

CLOWN:

Wit, an't be thy will, put me into good fooling!
Those wits, that think they have thee, do very oft
prove fools; and I, that am sure I lack thee, may
pass for a wise man: for what says Quinapalus?
Better a witty fool than a foolish wit'...

Here, Feste humorously proves his wit—the very subject of his maxim, through this use of chiasmus. Another example, also spoken by the Clown, can be found in Act I, scene v:

Any thing that's mended is but patched: **virtue that
transgresses is but patched with sin; and sin that
amends is but patched with virtue.**

As exemplified in these instances from *Twelfth Night*, chiasmus is often used to strengthen an argument or axiom through word repetition and, sometimes, through humor.

III. Dramatic Conventions and Techniques

Among the dramatic conventions Shakespeare employs in *Twelfth Night* are:

- **Conflict:** In any play, the plot is driven by conflicts—both external conflicts that occur between characters and their environment, and internal conflicts that take place within a character. An example of an external conflict in *Twelfth Night* is that which takes place between Malvolio and the rest of Olivia's household: a clash between Malvolio and outside forces. The play contains examples of internal conflict, as well, such as Viola's inner distress over having to hide her love for the Duke.
- **Soliloquy:** a speech delivered by a character while alone on stage. Often, soliloquies provide insights into a character's thoughts, emotions, and motives for action. An example from *Twelfth Night* appears in Act II, scene ii, when Viola is left alone on stage after Malvolio presents her with Olivia's ring. In her soliloquy, Viola suggests that Olivia appears to be in love with her, and laments the hopelessness of her situation. Thus, Shakespeare allows Viola to express ideas and feelings she would not otherwise be able to demonstrate on stage in dialogue with other characters.

- **Aside:** words spoken by a character on stage that are meant to be heard by the audience, but not by the other characters. This technique is often used to give the audience insight into a character's internal reactions to the scene at hand. An instance of aside can be found in Act I, scene iv of *Twelfth Night*. Here, Viola (as Cesario) uses an aside to express her private sorrow and to highlight the irony of her situation, when Orsino asks her to woo Olivia for him.
I'll do my best
To woo your lady: [*Aside*] yet, a barful strife!
Whoe'er I woo, myself would be his wife.
- **Subplot:** a secondary plot that runs alongside the main action of the play. The subplot in *Twelfth Night* consists of the mischievous schemes of Olivia's household.
- **Situational Irony:** occurs when a situation has results contrary to those expected. For example, Duke Orsino sends Cesario to woo Olivia for him. However, his strategy backfires, and Olivia falls in love with the messenger, rather than the Duke himself, while it is the messenger who is in love with the Duke.
- **Dramatic Irony:** occurs when the audience is aware of something that characters do not know. *Twelfth Night* abounds with examples of dramatic irony that lend both conflict and humor to the plot. For example, while other characters are deceived, the audience is always aware that Cesario is really Viola in disguise. Likewise, the audience is aware that the letter to Malvolio is a forgery, while he believes it is legitimate.

IV. Elizabethan Comedy

Twelfth Night is an Elizabethan comedy—a genre named for Queen Elizabeth I, the ruling monarch during much of Shakespeare's career. In this play, as in most of his other comedies, Shakespeare follows the conventions of the Elizabethan stage, which prescribe that comedies should include:

- a lighthearted tone
- mistaken identities
- multiple plot lines
- frequent use of puns
- a clever "fool" or servant
- a conflict between propriety and debauchery
- young lovers who overcome obstacles to their relationship
- a happy ending that includes marriages and, often, reconciliations and reunions

Twelfth Night contains each of these elements, and is, therefore, a fitting model by which to study the genre.

V. Major Themes

1. Appearances do not always reflect reality.

One of the most prominent themes in *Twelfth Night* is the idea that appearances do not always reflect reality.

This premise is most conspicuously embodied in the character of Viola, who disguises herself as a man throughout the play. Although the audience is aware of Viola's true identity, her fellow characters are misled by deceptive appearances. To further complicate matters, the arrival of Sebastian in Illyria adds another layer of confusion. Although her disguise makes Viola appear identical to her brother, they are, of course, two different people of opposite sexes.

The theme of illusions is also reflected in the subplot, when Malvolio is misled by what appears to be a love letter from Olivia. Here, in another instance of dramatic irony, the audience is aware of Maria's forgery throughout the play, but Malvolio is completely taken in by the illusion.

A second ruse in the subplot involves Feste convincing Malvolio that he is a priest. The Clown's costume and the darkness of his cell lead Malvolio to believe that he is actually speaking to a priest, Sir Topas, when he is actually speaking to the Fool.

Moreover, in addition to being demonstrated in characters' actions, the motif of illusory also appears in their dialogues and speeches. For example, both Viola and Antonio comment on the deceptive power of beauty. Soon after the shipwreck, in Act I, scene ii, Viola remarks to the Captain that

...nature with a beauteous wall
doth oft close in pollution...

Similarly, in Act III, scene iv, Antonio comments:

Virtue is beauty; but the beauteous evil
are empty trunks o'erflourish'd by the devil.

Likewise, Viola and Olivia both discuss the topic of hidden love. As Olivia observes to Cesario, whom she secretly cares for:

A murderous guilt shows not itself more soon
Than love that would seem hid: love's night is noon.

In Viola's story of concealed love, shared with Orsino—the object of her own undisclosed passion—she concludes (speaking as the male Cesario):

...men may say more, swear more: but indeed
Our shows are more than will; for still we prove
Much in our vows, but little in our love.

2. Role-playing is a part of social life.

Related to the theme of deceptive appearances is that of role-playing and disguises. Throughout the play, characters erect facades, conforming to societal edicts for their genders and social stations.

Most notably, when Viola is shipwrecked and parted from her brother, she feels the need to play the role of a man in order to protect herself and act as a more powerful agent in society. While she is evidently by nature a dynamic individual, apt at practical decision-making and prone to take action, such qualities do not conform to her culture's standards of femininity.

Conversely, Olivia is a passive character, fulfilling the stereotype of feminine behavior better than Viola. Nonetheless, she, too, wears a mask. In her case, the mask takes the form of a mourning veil. She plays the part of a grieving sister with great care. The artifice of Olivia's mourning is emphasized in Act I, scene i, in the description of her scheduling seven years of isolation and daily weeping. Moreover, in Act I, scene v, Feste hints at Olivia's desire to fulfill conventions through her show of mourning, as follows:

CLOWN:

Good madonna, why mourn'st thou?

OLIVIA:

Good fool, for my brother's death.

CLOWN:

I think his soul is in hell, madonna.

OLIVIA:

I know his soul is in heaven, fool.

CLOWN:

The more fool you, madonna, to mourn for your brother's soul being in heaven.— Take away the fool, gentlemen.

Likewise, Feste himself plays a role, complying with the decrees of society. He acts the part of the fool, despite being remarkably clever. Earlier in the same scene, he remarks to Olivia, “Lady, cucullus non facit monachum; that’s as much to say as, I wear not motley in my brain.” The Latin phrase, which means “The cowl does not make the monk,” suggests that appearances are not to be trusted. Clothing, in particular, is suspect, as reinforced by the reference to *motley*, or fool’s garb. While Feste wears motley on his exterior, his foolery is a pretense and does not originate in an irrational mind. Close observation demonstrates that he is indeed quite intelligent—perhaps even wise, as Viola suggests in Act III, scene i.

This fellow is wise enough to play the fool;
And to do that well craves a kind of wit...

In another illustration of the necessity of conforming to socially prescribed roles, Malvolio garners animosity, ostracism, and even the stigma of insanity for daring to aspire to a more noble rank in society. His attitude of self-importance, out of keeping with his status as a servant, precipitates the cruel treatment he receives from the rest of Olivia’s household. Maria, in particular, accuses him of being

...a time-pleaser; an affectioned ass, that cons
state without book and utters it by great swarths:
the best persuaded of himself, so crammed, as he
thinks, with excellencies, that it is his grounds of
faith that all that look on him love him...

Later, when Malvolio entertains the idea of marrying Olivia, he literally acts out a scene in which he commands several servants and lectures Sir Toby. However, he is playing the wrong role and defying social conventions—and to this transgression, Sir Toby and Sir Andrew respond with outrage and violent threats.

3. Love often resembles madness.

For most of the characters in *Twelfth Night*, love is sudden, illogical, and fickle. Furthermore, with the exception of Sir Toby and Maria, all of the characters form attachments based almost solely on appearances—which are often misleading. Hence, in the world of this comedy, love is irrational even when properly directed and appears positively mad when, as is often the case, it is based on illusions.

The capricious character of love is established early on in the play—as early as the Duke’s opening discussion of love and music, which concludes,

O Spirit of love! how quick and fresh art thou!
That, notwithstanding thy capacity
Receiveth as the sea, nought enters there,
Of what validity and pitch soe’er,
But falls into abatement and low price,
Even in a minute! so full of shapes is fancy
That it alone is high fantastical.

Following suit, the characters, including the Duke, fall in love almost at random, become deeply attached, and later lose interest with equal ease.

However, the association between love and madness is not only implied by the characters’ illogical behavior; it is also made explicit in their speech. For example, in Act III, scene iv, Olivia compares her pining for Cesario to Malvolio’s love-struck behavior, saying:

I am as mad as he,
If sad and merry madness equal be.

Indeed, for Malvolio in particular, love (of Olivia and of himself) leads to a reputation of madness and even isolation in a makeshift asylum.

However, while Malvolio denies allegations of madness, Olivia questions her own judgment when she falls quickly and passionately in love with Cesario, in Act I, scene v.

I do I know not what, and fear to find
Mine eye too great a flatterer for my mind.

Similarly, when Sebastian meets Olivia in Act IV, scene i, he questions his senses, asking of himself,

What relish is in this? how runs the stream?
Or I am mad or else this is a dream...

