

WS 1: Feste and his language (sample solutions)



1. Playing with words is typical for the character of Feste. Read the following lines again in the CSS, III, i, p.71, l. 1-5.

Feste uses the same word - 'to live' - for different meanings. With the help of the info box below decide which meaning is meant in each quote and each situation. Fill in the gaps.

Q different meanings of 'to live' X

to live=
to live (literal meaning)
to earn money
to have a house

- (A) V: *"Dost thou earn money by thy tabor?"*
(B) F: *"No, sir, I live by the church."*
V: *"Art thou a churchman?"*
(C) F: *"No such matter, sir. I have a house by the church; for I live at my house, and my house doth stand by the church."*

2. Read the following quotes by Feste and think about how you think Feste would say them.

- (A) *"[W]ords are very rascals, since bonds disgraced them."*
(B) *"I can yield you none without words, and words are grown so false, I am loath to prove reason with them."*
(C) *"The Lady Olivia has no folly. She will keep no fool, sir, till she be married, and fools are as like husbands as pilchards are to herrings - the husband's the bigger. I am indeed not her fool but her corrupter of words."*

3. Together with a partner read those lines out loud. Try to read them in different ways.

4. Now, comment on the quotes from a dialogue between Fester and Viola (see task 2) and reflect on what they tell you about Feste as a character.

Include at least one of the following questions in your answer:

- What is the meaning of the quotes?
- What does Feste say about being a fool?
- What does he say about the connection between language and himself / fools?

Vocabulary:

rascal: a dishonest person, *to yield*: to produce, *folly*: synonym foolishness (*Narrheit*), *pilchards*: *Sardinen*

The annotations were designed with the *Cambridge Dictionary* (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/de>), the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) (<https://www.oed.com>), and the *PONS English-German Dictionary* (<https://de.pons.com/uebersetzung/deutsch-englisch>) and adapted by the author.

The tasks on this worksheet were adapted from the task *Feste: 'her corrupter of words'* in the CSS edition* of *Twelfth Night*.

*Shakespeare, William: *Twelfth Night* (Cambridge School Shakespeare, edited by Rex Gibson). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 70.



Task 4) Feste likes to play with words and their meanings. In these quotes he says that words don't have the meaning they used to have anymore because they can easily be changed. Therefore, he says words themselves can be cheeky, have lost their meaning and are wrong which is a reason for him to not give Viola an answer (since he would have to use words for that). Feste then makes a joke and says he doesn't see himself as a fool but a corrupter of words, so someone who changes words the way he wants to and the only fool Olivia can have is her future husband. Therefore, playing with language and words is an essential part of Feste's character and a typical feature of Feste's speech which can be seen throughout the whole play.