Drama

Twelfth Night

Learning and Teaching Guide

[HIGHER]

David M S Roy
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Introduction

This publication replaces The Merchant of Venice as the Shakespeare set text for SQA Higher Drama. The new material has been written both as a resource for teachers and as a study aid for students working on Unit 2 (Study of a Text in its Theatrical Context) of Higher Drama.

Shakespeare’s World is brief summary of Shakespeare’s life and a historical background context to the period of the writing of Twelfth Night. It is to be used to support students’ further study into the background of Shakespeare and his life. This section also includes a simple chronology listing of the key events and writings of Shakespeare. It reflects the lack of agreed specifics that we have on Shakespeare.

Section 2 provides a list of the features of each key scene in Twelfth Night which would be important in any production of the play. It also provides space for the student to record why each key scene would be important in his/her intended production.

Section 3 provides a directory of possible acting pieces in terms of casting, suitable length and specific challenges to the actor.

All text page references are to the recommended edition of the text which is published by Nelson Thornes Ltd in The Arden Shakespeare series, edited by J M Lothian and T W Craik (1975/2005).

Other resources for teaching this unit include the following:

• The Arrangements for Drama published in 1997 containing detail of content, suggested learning and teaching approaches, guidance on assessment and unit descriptors.
• The Subject Guide for Drama, the first instalment of which was published in 1997, includes guidance on learning and teaching in general, bi-level teaching, differentiation, workshop approaches to the text, health and safety guidelines, ensuring appropriate access for students with special educational needs.
• The National Assessment Bank packages published in 1998, and updated in 2003, for each unit of Drama include all checklists, task sheets, marking
instructions and guidance necessary to carry out the internal assessment of each unit.

- A video published in 1998 exemplifies standards of practical performance for Investigative Drama (Unit 1), and for Acting in both Study of a Text in its Theatrical Context (Unit 2) and Contemporary Scottish Theatre (Unit 3).

I must acknowledge with thanks the help, comments and advice of Gordon Jarvie of Learning and Teaching Scotland, and the Drama staff and students of Stonelaw High School (South Lanarkshire).

Shakespeare’s work is as insightful today as it was 400 years ago. I dedicate this resource to my son David Macpherson Roy: I hope he will learn to appreciate the insights into life that Shakespeare has offered me, and hopefully all those who continue to study, perform and watch his plays.
Section 1

Shakespeare’s World

Shakespeare’s life

Many of the ‘facts’ about the life of Shakespeare are hazy at best. It is usually through historical documentation that we know many key pieces of information about people. However, there are large gaps in our knowledge of Shakespeare and his life. Academics have written many books trying to fill in these gaps in our knowledge and the information contained here summarises this knowledge; where factual evidence is lacking some of this ‘knowledge’ is anecdotal.

William Shakespeare was born in April 1564 to Mary and John Shakespeare, in Stratford-upon-Avon. He was their first son but their third child, and was baptised on 26 April 1564. Most scholars take the date of 23 April as his actual birthday, though this may be because it is exactly 52 years before his death, as well as being (coincidentally) St George’s Day.

While William’s early life has left few records, his family as a whole was well known in Stratford-upon-Avon. His father worked with leather goods and eventually became involved in local government, becoming a town councillor and having a coat of arms. While a prominent family, they also probably had Catholic sympathies; this was an important fact, and a potential difficulty in the new Protestant England.

Because his family had some importance in the town, Shakespeare probably attended Stratford Grammar School and later helped in the family leather business. The first real record of William Shakespeare himself is of his marriage to Anne Hathaway when he was eighteen, in 1582. She was eight years older than him and, even more importantly, three months pregnant when they married. They had three children in three years, Susanna and the twins Hamnet and Judith. What happened to them in the next seven years is unknown, but Shakespeare re-surfaces in London in 1592.