Later, in Act IV, scene iii, he decides to “distrust [his] eyes” and “wrangle with [his] reason,” rather than believing that Olivia is mad, for her rash behavior, or that he is, for his sudden, impulsive return of her affections. “‘Though ‘tis wonder that enwraps me thus,’ he reasons, ‘yet ‘tis not madness.’”

VI. Motifs

- Fools/Madness
- Deceptions/Illusions
- Role-playing/Disguises
- Inversion of the Normal Order
- The Fleeting Nature of Love and Beauty
- Concealed Love
- Letters/Messages

VII. Historical Context and Sources

The basic plot of *Twelfth Night* is not original to Shakespeare. In this play, as with many others, he borrows much of the plot from existing stories. In this case, the play was inspired by several Italian comedies that appeared in the decades prior to *Twelfth Night*'s first performance.

One play in particular, entitled *GI' Ignannati*, is a definite source for the plot of *Twelfth Night*. In this Italian play, a brother and sister are separated during a battle. As in *Twelfth Night*, the sister disguises herself as a man and enters the service of a local nobleman. From thence, she is sent on a mission identical to Viola's—wooing her master's beloved. However, just as in *Twelfth Night*, the affections of the lady are mistakenly given to the disguised messenger. In the end, the brother arrives, is confused for his sister, and happily takes her place in the relationship. Thus, the main plot of *Twelfth Night* is almost an exact replica of the original story.

VIII. The Elizabethan Stage and Shakespeare's Audience

The theater was an integral part of life in Elizabethan England, and Shakespeare's plays were particularly popular. His company performed not only in the royal court, but also in various London theaters that accommodated a broad range of social classes.

In 1599, Shakespeare designed and became the co-founder of the Globe Theatre: an innovative arena whose octagonal shape created exceptional sound quality. The Globe seated up to 3,000 spectators, with different classes accommodated in their respective regions of the theater. The cheapest tickets were sold for standing room directly in front of the stage, and the occupants of this region of the theater, the poorest in attendance, were called "groundlings." Even for these tickets, theatergoers paid one penny each—roughly a day's wage. Hence, Shakespeare's plays appear to have held a strong, universal appeal among all classes in Elizabethan London.

Free-Response (Essay) Items

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 1:

In the following passage from Act I, scene i, Duke Orsino opens the play with an impassioned discourse on love. Write a well-organized essay in which you analyze the Duke's view of love, based on this passage. Include an analysis of what, if anything, can be predicted about the play based on the view of love presented here.

DUKE:

If music be the food of love, play on;	
Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,	
The appetite may sicken and so die.	
That strain again! it had a dying fall:	
O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound,	5
That breathes upon a bank of violets,	
Stealing and giving odour! Enough; no more:	
'Tis not so sweet now as it was before.	
O spirit of love, how quick and fresh art thou!	
That, notwithstanding thy capacity	10
Receiveth as the sea, nought enters there,	
Of what validity and pitch soe'er,	
But falls into abatement and low price,	
Even in a minute! so full of shapes is fancy,	
That it alone is high fantastical.	15

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 2:

In the following soliloquy from Act II, scene ii, Viola is disguised as Cesario. She has just received a ring from Olivia, sent through Malvolio, and ponders the import of the lady's action. Read the passage carefully and, in a well-organized essay, analyze the function of the dramatic technique of soliloquy, as exemplified in this instance from *Twelfth Night*. Be sure to discuss both the general use of the theatrical convention, as exemplified by the passage, and Shakespeare's use of this particular soliloquy in the context of the play.

VIOLA:

I left no ring with her: what means this lady?	
Fortune forbid my outside have not charm'd her!	
She made good view of me; indeed, so much,	
That methought her eyes had lost her tongue,	
For she did speak in starts distractedly.	5
She loves me, sure; the cunning of her passion	
Invites me in this churlish messenger.	
None of my lord's ring! why, he sent her none.	
I am the man: if it be so, as 'tis,	
Poor lady, she were better love a dream.	10
Disguise, I see, thou art a wickedness,	
Wherein the pregnant enemy does much.	
How easy is it for the proper-false	
In women's waxen hearts to set their forms!	
Alas, our frailty is the cause, not we!	15
For such as we are made of, such we be.	
How will this fadge? my master loves her dearly,	
And I, poor monster, fond as much on him;	
And she, mistaken, seems to dote on me.	
What will become of this? As I am man,	20
My state is desperate for my master's love;	
As I am woman, —now alas the day!—	
What thriftless sighs shall poor Olivia breathe!	
O time! thou must untangle this, not I;	
It is too hard a knot for me to untie!	25

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 3:

The following dialogue, in which Viola is still disguised as the male Cesario, demonstrates several conventions of Elizabethan comedy that are prevalent throughout *Twelfth Night*. After reading the passage carefully, write a well-organized essay in which you explain the comedic conventions illustrated in this dialogue, in a well-organized essay.

DUKE:

What dost thou know?

VIOLA:

Too well what love women to men may owe:

In faith, they are as true of heart as we.

My father had a daughter loved a man,

As it might be, perhaps, were I a woman,

5

I should your lordship.

DUKE:

And what's her history?

VIOLA:

A blank, my lord. She never told her love,

But let concealment, like a worm i' the bud,

Feed on her damask cheek: she pined in thought;

10

And with a green and yellow melancholy

She sat like patience on a monument,

Smiling at grief. Was not this love indeed?

We men may say more, swear more: but indeed

Our shows are more than will; for still we prove

15

Much in our vows, but little in our love.

DUKE:

But died thy sister of her love, my boy?

VIOLA:

I am all the daughters of my father's house,

And all the brothers too: and yet I know not.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 4:

In this passage, Olivia expresses her feelings for Cesario and attempts to persuade him of the value of her love. Read the passage carefully, and examine Shakespeare's use of language. In a well-organized essay, identify and discuss the rhetorical goals of this speech and the language used to accomplish them.

OLIVIA:

O, what a deal of scorn looks beautiful
In the contempt and anger of his lip!
A murderous guilt shows not itself more soon
Than love that would seem hid: love's night is noon
Cesario, by the roses of the spring, 5
By maidhood, honour, truth, and everything,
I love thee so, that, maugre all thy pride,
Nor wit nor reason can my passion hide.
Do not extort thy reasons from this clause,
For that I woo, thou therefore hast no cause; 10
But rather reason thus with reason fetter,
Love sought is good, but given unsought is better.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 5:

In this passage, Olivia has just rejected the Duke in preference of his young friend, Cesario. Carefully read the following speech, the Duke's response to his rejection, analyzing Shakespeare's use of figurative language and its effects.

DUKE:

Why should I not, had I the heart to do it,
Like to the Egyptian thief at point of death,
Kill what I love?—a savage jealousy
That sometime savours nobly. But hear me this:
Since you to non-regardance cast my faith, 5
And that I partly know the instrument
That screws me from my true place in your favour,
Live you the marble-breasted tyrant still;
But this your minion, whom I know you love,
And whom, by heaven I swear, I tender dearly, 10
Him will I tear out of that cruel eye,
Where he sits crowned in his master's spite.
Come, boy, with me; my thoughts are ripe in mischief:
I'll sacrifice the lamb that I do love,
To spite a raven's heart within a dove. 15

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 6:

In Elizabethan England, Shakespeare's plays were well received by rich and poor alike. His comedies, in particular, were popular among Londoners from a wide range of socio-economic and educational backgrounds. Using *Twelfth Night* as an example, write a well-organized essay exploring the universal appeal of Shakespeare's comedies.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 7:

Many works of literature contain a *foil*—a character whose qualities or actions serve to emphasize those of another character by providing a strong contrast. In a well-organized essay, analyze Shakespeare's use of this technique in *Twelfth Night*.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 8:

In some novels and plays, a character must somehow camouflage his or her true nature, identity, or intentions in order to achieve a particular goal. Identify such a character in *Twelfth Night*, and, in a well-organized essay, evaluate the effectiveness of the disguise as a dramatic technique.

Do not merely summarize the plot.

Twelfth Night

Discussion Topics/Questions

1. In the opening lines of the play, the Duke describes music as “the food of love.” Discuss the extension of this metaphor throughout the play, identifying and analyzing the variety of ways in which love is associated with music.
2. On the Elizabethan stage, comedies often include a “clown” or “fool” who is, in reality, quite clever. Analyze the character of Feste, using specific examples from the text that demonstrate whether he fulfills this role.
3. Discuss the commentary *Twelfth Night* makes on love, identifying the various perspectives on the subject espoused by the different characters.
4. Compare and contrast Olivia and Viola. With which character does the audience identify more closely? How does Shakespeare achieve this effect?
5. Compare and contrast Viola and the Duke. Which stereotypes of male and female behavior do they fulfill, and which do they defy?
6. Discuss the ways in which *Twelfth Night*’s subplots mimic or comment on the main plot’s themes.
7. By the end of *Twelfth Night*, many of the characters either have been suspected of madness or have doubted their own sanity. How does the motif of madness relate to other major themes in the play?
8. In what ways does Shakespeare establish the pragmatic, level-headed nature of Sebastian, prior to his falling in love with Olivia?
9. How does *Twelfth Night*’s subtitle, *What You Will*, relate to the content of the play?

Twelfth Night

Multiple Choice Questions

Practice Multiple Choice Questions 1-10:

Read the following passage carefully before choosing your answers. In it, the Duke discusses Olivia with his servant, Valentine.

VALENTINE:

So please my lord, I might not be admitted;
But from her handmaid do return this answer:
The element itself, till seven years' heat,
Shall not behold her face at ample view;
But, like a cloistress, she will veiled walk 5
And water once a day her chamber round
With eye-offending brine: all this to season
A brother's dead love, which she would keep fresh
And lasting in her sad remembrance.

DUKE:

O, she that hath a heart of that fine frame 10
To pay this debt of love but to a brother,
How will she love, when the rich golden shaft
Hath kill'd the flock of all affections else
That live in her; when liver, brain, and heart,
These sovereign thrones, are all supplied and fill'd, 15
Her sweet perfections with one self king!
Away before me to sweet beds of flowers:
Love-thoughts lie rich when canopied with bowers.