In 1592 Shakespeare is described as an ‘upstart Crow’ of an actor by Robert Greene. He also starts to gain some notice as both a performer and a writer, including his play trilogy Henry VI (Parts I, II and III). Between 1592 and
1598 he gained in status as a playwright, while continuing to perform in plays as part of the Lord Chamberlain’s Men. He averaged writing about two full plays a year. In 1599 the Globe Theatre was re-erected and Shakespeare was listed as one of ten ‘housekeepers’, or shareowners. As he was already a shareholder in another theatre, he started to earn a reasonable income on top of the money he made from writing plays and performing. This comparative wealth is reflected in the property he started to purchase back in Stratford-upon-Avon.

Around 1600, having mainly written comedies and history plays, Shakespeare started to write the great tragedies, such as *Julius Caesar* and *Hamlet*. Even the comedies he wrote after this time are so dark that it is hard to realise at times why they are defined as comedies (*Measure for Measure* is one example of his ‘dark’ comedies). It was in 1601 that William Shakespeare’s father died and this may have been one reason for Shakespeare’s change in writing. Another factor may be that Shakespeare wanted to be respected more as a playwright, and tragedies were seen as being more important than comedies (because more serious). However, Shakespeare became even more financially secure when his theatre company became funded by the new King James I (James VI of Scotland), who renamed the company the King’s Men. *Macbeth* (the ‘Scottish play’) was written for the King who had survived an attempted assassination in 1605, an episode that is still remembered nowadays through Guy Fawkes and Bonfire Night.

Around 1608 Shakespeare’s writing again changed direction, and focussed more on romance. He also started to share writing with John Fletcher, with whom it is thought he co-wrote *Henry VIII* and *The Two Noble Kinsman*. By 1611 Shakespeare had returned to Stratford-upon-Avon. While we know little about his final years, we know he was fifty-two when he died in April 1616.

Seven years later, in 1623, the *First Folio* was published. It contained thirty-six plays of Shakespeare, many being published here for the first time. Although there have been many debates about whether Shakespeare actually wrote the plays or not, what is important is that we currently attribute authorship to Shakespeare. Many scholarly texts discuss this topic, and students may wish to research it further.

**Shakespeare’s theatre**

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, one-tenth (or ten percent) of London’s population went to theatre. Performance of plays, known as Public Plaice, took place every day, except for Lent, Sundays and during outbreaks of the Plague!
This large demand meant that there was constant pressure for new work. It also meant that the plays were not usually viewed as great literary works. Indeed, Shakespeare’s plays were never edited, printed or collected until after his death – his scripts were worked on right up until the eve of their performance.

Early players toured the country, performing in market places. This happened so much that in 1572 an Act of Parliament was passed that classed actors as poor beggars unless they could prove noble patronage.

As a consequence, many theatrical companies disappeared. Some actors went to London to play in the yards of the Inns of Court. However, places on the south side of the river were outwith the control of the city officials who didn’t want actors or theatres. So it was in this area that theatre developed again.

In 1576 the first purpose-built theatre was constructed. In 1599, the Globe Theatre was built.

There are a few historical clues to tell us what the theatre buildings were like. They were large wooden constructions, open to the air. In Henry V, Shakespeare describes the theatre as a wooden ‘O’. A surviving copy of a sketch by a visitor gives an insight into its kind of circular construction.

Shakespeare was based at the Globe. Today in London, you can visit a recreation of the Globe Theatre, and it gives you an idea of the size of the theatres in those days, and how plays were put on there.

Evidence shows that Shakespeare may well have been an original member of the company based at the Globe, both as writer and actor.

Performances in Shakespeare’s time only had male actors. Scripts were written as plays were rehearsed, and so the scripts changed. Actors tended to be given their lines only, and there were few stage directions. This is one of the reasons that there are different versions of Shakespeare’s plays now published: actors were so often asked to say their lines again that they had to be written down after Shakespeare’s death. By the time they were finally printed there were several versions.