[Exeunt.]

1. In line 7, the *eye-offending brine* Valentine refers to is
 - (A) the water of the ocean.
 - (B) a solution used to preserve flowers.
 - (C) the solution used to embalm Olivia's brother.
 - (D) the tears Olivia will cry.
 - (E) a caustic solution Olivia will use to clean her room.
2. In line 3 of this dialogue, "the element itself" most likely refers to
 - (A) Olivia.
 - (B) the sun.
 - (C) nature.
 - (D) oxygen.
 - (E) society.
3. The word "season" in line 7 refers to
 - (A) the seven summers of Olivia's grief.
 - (B) the specific time-period of the play.
 - (C) the mellowing of Olivia's deep grief.
 - (D) the bitterness of having lost a brother.
 - (E) the salt of Olivia's "eye-offending brine."
4. The "'rich golden shaft' of line 12 most likely represents
 - (A) a message of love from the Duke.
 - (B) the realization that the Duke loves her.
 - (C) the "sweet pang" of love.
 - (D) the arrow of Cupid.
 - (E) a ray of sunlight.
5. At the end of this dialogue, the Duke
 - (A) goes to bed.
 - (B) goes to find Olivia.
 - (C) goes to visit a flower garden.
 - (D) delivers a famous soliloquy.
 - (E) is disappointed with Olivia.
6. To what is Shakespeare referring when the Duke mentions the "sovereign thrones: liver, brain, and heart"?
 - (A) the seats of Olivia's playfulness, reason, and love
 - (B) the organs Olivia will yield to the man she loves
 - (C) the classical organs of human temperament
 - (D) the organs believed to be necessary to sustain human life
 - (E) the differences between feminine and masculine ideas of love

7. In line 4, the word *ample* means
- (A) plump.
 - (B) full.
 - (C) sufficient.
 - (D) abundant.
 - (E) large.
8. In this dialogue, Olivia is compared to
- (A) a nun.
 - (B) the goddess Diana.
 - (C) a queen.
 - (D) a flock of sheep.
 - (E) the weather.
9. The Duke expresses the wish that Olivia's _____ would be killed.
- (A) brother
 - (B) other suitors
 - (C) flocks
 - (D) pride
 - (E) current affections
10. According to the passage, Olivia intends to
- (A) marry the Duke, eventually.
 - (B) become a nun.
 - (C) cry over her brother every day.
 - (D) avoid being hurt again, after being rejected.
 - (E) stay indoors for seven years.

Practice Multiple Choice Questions 11-20:

In the following dialogue from Act I, scene iv, the Duke instructs Viola (disguised as Cesario) to court Olivia on his behalf. Read the passage carefully before choosing your answers.

DUKE.

O, then unfold the passion of my love,
Surprise her with discourse of my dear faith:
It shall become thee well to act my woes;
She will attend it better in thy youth
Than in a nuncio's of more grave aspect. 5

VIOLA:

I think not so, my lord.

DUKE:

Dear lad, believe it;
For they shall yet belie thy happy years,
That say thou art a man: Diana's lip
Is not more smooth and rubious; thy small pipe 10
Is as the maiden's organ, shrill and sound;
And all is semblative a woman's part.
I know thy constellation is right apt
For this affair. Some four or five attend him;
All, if you will; for I myself am best 15
When least in company. Prosper well in this,
And thou shalt live as freely as thy lord,
To call his fortunes thine.

11. The Duke compares Cesario to
(A) a man.
(B) a lord.
(C) a constellation.
(D) a goddess.
(E) Olivia.
12. In lines 16-18, the Duke suggests that Cesario will be _____ if the mission is successful.
(A) happy for him
(B) freed from indentured servitude
(C) financially compensated
(D) given the Duke's title
(E) wed to an appropriate mate
13. The word "constellation" in line 13 most likely refers to
(A) Viola/Cesario's youthful face.
(B) Viola's effective disguise.
(C) Cesario's voice.
(D) Viola/Cesario's destiny.
(E) Viola's predicament in Illyria.
14. Based on the passage, the word nuncio, in line 5, probably means
(A) little boy.
(B) messenger.
(C) clown.
(D) liar.
(E) woman.
15. The Duke interprets Cesario's _____ as a sign of youth.
(A) sensitive nature
(B) effeminate personality
(C) awkward mannerisms
(D) effeminate appearance
(E) unmanly modesty
16. During this scene, _____ are present.
(A) only the Duke and Cesario
(B) only the Duke, Cesario, and Valentine
(C) only the Duke, Cesario, and Olivia
(D) the Duke, Cesario, Valentine, and four servants
(E) the Duke, Cesario, and more than five servants

17. According to the passage, the Duke thinks Cesario is
- (A) a man.
 - (B) gorgeous.
 - (C) young.
 - (D) extremely clever.
 - (E) an effeminate dandy.
18. This passage contains a mention of
- (A) an old man.
 - (B) the color red.
 - (C) a pipe organ.
 - (D) the Duke's religious beliefs.
 - (E) Olivia's virginity.
19. The Duke views youth as
- (A) a time of incessant merriment.
 - (B) a time of instinctual wisdom.
 - (C) a fortunate time of life.
 - (D) a time when one should be seen and not heard.
 - (E) a time when one should be most assertive.
20. What can be inferred from the Duke's statement, "for I myself am best/when least in company"?
- (A) The Duke prefers to humble himself in front of others.
 - (B) The Duke does not enjoy entertaining guests.
 - (C) The Duke wants to be alone to think about Olivia.
 - (D) The Duke wants to appear humble, putting himself last.
 - (E) The Duke wants to be alone.

Practice Multiple Choice Questions 21 – 30:

In the following scene, Viola is disguised as Cesario, a male messenger of the Duke. Read the passage carefully before choosing your answers.

OLIVIA:

O, what a deal of scorn looks beautiful
In the contempt and anger of his lip!
A murderous guilt shows not itself more soon
Than love that would seem hid: love's night is noon
Cesario, by the roses of the spring, 5
By maidhood, honour, truth, and everything,
I love thee so, that, maugre all thy pride,
Nor wit nor reason can my passion hide.
Do not extort thy reasons from this clause,
For that I woo, thou therefore hast no cause; 10
But rather reason thus with reason fetter,
Love sought is good, but given unsought is better.

VIOLA:

By innocence I swear, and by my youth,
I have one heart, one bosom, and one truth,
And that no woman has; nor never none 15
Shall mistress be of it, save I alone.
And so adieu, good madam: never more
Will I my master's tears to you deplore.

OLIVIA:

Yet come again; for thou perhaps mayst move
That heart, which now abhors, to like his love. 20

[Exeunt.]

21. The main idea expressed in lines 14-16 could best be summarized as:
- (A) "I am honest, but women are dishonest."
 - (B) "I am loyal to the one I love, but women are disloyal."
 - (C) "I am honest, and I do not love anyone."
 - (D) "No one will ever have my love."
 - (E) "No woman will ever have my love."
22. Based on the context of the passage, the word *maugre*, in line 7, probably means
- (A) meager.
 - (B) because of.
 - (C) despite.
 - (D) in addition to.
 - (E) understanding.
23. In lines 1-4, Olivia implies that
- (A) Cesario murdered Olivia's brother and cannot hide his guilt.
 - (B) although the scene takes place at night, she can see that Cesario loves her.
 - (C) she cannot hide her desire to kill Cesario.
 - (D) Cesario appears angry, but perhaps, like herself, is merely attempting to hide his love.
 - (E) Cesario is angered by the fact that Olivia is hiding her love.
24. In the context of this passage, the word *deplore*, in line 18, denotes
- (A) disgust.
 - (B) sadness.
 - (C) deployment.
 - (D) hatred.
 - (E) wrath.
25. In this passage, Olivia says that Cesario should love her on the basis that
- (A) despite his contempt, she finds him attractive.
 - (B) he is at an advantage because he does not have to woo her.
 - (C) her maidenhood and honor make her a faithful lover.
 - (D) her love is so great that he cannot resist it.
 - (E) her love is unsolicited and, therefore, should be especially prized.
26. Olivia accuses Cesario of being
- (A) spiteful.
 - (B) guilty.
 - (C) jealous.
 - (D) proud.
 - (E) capricious

27. The irony of Viola's reply, in this passage is that she claims
- (A) to deplore her master, when in reality she loves him.
 - (B) that women do not have hearts, yet she is in love with the Duke.
 - (C) to be the *mistress* of her own heart, while dressed as a man.
 - (D) that Olivia is good, when in reality she is deceitful.
 - (E) to be innocent, when in reality she has a guilty conscience.
28. Olivia speaks of *the roses of the spring* as
- (A) an enticement for Cesario to fall in love.
 - (B) less attractive than Cesario.
 - (C) a symbol by which she swears.
 - (D) a symbol of her love.
 - (E) a symbol of her purity and honor.
29. In lines 19-20, Olivia entreats Cesario to come again, saying that
- (A) she may convince Cesario, who now hates her, to return her love.
 - (B) she may convince Cesario, who now hates the Duke, to like him.
 - (C) Cesario may convince her to accept the Duke's love, although at present she loathes it.
 - (D) Cesario may convince her to love him, although at present she is angry with him.
 - (E) she may convince Cesario, who now hates her, that she is likeable.
30. Olivia's tone, in lines 1-12 of this passage, can best be described as
- (A) seditious.
 - (B) zealous.
 - (C) dispassionate.
 - (D) reproachful.
 - (E) melancholic.

Twelfth Night

Multiple Choice Answers With Explanations

1. In line 7, the *eye-offending brine* Valentine refers to is
(A) the water of the ocean.
(B) a solution used to preserve flowers.
(C) the solution used to embalm Olivia's brother.
(D) **the tears Olivia will cry.**
(E) a caustic solution Olivia will use to clean her room.

(A) is not supported by the passage, and while Valentine says Olivia will use the brine to "keep [something] fresh," that something is identified as "a brother's dead love," not flowers (B) or the brother's body (C). Similarly, the solution being "eye-offending" might suggest its caustic nature (E) but the passage does not suggest that Olivia will be cleaning. Clearly, she will exaggerate her grief with tears (D) for a period of seven years.

2. In line 3 of this dialogue, "the element itself" most likely refers to
(A) Olivia.
(B) **the sun.**
(C) nature.
(D) oxygen.
(E) society.

Clearly, if "element" referred to Olivia (A) the passage would read, "The element *herself*." Nature (B) may be tempting, but is too general an answer, while oxygen (D) is too specific and clinical. Society (E) might be tempting from the fact that Olivia would not allow admittance to Valentine, but there is nothing in the passage to suggest a connection between human society and an "element," which suggests something in nature. The sun (B) is the best answer, as suggested by the phrase "seven years' heat," which refers to revolutions of the sun.

3. The word "season" in line 7 refers to
(A) the seven summers of Olivia's grief.
(B) the specific time-period of the play.
(C) the mellowing of Olivia's deep grief.
(D) the bitterness of having lost a brother.
(E) **the salt of Olivia's "eye-offending brine."**

Valentine says that Olivia will perform her grief ritual "to season a dead brother's love." Thus all references to "season" as a period of time (A) and (B) are eliminated. (C) and (E) seem equally tempting, except that it is clear Olivia hopes to maintain the sharpness of her grief rather than mellow or temper it (D). Her "eye-offending brine" (salty tears), however, will season her brother's love, thus establishing (E).

4. The “rich golden shaft” of line 12 most likely represents
- (A) a message of love from the Duke.
 - (B) the realization that the Duke loves her.
 - (C) the “sweet pang” of love.
 - (D) the arrow of Cupid.**
 - (E) a ray of sunlight.

The Duke is contemplating what it would be like if Olivia were to fall in love with him—comparing the love Olivia would show him to what she offers a mere brother. In that context, (A) has already been sent and rejected, (B) would probably have been accomplished with (A). (C) might be as tempting as (D), but is more vague. (E) would suggest that the Duke is willing to wait for Olivia’s self-imposed seven-year mourning period. Therefore, (D) is the correct answer, referring to the arrows by which Cupid is said to inspire love in his victims, in classical mythology.

5. At the end of this dialogue, the Duke
- (A) goes to bed.
 - (B) goes to find Olivia.
 - (C) goes to visit a flower garden.**
 - (D) delivers a famous soliloquy.
 - (E) is disappointed with Olivia.

The answer can be found in line 17, in which the Duke says: “Away before me to sweet beds of flowers.” “Away” is clearly a command to Valentine to go ahead of him. Answers (A), (B), and (E) are not indicated by the passage, and answer (D) cannot be true because of the stage direction, “Exeunt,” which means that everyone leaves the stage.

6. To what is Shakespeare referring when the Duke mentions the “sovereign thrones: liver, brain, and heart”?
- (A) the seats of Olivia’s playfulness, reason, and love**
 - (B) the organs Olivia will yield to the man she loves
 - (C) the classical organs of human temperament
 - (D) the organs believed to be necessary to sustain human life
 - (E) the differences between feminine and masculine ideas of love

The organs mentioned (liver, brain, heart) are *not* the four organs associated with the classical humors (C), but they can be seen to correspond to human emotion (especially brain and heart) (A).

7. In line 4, the word *ample* means
- (A) plump.
 - (B) full.**
 - (C) sufficient.
 - (D) abundant.
 - (E) large.

Although each of the response options are synonyms of the word *ample*, answer (B) is most appropriate in the context of this passage. Olivia's face will be veiled and, therefore, will not be visible in full.

8. In this dialogue, Olivia is compared to
- (A) a nun.**
 - (B) the goddess Diana.
 - (C) a queen.
 - (D) a flock of sheep.
 - (E) the weather.

The answer (A) is found in line 5: "But like a **cloistress** she will veiled walk..."

9. The Duke expresses the wish that Olivia's _____ would be killed.
- (A) brother
 - (B) other suitors
 - (C) flocks
 - (D) pride
 - (E) current affections**

The answer can be found in lines 12-14: "How will she love when the rich golden shaft/
Hath kill'd the flock of **all affections else**/That live in her..."

10. According to the passage, Olivia intends to
- (A) marry the Duke, eventually.
 - (B) become a nun.
 - (C) cry over her brother every day.**
 - (D) avoid being hurt again, after being rejected.
 - (E) stay indoors for seven years.

The answer is found in lines 6-7, which state that Olivia will "water once a day her chamber round/With eye-offending brine." Although Olivia is compared to a nun, Valentine does not imply that she intends to become one. Likewise, although Olivia plans to wear a veil for seven years, Valentine says that "the element," or sun, will not see an "ample," or "full" view of her face. This would not necessarily require her remaining indoors. Nor does the passage suggest that Olivia intends to marry the Duke or that she is avoiding rejection.

11. The Duke compares Cesario to
- (A) a man.
 - (B) a lord.
 - (C) a constellation.
 - (D) a goddess.**
 - (E) Olivia.

In lines 9-10, the Duke compares Cesario's lip to that of the goddess Diana: "Diana's lip/Is not more smooth and rubious..."

12. In lines 16-18, the Duke suggests that Cesario will be _____ if the mission is successful.
- (A) happy for him
 - (B) freed from indentured servitude
 - (C) financially compensated**
 - (D) given the Duke's title
 - (E) wed to an appropriate mate

The Duke remarks to Cesario: "—prosper well in this,/And thou shalt live as freely as thy lord,/To call his fortunes thine." Hence, option (C) is the most appropriate answer.

13. The word "constellation" in line 13 most likely refers to
- (A) Viola/Cesario's youthful face.
 - (B) Viola's effective disguise.
 - (C) Cesario's voice.
 - (D) Viola/Cesario's destiny.**
 - (E) Viola's predicament in Illyria.

A constellation is a group of stars, either one of the 88 illustrations of classical mythology found in the nighttime sky, or an individual person's astrological chart, predicting his or her destiny. Thus (D) is the most likely answer in that the Duke is predicting Viola/Cesario's success in winning love, although not the exact type of success he is expecting.

14. Based on the passage, the word *nuncio*, in line 5, probably means
- (A) little boy.
 - (B) messenger.**
 - (C) clown.
 - (D) liar.
 - (E) woman.

The word "*nuncio*" means "ambassador" or "messenger." However, without previous knowledge of the word meaning, option (B) can be discerned as the correct answer by the process of elimination, based on the context of the passage. In lines 3-5, the Duke remarks: "It shall become thee well to act my woes;/She will attend it better in thy youth/Than in a *nuncio*'s of more grave aspect." Option (A) can be eliminated because the Duke is commending Cesario to the task based on "his" youth. Option (C), "clown," does not fit with the "grave aspect" of the *nuncio*. Finally, options (D) and (E) are not suggested by the passage, leaving option (B) as the best answer.

15. The Duke interprets Cesario's _____ as a sign of youth.
- (A) sensitive nature
 - (B) effeminate personality
 - (C) awkward mannerisms
 - (D) effeminate appearance**
 - (E) unmanly modesty

Option (D) is correct. The Duke mentions Cesario's effeminate appearance as an indicator of youth. Viola, dressed as Cesario does not display any of the other stereotypically feminine or youthful characteristics.

16. During this scene, _____ are present.
- (A) only the Duke and Cesario
 - (B) only the Duke, Cesario, and Valentine
 - (C) only the Duke, Cesario, and Olivia
 - (D) the Duke, Cesario, Valentine, and four servants
 - (E) the Duke, Cesario, and more than five servants**

The answer to this question can be found in lines 14-15, in which the Duke commands his servants, "Some four or five attend him;/All, if you will," which implies that there are more than five servants on stage, in addition to the Duke and Cesario.

17. According to the passage, the Duke thinks Cesario is
- (A) a man.
 - (B) gorgeous.
 - (C) young.**
 - (D) extremely clever.
 - (E) an effeminate dandy.

Throughout the passage, the Duke dwells on the topic of Cesario's youth, as suggested by the correct answer, option (C). He does not classify the youth as a man, as does option (A), nor does he imply that Cesario is stylish, as suggested by option (E). Although the Duke compares Cesario's lip to that of a goddess, he does not imply in this passage that the young man is extraordinarily attractive. Neither does he explicitly describe Cesario as intelligent in this selection.

18. This passage contains a mention of

- (A) an old man.
- (B) the color red.**
- (C) a pipe organ.
- (D) the Duke's religious beliefs.
- (E) Olivia's virginity.

The Duke does say Cesario's youth makes "him" better suited than an older (A) man to the mission of wooing Olivia, but this is not a clear reference to an *old* man. The "organ" and "pipes" referred to are Viola's voice and the lack of an Adam's apple in her throat, *not* a "pipe organ" (C). Allusion to the chaste goddess of the hunt and the moon (Diana) again refers to Cesario's feminineness, not the Duke's religion (D). Likewise, the reference to the virginal Diana is in the context of Cesario's youth, not Olivia's virtue (D). The Duke does, however, clearly state that Cesario's lip is smooth and "rubious" or red like a ruby (B).

19. The Duke views youth as

- (A) a time of incessant merriment.
- (B) a time of instinctual wisdom.
- (C) a fortunate time of life.**
- (D) a time when one should be seen and not heard.
- (E) a time when one should be most assertive.

The correct answer, option (C), is found in line 8, in which the Duke describes Cesario's youth as "happy." In the context of the passage, the word "happy" indicates fortune, rather than "incessant merriment."