The playscripts show few stage directions. There were no scene changes, so the action was continuous. There were no elaborate special effects and no painted scenery. Trumpets were blown before a ‘king’ appeared on stage. Drums represented thunder.
Due to this lack of special technical effects, the writers, actors and public had to rely on their imagination! Shakespeare’s plays often relied on the audience using their imagination!

“And let us, on your imaginary forces work.”

“Suppose within the girdle of these walls are now confined two mighty monarchies,
Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts; Into a thousand parts divide one man,”

“Think when we talk of horses, that you see them printing their proud hoofs i’ the receiving earth.”

“For ’tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings, carry them here and there; jumping o’er times, turning the accomplishment of many years into an hour-glass.”

The performances took the whole afternoon – and through these stories, the people escaped the filth of London, escaped from their own everyday troubles . . . and visited far-off countries and lands.

Everyone went to the theatre – no matter their status. Standing admission was 1p, seated admission was 6p.

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Let us take a step back into Shakespearean times.

The world of Shakespearean England was very different from today’s. Think of a place where there are no vans or cars; no postal services, no railways; no televisions, no telephones, definitely no mobile phones. No pre-made breads and food products. No electricity. No gas. No antibiotics. No police. No chocolate.

Let’s visit London in the 1590s . . .

You walk down the street and realise London is a city of loud noises – horses’ hooves and raucous coach wheels on the cobbles, the yells of traders, the brawling of apprentices . . .

The streets are narrow, cobbled and slippery with the slime of refuse. Chamber pots, or ‘jordans’, are emptied out of windows, so you have to watch where you walk. There is no drainage. Most houses have a refuse heap outside the front door.
The place smells. Bathing happens rarely, clothes are seldom cleaned. No wonder everyone seems to be wearing heavy perfume! Getting sick is a bad idea. You’ve just found out that a ‘cure’ for asthma is to drink wine in which woodlice have been seeped!

Nobody drinks water, partially because it is dangerous to drink. Ale is the standard tipple, and it is strong. Ale for breakfast, ale for dinner, ale for supper . . . most people around you seem to be staggering because they’ve been drinking only ale all day.

Look around and you see that the houses are crammed together, and there are a lot of furtive alleys where muggers called swaggerers could easily accost you and rob you of your money; which isn’t a lot. Your pockets are empty, and your friend, who is a servant to a big family, earns only £2 a year!

Punishment for crimes is severe – torture, the rack, beheadings, dismemberment. In 1590, with a population of only 5 million, England had 800 hangings.

Great travellers may be aware of America and the Far East, but there are few of them. The common person doesn’t really travel much further than their own little town. Travel is expensive – and difficult if you aren’t rich. Domestic travel is also exceedingly difficult; in order to travel anywhere you need money and a permit.

You pass a small building and realise it is a school. In general, only boys go to school. A girl’s education is accomplished at home, although it usually includes reading and arithmetic. The school day begins at 7:00am in winter or 6:00am in summer. The school day ends at 5:00 or 5:30pm. There is no standard dictionary – that is 150 years away.

New words were invented all the time, and people spelled words in many different ways. Shakespeare himself signed his name differently at different times. This was a time when words were still being developed – indeed many words that are strange now, were strange then too!

You cross the Thames normally by boat-taxi, and you notice that there are criminals chained to the banks of the river, forced to endure the washings of three tides. As you pass under London Bridge, you spot the freshly-severed heads of criminals.

As peoples’ lives were harsh, they liked to see plays that made other people targets of blame, and allowed the population a bit of escapism.
And so maybe all of this is why Shakespeare wrote about foreign places, and about women dressing as men, and his plays had such a bloodthirsty nature and ‘bawdy’ humour. And it’s why there are so many strange words.

Twelfth Night

Twelfth Night is so named after the last day of the Christmas festivities, when traditionally order and misrule battled it out for control. Like some soap opera, the storyline reflects this. It is more than a story of a boy who falls in love with a girl. A girl falls in love with a girl dressed as a boy. A boy falls in love with a girl dressed as a boy. A girl makes a boy and a girl fall in love with her. As the title suggests by referring to the festivities, the natural order of things is turned on its head. The play was given the clever sub-title of What You Will; this in itself suggests innuendo.

The play was written as a comedy, but like many of his plays it also contained ideas and themes that linked it closely with the society Shakespeare came from. It questions the strict morals of the time and pokes fun at them through Malvolio’s character, as well as generally mocking court life. It portrays women, such as Olivia and Viola, as strong characters, in a world where women were encouraged to be seen as subordinate to men.

The play was probably first written in 1602, when it was first recorded as being performed at the Middle Temple. It was the character of Malvolio that seemed to appeal to the audience more than any other: he was a figure of fun to mock. Twelfth Night’s first appearance in print was as part of the First Folio, in 1623.

Like many of Shakespeare’s plays, its storyline was inspired by many other sources. It is thought that while the story originates from an Italian play called Gl’Ingannati, he knew the story from ‘The tale of Apolonius and Silla’ in Barnabe Riche’s writing Riche Farewell to Militarie Profession. Shakespeare also used as an inspiration his own earlier play The Comedy of Errors, with its confusion of identities and the mistaken requests for money.

Twelfth Night has remained popular throughout the ages for various reasons. It uses puns and witty language. It has a slapstick humour of mistaken identity, something that continues today in popular comedies such as Fawlty Towers, Blackadder and Mrs Doubtfire. Finally, it makes fun of pompous authority figures and it has a happy ending, although for Malvolio it is anything but happy.
The largest area for discussion in recent times has been the idea of mistaken identity and the representation of gender and sexuality. This is an area that all students must consider, remembering that all the Shakespeare roles were originally played by males. Thus Viola was played by a man, acting as a woman, pretending to be a man.

A chronology

Many of the dates shown here are unconfirmed. When plays were written is uncertain, as the dates listed sometimes give the first known performance. Nor are William Shakespeare’s birth and death dates known for sure, just his baptismal and burial dates.

1564 Shakespeare born 23 April, baptised 26 April
1582 Shakespeare marries Anne Hathaway
1583 Daughter, Susanna, is born
1585 The twins, Hamnet and Judith, are born
1580s–1591 Writes Henry VI (Parts I, II and III), and Richard III
1592 An actor in London
1592–1594 Writes The Comedy of Errors, The Taming of the Shrew and Titus Andronicus. He also writes the poem Venus and Adonis.
1594 Works exclusively for the Lord Chamberlain’s Men. He also writes the poem The Rape of Lucrece.
1594–1595 Writes A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Love’s Labours Lost, and The Two Gentlemen of Verona
1595 Writes Romeo and Juliet
1596 His son Hamnet dies
1596–1598 Writes Henry IV (Parts 1 and 2), Henry V, King John, The Merchant of Venice, The Merry Wives of Windsor, and Richard II
1599 Writes Hamlet and Julius Caesar
1600  Writes *Much Ado about Nothing*. First Quarto published

1601  Writes *As You Like It*

1602  Writes *Twelfth Night*

1603  Theatre company named the King’s Men formed. Writes *All’s Well That Ends Well* and *Troilus and Cressida*

1604  Writes *Measure for Measure* and *Othello*

1605  Writes *King Lear*

1606  Writes *Macbeth*

1607  Writes *Anthony and Cleopatra*, *Coriolanus* and *Timon of Athens*

1608–1610  Writes *Pericles* and completes the *Sonnets*

1611  *Cymbeline, A Winter’s Tale* and *The Tempest* written

1612–1615  He co-writes *Henry VIII* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* with John Fletcher

1616  William Shakespeare dies 23 April, buried 26 April.
Section 2

ACT ONE
(pages 5–37)

Why would Act One be important in any production of the play?