20. What can be inferred from the Duke's statement, "for I myself am best/when least in company"?

- (A) The Duke prefers to humble himself in front of others.
- (B) The Duke does not enjoy entertaining guests.
- (C) The Duke wants to be alone to think about Olivia.
- (D) The Duke wants to appear humble, putting himself last.
- (E) The Duke wants to be alone.**

In lines 15-16, the Duke implies that he wants to be alone—with no implication of disliking company in general, or wanting to think about Olivia. He certainly is not one to humble himself when in the presence of servants and inferiors.

21. The main idea expressed in lines 14-16 could best be summarized as:

- (A) "I am honest, but women are dishonest."
- (B) "I am loyal to the one I love, but women are disloyal."
- (C) "I am honest, and I do not love anyone."
- (D) "No one will ever have my love."
- (E) **"No woman will ever have my love."**

Cesario does imply that he is honest and loyal, but the primary idea of the passage is that no woman will ever have "his" love.

22. Based on the context of the passage, the word *maugre*, in line 7, probably means

- (A) meager.
- (B) because of.
- (C) **despite.**
- (D) in addition to.
- (E) understanding.

Olivia says, "I love thee so, that, *maugre* all thy pride,/Nor wit nor reason can my passion hide..." (A) simply does not fit grammatically into the sentence. (B) (D) and (E) fit, but do not really make sense. She is saying, however, that she loves Cesario *despite/maugre* her pride (C).

23. In lines 1-4, Olivia implies that

- (A) Cesario murdered her brother and cannot hide his guilt.
- (B) although the scene takes place at night, she can see that Cesario loves her.
- (C) she cannot hide her desire to kill Cesario.
- (D) **Cesario appears angry, but perhaps, like herself, is merely attempting to hide his love.**
- (E) Cesario is angered by the fact that Olivia is hiding her love.

The only mention of "murderous guilt" is in a simile comparing the extent with which one attempts to hide one's guilt with Cesario's apparent attempt to hide "his" love, thus (A) is impossible. (B) is excluded by the fact that the mention of night is also metaphoric, not a statement of setting. Olivia certainly has no desire to kill the youth with whom she has fallen in love (C), and she is certainly not hiding her love (E) as she assumes Cesario is.

24. In the context of this passage, the word *deplore*, in line 18, denotes
- (A) disgust.
 - (B) **sadness.**
 - (C) deployment.
 - (D) hatred.
 - (E) wrath.

While the word “deplore” often denotes disgust or hatred, in this passage it is used to indicate sadness and could be replaced by the word “lament.” Therefore, option (B) is the correct answer.

25. In this passage, Olivia says that Cesario should love her on the basis that
- (A) despite his contempt, she finds him attractive.
 - (B) he is at an advantage because he does not have to woo her.
 - (C) her maidenhood and honor make her a faithful lover.
 - (D) her love is so great that he cannot resist it.
 - (E) **her love is unsolicited and, therefore, should be especially prized.**

Although the idea of option (B) appears in the passage, Olivia prefaces it with the admonition: “Do not extort thy reasons from this clause.” She prefers, rather, that Cesario reason thus: “Love sought is good, but given unsought is better.”

26. Olivia accuses Cesario of being
- (A) spiteful.
 - (B) guilty.
 - (C) jealous.
 - (D) **proud.**
 - (E) capricious

The accusation of pride appears in line 7. None of the other accusations are made explicitly in this passage, if at all.

27. The irony of Viola’s reply, in this passage is that she claims
- (A) to deplore her master, when in reality she loves him.
 - (B) that women do not have hearts, yet she is in love with the Duke.
 - (C) **to be the mistress of her own heart, while dressed as a man.**
 - (D) that Olivia is good, when in reality she is deceitful.
 - (E) to be innocent, when in reality she has a guilty conscience.

As discussed in the explanation to question 24, Viola does not claim to “deplore” her master. Thus, option (A) is eliminated. Neither does she claim that women do not have hearts; rather, she suggests that no woman will have *her* heart, as explained in the answer to number 21. Thus, option (B) is also eliminated. The only deceit in the passage is Viola’s. Therefore, option (D) is false. Likewise, there is no suggestion that Viola suffers from a guilty conscience, eliminating option (E). Option (C) is the best response.

28. Olivia speaks of *the roses of the spring* as
- (A) an enticement for Cesario to fall in love.
 - (B) less attractive than Cesario.
 - (C) **a symbol by which she swears.**
 - (D) a symbol of her love.
 - (E) a symbol of her purity and honor.

In lines 5-8, Olivia swears her love by “the roses of the spring,” and by her “maidhood, honour, truth, and everything.”

29. In lines 19-20, Olivia entreats Cesario to come again, saying that
- (A) she may convince Cesario, who now hates her, to return her love.
 - (B) she may convince Cesario, who now hates the Duke, to like him.
 - (C) **Cesario may convince her to accept the Duke’s love, although at present she loathes it.**
 - (D) Cesario may convince her to love him, although at present she is angry with him.
 - (E) she may convince Cesario, who now hates her, that she is likeable.

In lines 19 and 20, Olivia attempts to entice Cesario to come again with the suggestion that Cesario may perhaps “move/That heart, which now abhors, to like his love.” The pronoun “his,” in line 20, refers to the Duke. Therefore, option (C) is the correct answer.

30. Olivia’s tone, in lines 1-12 of this passage, can best be described as
- (A) seditious.
 - (B) **zealous.**
 - (C) dispassionate.
 - (D) reproachful.
 - (E) melancholic.

Twelfth Night

Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition Teaching Unit

Study Guide Teacher's Copy

Act I, scene i

1. What does this scene demonstrate about the Duke's view of love?

The Duke opens the play with a metaphor calling music "the food of love" and expressing his desire to glut on this "food" until he has killed his appetite. Only a few lines later, he appears to have had his fill; the music is "not so sweet now as it was before," and he commands the musicians to cease playing. The Duke then goes on to remark on how quickly feelings of love can dissipate and describes love as an illusion.

The Duke treats love as a selfish diversion. He appears to be interested in love purely for the sake of indulging in the emotions it inspires.

2. Assess the Duke's love for Olivia based on the information provided in this scene.

The Duke seems to be more excited about being in love than he is about Olivia. Despite exhibiting strong feeling and putting great effort into convincing Olivia of his love for her, he knows that his love is insubstantial and will quickly pass. His objective is conquest, rather than the formation of a lasting, meaningful relationship.

3. Is there anything unusual about Olivia's reaction to her brother's death?

The fact that Olivia contrives a schedule for mourning the loss of her brother, which includes crying daily for seven years, makes her display of grief seem forced and exaggerated.

4. Do Olivia and the Duke appear to have any personality traits or views in common?

Like the Duke, Olivia appears to wallow in her emotions. As the Duke desires to glut himself on feelings of romantic love, Olivia wants to overindulge in grief at the loss of filial affections. As Valentine relates, Olivia desires to keep her brother's love, "fresh/And lasting in her sad remembrance." This melodramatic and somewhat self-important glorification of emotions is a common thread between Olivia and her suitor.

Act I, scene ii

1. Identify the figurative device that is used by both Viola and the Captain within the first fifteen lines of this scene. What effect does the use of this device create?

Viola and the Captain each make an allusion to classical myth at the beginning of Act I, scene ii. Viola refers to Elysium of Greek mythology, and the Captain, in turn, mentions Arion—also from Greek myth. These allusions lend a fanciful quality to the story of Sebastian's shipwreck, elevating it to legendary proportions.

2. Compare and contrast Viola and Olivia based on the information provided in the first two scenes, paying special attention to their situations and personalities.

Viola and Olivia are both noblewomen whose fathers have died. More recently, they have, presumably, both lost their brothers. However, their reactions to loss are very different, with Viola responding in a practical, active manner, while Olivia chooses to indulge in self-pity and seclusion.

3. Identify any clues contained in this scene that point to the theme of appearances conflicting with reality.

In this scene, one of the play's main illusions is conceived: Viola decides to disguise herself and to enter the Duke's service as his "eunuch." However, the scene also contains a more subtle instance of the motif of deception, when Viola remarks to the Captain that "nature with a beauteous wall/doth oft close in pollution." In other words, outward beauty often conceals inward corruption.

4. What reason does Viola give for wishing to disguise herself? What does this passage reveal about Viola's social station and personality?

Viola wants to keep her identity and, as she puts it, her "estate" hidden for the present time. Thus, Viola indicates that she comes from a wealthy, noble family. She also displays a tendency toward assertiveness and practicality, deciding on such a bold course of action so quickly after having been shipwrecked and parted from all family and friends.

Act I, scene iii

1. What is different about the language of this scene, when compared to the two previous scenes? What does this indicate about the purpose of the scene or the status of the characters?

This scene is written entirely in prose, while the previous scenes have all been blank verse. In this case, the characters' switching to prose does not indicate low social status; Sebastian is Viola's brother, and she has just been established as an upper-class character through both her manner of speech and her reference to her "estate." In this instance, the use of prose fits the straightforward expository purposes of the scene and establishes Sebastian's pragmatic personality.

2. In what ways are Sir Toby and Sir Andrew similar? In what ways are they different?

Sir Toby and Sir Andrew have much in common in terms of behavior: they are both given to drinking, dancing, and debauchery. However, it is clear that Sir Toby is the more crafty and intelligent of the two. He is the leader and Sir Andrew the follower.

3. In this scene, it is revealed that Sir Toby is encouraging Sir Andrew to pursue his niece, Olivia. Is this a realistic match, based on what has been revealed of the characters thus far? What does his matchmaking attempt reveal about Sir Toby?

Sir Toby's encouragement of Sir Andrew is clearly futile. Rejecting the Duke, it is highly unlikely that Olivia would give preference to one of Sir Toby's drunken friends. Thus, by encouraging this pointless hope in his friend, Sir Toby establishes himself early on as one who will toy with and potentially hurt his friends for the sake of his own amusement.

4. As of Act I, scene iii, Olivia has been discussed in every scene of the play, but has not yet appeared on stage. How does Shakespeare use this scene to further develop the audience's view of the yet unseen Olivia?