Provides context of the play and gives background to the action/storyline
- We learn that Orsino is the Duke of Illyria, a fictitious duchy opposite Italy, in the Balkans.
- We are introduced to the fact that Orsino is in love with Olivia.
- Viola has survived a shipwreck where she believes her twin brother Sebastian is drowned.
- Viola knows of Orsino.
- We meet Sir Toby Belch, uncle to Olivia, and his friend Sir Andrew Aguecheek who also wants to marry Olivia.
- Viola has disguised herself as a man.
- Viola reveals herself to be in love with Orsino, even though she is to be his representative to Olivia to win her heart.
- Olivia is depressed and even her clown cannot cheer her up.
- Malvolio is introduced, and revealed to lack any humour.
- Olivia, on hearing Viola’s words, seems to be falling in love with Viola (whom she believes to be a man).

Begins plot
- Orsino declares his love for Olivia, though he seems to be more in love with the idea of love.
- Viola has been shipwrecked and decides to disguise herself as a man and enter Duke Orsino’s service as she has heard good things of him from her father.
- She believes her brother to have drowned.
- Olivia has no interest in Orsino.
- Sir Toby decides to promote Sir Andrew as a suitor to his niece Olivia.
- The development of closeness and trust between Viola and Orsino is very clearly revealed.
- Viola is sent to woo Olivia on Orsino’s behalf.
- Olivia, believing Viola to be a man, starts to fall in love with Viola.
- Malvolio is introduced and the hints of his own self-love are suggested.
Introduces key characters

• Orsino is established as the Duke of Illyria. While he claims to love Olivia, he does not mention her name until well into his speech. It becomes apparent that Orsino is more in love with the idea of being in love than with Olivia herself. His immediate trust and bond with Viola is also shown, which prepares for the development of their relationship later in the play.

• Viola is introduced as an intelligent and beautiful woman. It is clear that she has fallen in love with Orsino, while mourning the presumed loss of her twin brother. She uses words in a clever way, with lots of puns. This would have appealed to the audience of Shakespeare’s time.

• Olivia is eventually introduced in Scene 5, after being mentioned in the previous three scenes. While others think of her as a recluse, she is shown to be strong willed and clever in her wordplay. She is more complex than others think, possibly using her ‘mourning’ to deter the advances of suitors, such as Orsino. She is also attracted to the intelligence and youthful beauty of Viola, whom she believes to be a man. This also suggests a form of narcissism, which will be developed by many of the characters throughout the play.

• Malvolio is introduced as a person who dislikes fun and laughter, though we are only shown a part of this aspect of him in Act I. He is a cold character.

• Feste, the clown, a contrast to Malvolio, is introduced and the dislike between Feste and Malvolio is introduced.

• We are also introduced to Sir Toby, who carries much of the comic element of the play. He revels in pleasure and self-gratification, and he too is shown to have selfish motives. He reflects the ideas of festive energies.

• Sir Andrew is another comic character, almost the second half of a comic duo with Sir Toby. He is described by Maria as ‘a very fool’, and serves as a figure of fun.

Establishes central themes and issues

• Excess is a theme linked with the title of *Twelfth Night*. The play reflects the idea of passions and excess. In Act I, Olivia is described as having an excess of mourning, while Orsino wishes an excess of music. Orsino seems to love the idea of love to excess. And there is the obvious excess of food and drink that consumes Sir Toby and Sir Andrew.

• Love and self-love is a theme in its own right in *Twelfth Night*. Orsino’s passion for Olivia is more about him being a lover. Malvolio is described as having a self-love and self-importance. Olivia is more concerned with image and beauty than actual love. Her mourning is seen as almost self-obsessed and indulgent.
Why might Act One be important in your production of the play?

• As a director, how will you ensure that your audience understands the background to the play? Are they familiar with the conventions and attitudes of Shakespeare’s time?

• How will your production establish a setting other than the sixteenth or seventeenth century Italy/Balkans where Illyria was thought to be?

• What are your directorial concepts? How will Act I introduce them?

• How do you want your audience to feel towards Orsino? How will this affect the acting of his character?
OVERALL DIRECTORIAL INTERPRETATION AND DRAMATIC COMMENTARY

• How do you want your audience to feel towards Viola? How will this affect the acting of her character?

• How do you want your audience to feel towards Sir Toby and Sir Andrew? How will this affect the acting of their characters?

• How do you want your audience to feel towards Olivia? How will this affect the acting of her character?

• How do you want your audience to feel towards Malvolio? How will this affect the acting of his character?

• What kind of relationship between Orsino and Viola do you want to create?
OVERALL DIRECTORIAL INTERPRETATION AND DRAMATIC COMMENTARY

• What kind of relationship between Sir Toby and Sir Andrew do you want to create?

• What kind of relationship between Olivia and Malvolio do you want to create?

• What kind of relationship between Viola and Olivia do you want to create?

• What attitudes towards Malvolio do you want Feste and Olivia each to show?
ACT TWO
(pages 38–73)

Why would Act Two be important in any production of the play?

Development of plot
• Sebastian is introduced. He is Viola’s twin brother and he also has survived the shipwreck. He decides to go to Orsino’s court.
• His new-found companion is Antonio, who declares that even though he is in an enemy land, he will stay with Antonio as he ‘adores’ him.
• Viola discovers Olivia has fallen in love with her (disguised as Cesario).
• Sir Toby, Sir Andrew and Maria decide to trick Malvolio into thinking Olivia is in love with him. This is after Malvolio threatens them over their drinking and merriment.
• Orsino and Viola discuss love, with Orsino arguing that women cannot love as strongly as men, and Viola (as Cesario) talking of her sister (really herself) having a passionate requited love (for Orsino).
• Malvolio finds a letter written by Maria, and is fooled into believing it is from Olivia. He believes mistakenly that Olivia loves him decides to do all she asks of him in the letter, such as wear yellow garters. Malvolio does not realise that this will make Olivia dislike him even further. Sir Toby, Sir Andrew and Maria all watch this performance with laughter, setting up events for later in the play.

Further illustration of themes and issues
• The theme of love and self-love is further developed. This is done via Feste’s cynical view on love in Act II, scene 3. Malvolio’s self-love is further explored with the comic characters punishing him with a cruel trick. Orsino and Viola discuss the different attitudes to love they both believe that men and women have. In comparison to this the one selfless love of the play that Antonio has for Sebastian is introduced. There is a suggestion that Antonio’s feelings for Sebastian are more than just friendship.
• Gender as a theme is explored though it is always ambiguous. Does Orsino have feelings for a person he believes to be a young boy: Viola? Viola’s own disguise allows her to explore romance and love while not challenging masculinity. There is the question of whether this challenges or actually re-enforces the question of gender. Shakespeare seems, at this
point of the play, to use gender to explore other themes without making any specific explorations of it in itself.

**Development of character and relationships**

- Sebastian is introduced, and the high regard in which he is held by Antonio is evident.
- The comic relationships between Sir Toby, Maria and Sir Andrew are further developed. There are also hints at a future relationship between Sir Toby and Maria.
- Malvolio’s Puritan character is revealed, as is the dislike he is held in by other characters.
- Viola realises that Olivia has feelings for her (as Cesario).
- The feelings of love that Viola has for Orsino are shown, through her story of a fictional sister (who is in reality herself).
- Malvolio’s hidden feelings for Olivia are outwardly shown, though it is Malvolio’s own ego that is flattered rather than true feelings for Olivia, reflecting his own self-love.

**Why might Act Two be important in your production of the play?**

- How does this act develop your overall directorial interpretation?

- How do you want the audience to feel towards Antonio? How will this affect the acting of the character? How will this also affect the acting of the character of Sebastian?
OVERALL DIRECTORIAL INTERPRETATION AND DRAMATIC COMMENTARY

• How do you want the audience to feel towards Malvolio? How will this affect the acting of the character?

• How do you want the audience to feel towards Viola? How will this affect the acting of the character?

• What relationship do you want to create between Sebastian and Antonio? How will this be shown in performance?