In previous scenes, Olivia was described by both the Duke and the Captain. These descriptions lead the audience to view Olivia as a remarkable beauty of noble rank who is grieving the death of her beloved brother. Although Act I, scene i highlights Olivia's propensity to overindulge in her grief, up to this act that had seemed to be her only major foible. However, with the appearance of her debauched uncle, Sir Toby, Olivia is taken down a peg in the audience's estimate. The fact that she is surrounded by such lewd characters dispels the idealized image of Olivia that the Duke created. Furthermore, Sir Toby's claim that Olivia prefers a man who is inferior to her casts doubt on her character. While Sir Toby's claim is highly suspect, it is not entirely out of the question. At the very least, his disrespect for his niece diminishes the audience's reverence for her.

Act I, scene iv

1. What is revealed about the Duke in this scene before he arrives on stage? Taking the rest of the plot into account, what could this foreshadow?

Before the Duke arrives, a conversation between Valentine and the disguised Viola establishes the fact that the Duke is “inconstant...in his favours.” This suggestion, which is also hinted at in the Duke’s opening speech, foreshadows the possible waning of the Duke’s affections for Olivia.

2. What does this scene, and particularly Viola’s aside, reveal about her character?

In this scene, Viola reveals her love for the Duke through an aside. However, this aside also reveals, more subtly, that Viola is a kind and morally upright person. Although she loves the Duke, and wooing Olivia for him causes her pain, Viola intends to faithfully fulfill her duty.

3. Identify the dramatic irony of this scene, and how it is highlighted. What purpose(s) does this irony achieve in terms of the tone of the scene?

The dramatic irony of this scene lies in the fact that, while the audience recognizes Cesario as Viola in disguise, the other characters are unaware of her true identity. This situation is underscored by the Duke’s description of Cesario, in which he compares “him” to a woman. This use of dramatic irony gives the scene a humorous tone.

4. Act I, scene iv introduces an important element of the plot structure of the play. What is the name of this dramatic element, and how does it unfold in this scene?

This scene introduces the conflict around which the play is centered. It is in this scene that the audience becomes aware of one of the main difficulties that must be overcome over the course of the play—Viola loves the Duke, but he believes her to be a man.

Act I, scene v

1. Identify a biblical allusion that appears in the Clown's dialogue with Maria, and explain its meaning and effects. [Note that the term *madonna*, as used in this scene means *my lady* and is not a biblical allusion.]

The Clown calls Maria "as witty a piece of Eve's flesh as any in Illyria." His allusion to "a piece of Eve's flesh," is a crude and somewhat demeaning way of calling Maria a woman. The use of this allusion also has the effect of highlighting the universality of womankind, all of whom are "pieces" of the same ancestral "flesh."

In a more obscure biblical allusion, the fool refers to the "Parable of the Talents" from the gospel of Matthew. In this story, a master gives each of his servants a different number of talents, a measure of currency. In his dialogue with Maria, the Clown remarks: "God give them wisdom that have it; and those that are fools, let them use their talents." This use of allusion and pun adds a layer of complexity and humor to the dialogue.

2. How does the Clown contribute to the motifs of illusions and role-playing, in his exchange with Olivia? What truths does he expose?

In this scene, the "Fool" attempts to prove that Olivia is more of a fool than he is. Through a game of word play, he makes Olivia's grief seem absurd. Thus, he accomplishes his goal of exposing that he is very clever, while Olivia is perhaps not as clever as she thinks she is. In doing so, he highlights the illusions created by social constructs and the role-playing involved in the fulfillment of social roles. Olivia must act as the grieving sister and the Fool must act foolish.

3. Based on the information provided in this scene, describe Malvolio.

In this scene, Malvolio is established as an egotistical and self-important character. Olivia chastises him openly for these qualities, calling him "sick of self-love" when he takes the Clown's insults to heart.

4. Now that Olivia has finally appeared on stage, how does she fulfill or defy expectations, in terms of her personality and view of love?

Olivia fulfills many of the expectations set up in previous scenes. She has a noble bearing, but keeps company with many lewd characters. She is emotional and impulsive, as the details of her mourning ritual suggested in scene i, and falls passionately in love with Cesario after only a few moments with him. Hence, like the Duke, Olivia appears to be rather superficial and impetuous in her affections, as implied in previous scenes.

5. This scene contains instances of both dramatic and situational irony. Identify and describe an example of each.

The main source of dramatic irony in this scene is that, again, Viola is taken for a man, while the audience knows her true identity. An instance of situational irony in this scene is the fact that while Viola attempts to inspire Olivia to love the Duke, she inadvertently attracts Olivia to herself.

Act II, scene i

1. How does this scene contribute to the motifs of illusion and disguise?

In this scene, Sebastian reveals his true identity to Antonio. Up to this point, Sebastian had been going by the name of Roderigo, wishing to keep his great wealth and nobility hidden.

2. In Act II, scene i, Shakespeare establishes several similarities between Sebastian and his sister, Viola. Identify and explain these similarities.

Sebastian and Viola have much in common. Sebastian mentions that the siblings are twins and are said to look alike. In addition, each has made it to shore with a companion, but is uncertain whether the other is still alive. Furthermore, Viola disguises herself, and Sebastian admits to having used an assumed name; thus, it is established that they have both masked their identities. Finally, both siblings appear to be very practical-minded. Each rebounds quickly from the trauma of the shipwreck and the possible loss of a family member, immediately devising a plan for the next step of the journey and taking action.

3. What might the appearance of Sebastian and his similarity to Viola foreshadow, based on what has been revealed of the plot up to this point?

Viola is disguised as a man and finds herself in the difficult situation of loving the Duke and being loved by Olivia. Therefore, Sebastian's emergence in this scene and his similarity to Viola suggest that he might substitute his sister as "Cesario" later in the play.

Act II, scene ii

1. What does this scene accomplish in terms of plot development?

In this scene, Viola is made aware of Olivia's feelings. Thus, in addition to loving the Duke, Viola now has a second conflict to deal with—Olivia's mistaken love for her.

2. How does Shakespeare use this scene to develop Viola as a character? Identify evidence of her moral nature that can be found in this scene.

In this scene, Viola displays an upright and unselfish moral nature. In her aside, she expresses great consternation at the thought of the Duke's pain and even that of her rival, Olivia. "What thriftless sighs will poor Olivia breathe!" she exclaims upon learning of Olivia's love for her [i.e., Cesario].

Act II, scene iii

1. What traditions, common in both Elizabethan comedy and Twelfth Night celebrations, are exemplified in this scene?

Both Elizabethan comedies and Twelfth Night celebrations are known for their lighthearted tone, identity confusion, and a conflict between propriety and debauchery. The tone of this scene is light and humorous, and, therefore, fits with the tone of the season and the conventions of the genre. Furthermore, the scene includes an instance of identity confusion, when Sir Toby declares to Maria, “My lady’s a Cataian, we are politicians,” Malvolio’s a Peg-a-Ramsey, and “Three merry men be we.” Finally, Act II, scene iii introduces the conflict between Malvolio and the rest of the household—a clash between decorum and dissipation.

2. What conflict is established in this scene?

In this scene, the outright animosity between Malvolio and the other members of Olivia’s household is established, and the plot to deceive him is conceived.

Act II, scene iv

1. What metaphor from the Duke’s first appearance in Act I, scene i is revived in this scene?

In this scene, music and love are again associated. The scene opens with his request for music that will alleviate his feelings. Later, Viola describes the song being played as giving “a very echo to the seat/Where Love is throned.”

2. How are the Duke’s views on women and love developed in this scene? How does he contradict himself on this subject?

In this scene, the Duke describes men’s affections as more fickle than those of women. Furthermore, he says that “women are as roses, whose fair flower/Being once display’d, doth fall that very hour.” This view of women as mere objects of visual pleasure is also reflected in his speculation that Cesario’s “eye hath staid upon some favour that it loves.” By describing love in this way, the Duke reduces the experience to mere physical attraction and the object of love to a mere “favour.”

Ironically, later in the scene, the Duke directly contradicts his earlier admission of the inconstancy of men’s hearts. Instead, he accuses women of being fickle, saying of them:

*Alas, their love may be call’d appetite,—
No motion of the liver, but the palate,—
That suffer surfeit, cloyment and revolt;
But mine is all as hungry as the sea...*

3. What judgment(s) does Feste make on the Duke during their brief conversation?

The Fool suggests that the Duke is indulging in his depression [“the melancholy god protect thee”], being so fond of such a dismal song. Feste also accuses him of being fickle, saying, “the tailor make they doublet of changeable taffeta, for thy mind is a very opal.”

4. Based on what has been revealed about him up to this point in the play, does the Clown fulfill the traditional role of the fool in Elizabethan theater, or is he an unusual character? What character traits does he exhibit in this scene?

Feste fulfills the Elizabethan tradition of the clever fool quite well. In this scene, he exhibits his extraordinary perceptiveness, accurately analyzing the Duke after only a few moments’ acquaintance.

Act II, scene v

1. In this scene, Sir Toby expresses admiration and affection for Maria. Compare Sir Toby’s feelings for Maria with the Duke’s love for Olivia.

Unlike the Duke, Sir Toby compliments his sweetheart not on her appearance, but on her intelligence. He is attracted to her wit, cunning, and even her cruelty. Furthermore, Sir Toby and Maria appear to have known each other for a long time, while the Duke and Olivia seem to be only superficially acquainted. Thus, unlike the Duke, who loves Olivia solely for her beauty, Sir Toby appears to value personality and cleverness in a woman. The wavering “sweet pangs” the Duke describes are very different from Sir Toby’s calm, rational experience of love.

2. Sir Toby is frequently echoed by Sir Andrew in this scene. What does this mimicry reveal about Sir Andrew, and what effect does it have on the tone of the scene?

Sir Andrew’s aping of Sir Toby reveals the extent of his foolishness and adds to the scene’s humorous, absurd tone.

3. Does Malvolio love Olivia? How does he react to the letter, and why?

Although Malvolio is pleased by what he reads in the letter, he gives no indication of being in love with Olivia. Instead, he focuses on how he would dress and behave towards others if he and Olivia were married. Hence, Malvolio seems to be in love not with Olivia, but with the idea of elevating his social status.

4. While imagining what he would do as Olivia’s husband, Malvolio envisions telling his servants “I know my place as I would they should do theirs.” What is ironic about this statement?

By entertaining the notion that Olivia loves him and that he will one day command a group of servants, Malvolio demonstrates that he does not, in fact, “know [his] place.” It is for this very error that Maria and the others resent and persecute Malvolio.

Act III, scene i

1. Identify and explain a form of word play that appears in the dialogue between Viola and the Clown at the beginning of the scene.

Viola and the Clown's witty exchange at the beginning of the scene includes instances of both pun and plocce. An example of a pun occurs in Feste's claim that he lives "by the church." Plocce is found in subsequent lines, in the Clown's use of the word "wanton."

2. Identify a dramatic technique Shakespeare employs in this opening dialogue and what it reveals.

This dialogue contains Viola's aside, "though I would not have [hair] grow on my chin." Using this device, Shakespeare allows Viola to convey her thoughts to the audience without betraying her secret to the Clown. Thus, she humorously emphasizes the dramatic irony of her situation.

3. Identify and explain two allusions used in this opening dialogue.

The dialogue between Feste and Viola contains allusions to Jove and to the story of Troilus and Cressida. The first allusion simply substitutes Jove's name for "God," as Jove is the chief god in Roman mythology. Troilus, also, is a hero from Classical mythology. The youngest son of Priam, king of Troy, Troilus is ambushed and murdered by Achilles. Medieval versions of the Troilus tale add Cressida, and Pandarus. Pandarus is essentially a pimp, arranging for Troilus and Cressida's liaisons. Therefore, Feste's remark that he would "play Lord Pandarus" were he in the position of matchmaker is a lewd joke.

4. In previous scenes, the Clown has proved to be a very perceptive character. Does he recognize the fact that Cesario is really a woman in disguise?

The Clown, though very perceptive and insightful, has found his match in Viola. He shows no sign of recognizing her as a woman. Thus, Shakespeare establishes the fact that, while appearing at times incredibly discerning, Feste is not omniscient, as Elizabethan fools sometimes were.

5. Why does Viola refer to herself as Olivia's "fool"? What do she and the fool have in common, as emphasized in this scene?

Like Feste, who is clever but must act the part of the fool, Viola finds herself compelled to play a role in order to please others and fulfill her duty. Viola and the Clown establish an amiable relationship at the beginning of the scene, and with this reference Viola cements the association between the two. Both characters exemplify the theme of playing a role in order to fulfill societal expectations.

Act III, scene ii

1. Identify the figurative devices used by Sir Toby in the phrase, “And they have been grand-jurymen since before Noah was a sailor.” What are the effects of figurative language in this passage?

In this phrase, Sir Toby is referring to the ideas of “judgment and reason” referred to by Fabian in the previous line. Hence, when Sir Toby refers to these concepts as “grand-jurymen,” he is personifying these abstract ideas. Note that this is also a metaphor—a comparison that does not use the words “like” or “as.”

Another figurative device employed in this quote is allusion. Sir Toby alludes to the biblical figure of Noah, who built an ark to escape a catastrophic flood. This allusion indicates the extreme antiquity of the “grand-jurymen” in question. These uses of figurative language lend both humor and imagery to Sir Toby’s statement.

2. What does Maria mean when she says she has “dogged” Malvolio “like his murderer”? What effect(s) does this simile produce?

In this phrase, Maria creatively describes the way she has been following and watching Malvolio. Using a simile, she compares herself to a murderer to give a sense of the intensity of her watchfulness. Maria implies that she is observing Malvolio as closely as she would if she were planning his murder. Equally important, the simile also signifies her animosity toward Malvolio and her sinister, destructive motive for watching him.

3. What might motivate Sir Toby to instigate a fight between Sir Andrew and Cesario? What does this action reflect about Sir Toby?

Sir Toby attempts to instigate a fight between Sir Andrew and Cesario for the purpose of his own entertainment. His willingness to endanger the life of his friend for his own amusement adds a new degree of cruelty to Sir Toby’s persona.

Act III, scene iii

1. Like Act II, scene i, this scene contains a dialogue between Sebastian and Antonio. What is different about the language of this scene, when compared to Act II, scene i, and why might Shakespeare have used language differently in these similar scenes?

One difference between the two scenes that may account for the shift to poetry is that the latter deals with declarations of emotional bonds between Sebastian and Antonio, and poetry is a better medium for emotive expression. There is no exclusive answer to this question, but responses should demonstrate an understanding of the uses of prose and blank verse in Shakespeare’s works.

Act III, scene iv

1. How does Malvolio's situation in this scene reflect Olivia's own situation?

In this scene, Malvolio absurdly believes that Olivia's behavior towards him—specifically her use of the word “fellow”—indicates her love for him. In reality, Olivia shows no signs of being pleased with Malvolio and even accuses him of being crazy. Likewise, in a previous scene, Olivia had interpreted Cesario's frown as a sign of concealed love.

2. What new deception do Sir Toby, Fabian, and Maria devise against Malvolio in this scene?

In this scene, the other characters speak to Malvolio as if he were possessed by a demon, attempting to make him question his sanity. Sir Toby also reveals his idea of binding Malvolio in a dark room, that resembles an asylum.

3. This scene contains an instance of the motif of messages. Identify letters and messages from this and other scenes. Thus far in the play, what do all the messages have in common? How does this fit in with the play's main theme?

Like all the previous letters in the play, Sir Andrew's letter in this scene is meant to deceive. In this case, the content of the letter is inane and fails to achieve Sir Andrew's purpose of intimidating his opponent. However, the common thread of the intention to mislead is present. To one degree or another, all the messages that have been sent, up to this point, fail to convey the truth. Beginning with Valentine's message from Maria in Act I, scene i, characters use messages to create illusions. In this first instance, Olivia depicts herself in a way that she hopes will inspire sympathy and approval. Later on, the Duke's messages to Olivia exaggerate the depth of his feelings for her, which according to his conversations with Cesario are not as profound as he would have her believe. Later, Olivia sends a ring after Cesario under the pretext that he left it with her. Finally, in the most obvious example of deceptive messages, Maria writes the letter to Malvolio for the express purpose of duping him. Through the motif of misleading letters, Shakespeare reinforces the theme of deceptive appearances that can be found throughout the play.

4. According to Viola, what does Olivia's passion have in common with the Duke's?

Olivia's passion, like the Duke's, is, in her own words, “such a headstrong potent fault...that it but mocks reproof.” Viola makes the comparison between Olivia's passion and the Duke's in the following lines, saying “With the same ‘havior that your passion bears/Goes on my master's grief.” Thus, Viola suggests that both parties are so caught up in their own feelings that they are behaving recklessly, without regard for the opinions of others.

5. Identify each of the various situations of dramatic irony, in the order of their occurrence in this scene.

This scene contains several instances of dramatic irony. First, Maria and the audience understand Malvolio's odd behavior and manner of dress, while Olivia is perplexed by it, unaware of the letter. Next, Sir Toby, Fabian, and Maria speak to Malvolio as if he were mad or possessed by devils, and Malvolio does not understand why. Soon after, Viola enters, still successfully disguised as a man. Then, Sir Toby amuses himself by playing Sir Andrew and Viola against one another, while only the audience and Fabian are aware of the full extent of his trickery. Finally, Antonio enters the scene and mistakes Viola, in disguise, for her brother, while all but Viola mistake Antonio for a madman.

6. What might Antonio's brief appearance in this scene foreshadow?

During his brief appearance, Antonio mistakes Viola for Sebastian and even mentions her lost brother's name. Thus, this incident foreshadows Sebastian's reappearance.

Act IV, scene i

1. What is the Clown trying to communicate with the speech that ends in “Nothing that is so is so,” and what literary device does he use?

The Clown mistakes Sebastian for Cesario. Therefore, when Sebastian does not recognize him, Feste is frustrated and believes he is being stubborn. In this speech, Feste uses verbal irony, saying the opposite of what he means, to mock Sebastian and express his frustration.

2. What does Sir Andrew do upon meeting Sebastian? Why does he react thus?

Sir Andrew’s first reaction, upon seeing Sebastian, is to strike him, saying “there’s for you.” He has mistaken Sebastian for his rival, Cesario.

3. Upon discovering Sir Toby’s treatment of Sebastian, Olivia’s requests of the latter, “let thy fair wisdom, not thy passion, sway...” What is ironic about this statement?

There are two possible responses to this question. First, Olivia’s suggestion is ironic because it comes from one who is almost entirely led by emotion, at the expense of reason. Second, Olivia’s advice is ironic because if Sebastian were to follow it, his reason would lead him to be more skeptical of Olivia rather than more trusting.

4. How does this scene suggest a resolution to one of the play’s main conflicts?

This scene suggests that Sebastian, mistaken for Cesario, will happily replace his sister in Olivia’s affections.

Act IV, scene ii

1. To whom does Feste direct the exclamation, “Out, hyperbolical fiend!”?

This imperative is directed towards the fiend, or devil, that is supposedly speaking through Malvolio.

2. How does Sir Toby feel about Malvolio’s predicament in this scene, and why does he have this reaction?

In this scene, Sir Toby expresses his desire to be done with the hoax he and Maria have played on Malvolio. However, this wish is inspired not by sympathy for Malvolio’s suffering, but by Sir Toby’s fear of falling even further out of favor with Olivia.

3. According to Maria, why does Malvolio fail to recognize Feste in his first appearance?

In his first visit to Malvolio, Feste was disguised as Sir Topas, a priest. However, it is not his disguise, but, rather, the extreme darkness of Malvolio's chamber that keeps him from recognizing the Fool, according to Maria.

4. What is the Clown's final insult, in this scene?

The Clown's parting shot in this scene comes at the end of his song, when he calls Malvolio "goodman devil."

Act IV, scene iii

1. What qualities does Sebastian praise in Olivia? Compare Sebastian's comments about Olivia with the Duke's.

In this scene, Sebastian admiringly notes the grace and prudence with which Olivia conducts her household affairs. In contrast, the Duke praises Olivia only for her beauty. He seems either disinterested in her character, or too distant an acquaintance to have observed it.

2. What does Olivia mean by the phrase "according to my birth"? How does her "birth" relate to the subject at hand?

In this phrase, Olivia is referring to her noble rank; she implies that her position in society might be compromised by a hasty marriage to someone of a lower status, and, therefore, suggests that the couple delay celebrating publicly.

Act V, scene i

1. Identify the literary device(s) the Duke uses in the following passage. What does the Duke mean?

I'll sacrifice the lamb that I do love,
To spite a raven's heart within a dove.

The first line of this passage contains an allusion to a biblical metaphor. Here, Cesario is the "lamb." In Judeo-Christian tradition, lambs are a symbol of purity. As such, they were sacrificed for the atonement of sins by the ancient Hebrews. In the New Testament, Christ is referred to as "the Lamb of God." Hence, by calling Cesario "the lamb," the Duke emphasizes the innocence of his friend. He also emphasizes his own distress at the idea of punishing Cesario for Olivia's offense.

In the second line, the Duke describes Olivia as a dove with the heart of a raven. Doves are emblems of peace and purity, while ravens are considered sinister and are associated with death. Thus, the Duke is implying through this metaphor that Olivia's welcoming exterior hides a malevolent heart.

2. How do the Duke's feelings towards Olivia vacillate in this scene, and why?

This scene contains the only on-stage meeting between the Duke and Olivia. In it, the Duke's feelings change from love to hate when Olivia brusquely rejects his romantic advances. In the end, however, the Duke is happy to accept Olivia as a "sister" when he learns that Viola is a woman. With Viola's love secured, he quickly forgets Olivia's previous offense and speaks with her on friendly terms.

3. How is the letter that appears in this scene different from previous messages and letters in the play? What function does the letter serve, in terms of plot development?

Unlike the earlier messages and letters, Malvolio's letter to Olivia is entirely earnest and truthful. Coming in the final scene of the play, in which all conflicts are resolved and illusions dispelled, this letter resolves the main conflict of the play's subplot.

4. What Elizabethan conventions does Shakespeare employ in resolving the plot?

This scene fulfills each of the Elizabethan conventions for the resolution of a comedy. It resolves the obstacles of young lovers and results in three marriages and a reunion between the estranged siblings, Viola and Sebastian. There is also the single person—in this case Malvolio—who is not reconciled at the end.

Twelfth Night

Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition Teaching Unit

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Act I, scene i

1. What does this scene demonstrate about the Duke's view of love?
2. Assess the Duke's love for Olivia based on the information provided in this scene.
3. Is there anything unusual about Olivia's reaction to her brother's death?
4. Do Olivia and the Duke appear to have any personality traits or views in common?

Act I, scene ii

1. Identify the figurative device that is used by both Viola and the Captain within the first fifteen lines of this scene. What effect does the use of this device create?
2. Compare and contrast Viola and Olivia based on the information provided in the first two scenes, paying special attention to their situations and personalities.
3. Identify any clues contained in this scene that point to the theme of appearances conflicting with reality.
4. What reason does Viola give for wishing to disguise herself? What does this passage reveal about Viola's social station and personality?

Act I, scene iii

1. What is different about the language of this scene, when compared to the two previous scenes? What does this indicate about the purpose of the scene or the status of the characters?
2. In what ways are Sir Toby and Sir Andrew similar? In what ways are they different?
3. In this scene, it is revealed that Sir Toby is encouraging Sir Andrew to pursue his niece, Olivia. Is this a realistic match, based on what has been revealed of the characters thus far? What does his matchmaking attempt reveal about Sir Toby?
4. As of Act I, scene iii, Olivia has been discussed in every scene of the play, but has not yet appeared on stage. How does Shakespeare use this scene to further develop the audience's view of the yet unseen Olivia?

Act I, scene iv

1. What is revealed about the Duke in this scene before he arrives on stage? Taking the rest of the plot into account, what could this foreshadow?
2. What does this scene, and particularly Viola's aside, reveal about her character?
3. Identify the dramatic irony of this scene, and how it is highlighted. What purpose(s) does this irony achieve in terms of the tone of the scene?
4. Act I, scene iv introduces an important element of the plot structure of the play. What is the name of this dramatic element, and how does it unfold in this scene?

Act I, scene v

1. Identify a biblical allusion that appears in the Clown's dialogue with Maria, and explain its meaning and effects. [Note that the term *madonna*, as used in this scene means *my lady* and is not a biblical allusion.]
2. How does the Clown contribute to the motifs of illusions and role-playing, in his exchange with Olivia? What truths does he expose?
3. Based on the information provided in this scene, describe Malvolio.
4. Now that Olivia has finally appeared on stage, how does she fulfill or defy expectations, in terms of her personality and view of love?
5. This scene contains instances of both dramatic and situational irony. Identify and describe an example of each.

Act II, scene i

1. How does this scene contribute to the motifs of illusion and disguise?
2. In Act II, scene i, Shakespeare establishes several similarities between Sebastian and his sister, Viola. Identify and explain these similarities.
3. What might the appearance of Sebastian and his similarity to Viola foreshadow, based on what has been revealed of the plot up to this point?

Act II, scene ii

1. What does this scene accomplish in terms of plot development?
2. How does Shakespeare use this scene to develop Viola as a character? Identify evidence of her moral nature that can be found in this scene.

Act II, scene iii

1. What traditions, common in both Elizabethan comedy and Twelfth Night celebrations, are exemplified in this scene?
2. What conflict is established in this scene?

Act II, scene iv

1. What metaphor from the Duke's first appearance in Act I, scene i is revived in this scene?
2. How are the Duke's views on women and love developed in this scene? How does he contradict himself on this subject?
3. What judgment(s) does Feste make on the Duke during their brief conversation?
4. Based on what has been revealed about him up to this point in the play, does the Clown fulfill the traditional role of the fool in Elizabethan theater, or is he an unusual character? What character traits does he exhibit in this scene?

Act II, scene v

1. In this scene, Sir Toby expresses admiration and affection for Maria. Compare Sir Toby's feelings for Maria with the Duke's love for Olivia.
2. Sir Toby is frequently echoed by Sir Andrew in this scene. What does this mimicry reveal about Sir Andrew, and what effect does it have on the tone of the scene?
3. Does Malvolio love Olivia? How does he react to the letter, and why?
4. While imagining what he would do as Olivia's husband, Malvolio envisions telling his servants "I know my place as I would they should do theirs." What is ironic about this statement?

Act III, scene i

1. Identify and explain a form of word play that appears in the dialogue between Viola and the Clown at the beginning of the scene.
2. Identify a dramatic technique Shakespeare employs in this opening dialogue and what it reveals.
3. Identify and explain two allusions used in this opening dialogue.
4. In previous scenes, the Clown has proved to be a very perceptive character. Does he recognize the fact that Cesario is really a woman in disguise?
5. Why does Viola refer to herself as Olivia's "fool"? What do she and the fool have in common, as emphasized in this scene?

Act III, scene ii

1. Identify the figurative devices used by Sir Toby in the phrase, “And they have been grand-jurymen since before Noah was a sailor.” What are the effects of figurative language in this passage?
2. What does Maria mean when she says she has “dogged” Malvolio “like his murderer”? What effect(s) does this simile produce?
3. What might motivate Sir Toby to instigate a fight between Sir Andrew and Cesario? What does this action reflect about Sir Toby?

Act III, scene iii

1. Like Act II, scene i, this scene contains a dialogue between Sebastian and Antonio. What is different about the language of this scene, when compared to Act II, scene i, and why might Shakespeare have used language differently in these similar scenes?

Act III, scene iv

1. How does Malvolio's situation in this scene reflect Olivia's own situation?
2. What new deception do Sir Toby, Fabian, and Maria devise against Malvolio in this scene?
3. This scene contains an instance of the motif of messages. Identify letters and messages from this and other scenes. Thus far in the play, what do all the messages have in common? How does this fit in with the play's main theme?
4. According to Viola, what does Olivia's passion have in common with the Duke's?
5. Identify each of the various situations of dramatic irony, in the order of their occurrence in this scene.
6. What might Antonio's brief appearance in this scene foreshadow?

Act IV, scene i

1. What is the Clown trying to communicate with the speech that ends in “Nothing that is so is so,” and what literary device does he use?
2. What does Sir Andrew do upon meeting Sebastian? Why does he react thus?
3. Upon discovering Sir Toby’s treatment of Sebastian, Olivia’s requests of the latter, “let thy fair wisdom, not thy passion, sway...” What is ironic about this statement?
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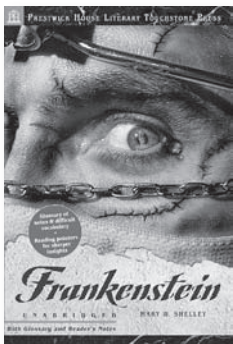
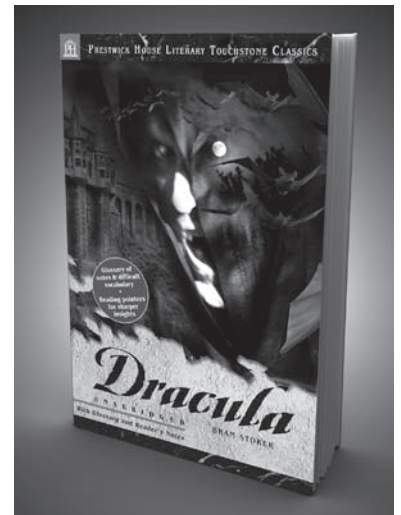
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