• What relationship do you want to create between Orsino and Viola? How will this be shown in performance?

• What relationship do you want to create between Sir Toby and Sir Andrew, and also between Sir Toby and Maria?
OVERALL DIRECTORIAL INTERPRETATION AND DRAMATIC COMMENTARY

• What impression of Malvolio do you wish to show at his reaction to the finding of the letter in Act II, scene 5? How will this be shown in performance?
ACT THREE
(page 74–115)

Why would Act Three be important in any production of the play?

Development of plot
- Feste reveals that he knows more about the situation that others realise.
- Olivia declares her love for Viola (Cesario).
- Sir Toby convinces Sir Andrew to challenge Viola to a duel.
- Antonio follows Sebastian but later gets arrested, accused of theft, when rescuing Viola from a duel with Sir Andrew.
- Antonio believes Viola to be Sebastian, giving Viola hope that her brother Sebastian is still alive.
- Malvolio dresses in cross-gartered yellow stockings, following the letter’s instructions.
- Olivia thinks Malvolio is mad.

Further illustration of themes and issues
- Love is further developed in this Act, in particular through the way language is used to express love. Shakespeare uses a variety of forms through Olivia and Viola’s meetings to reflect love and their feelings.
- The idea of madness and excess is sharply shown through Malvolio’s new appearance. Olivia refers to Malvolio as having a ‘very midsummer madness’. Antonio’s capture reveals his almost excessive love for Sebastian with words such as ‘idol’ and ‘god’ expressing his feelings.
- A side theme that links to excess is that of time. Time is forever running out, with references to the clock ticking and time passing. This has been read as a clear reflection of the title Twelfth Night, when the festivities of Christmas and excess come to an end. It is as if this period of madness and fun must be brought to a conclusion. In addition, the play has been seen as reflecting an end to Shakespeare’s writing of romantic comedies and preparing for his new period of work, the tragedies.
- The role of gender is further explored with Feste’s comments that could be interpreted as knowing who or what Viola really is. Indeed Viola herself makes a vulgar aside that she lacks a ‘little thing’.
Development of character and relationships

- Viola and Olivia’s relationship is at its most intense here, and they will not be seen alone together after this act.
- Viola’s strength of character and mind is shown. She matches Feste in wordplay. She is able to equal and surpass Sir Toby and Sir Andrew in their verbal attacks on her. She also reveals the reason she dressed so similarly to Sebastian, in order to keep his memory alive. She uses puns to suggest to the others that she is not what she seems; and she is able to counter Olivia without hurting her.
- The cruelty of Sir Toby is shown, not only in his encouragement of Malvolio’s mistreatment, but in his attitude to Sir Andrew. He encourages the fight and yet makes it clear that his friendship with Sir Andrew is mercenary.
- Sebastian shows his acceptance of Antonio, even though Antonio is slightly ambiguous about why he is a wanted man in Illyria.
- Antonio shows the depth of care he feels for Sebastian.
- Malvolio’s own sense of self-importance sets him up for the mocking he receives in this act. However while he may be seen as unlikeable, he shows a strength of purpose in how he acts. It is also revealed how much Olivia actually depends on him to run her house.

Why might Act Three be important in your production of the play?

- How does this act develop your overall interpretation of the play?

- How will you build up dramatic tension in the episode? Do you want the audience to find humour in Olivia’s misconceptions about Viola?
OVERALL DIRECTORIAL INTERPRETATION AND DRAMATIC COMMENTARY

• Viola finds herself in this act in a variety of different situations. How do you want Viola to be portrayed in her meetings with Feste, Sir Toby and Sir Andrew, Olivia and Antonio?

• Although Malvolio has appeared as an overbearing person so far, do you want the audience to feel any sympathy for him or not? How will you achieve this?

• What do you want to convey about the relationship between Sebastian and Antonio?

• How will you want Olivia to act towards Viola, and in contrast towards Malvolio?

• How will you show the relationship between Antonio and Viola; and Viola’s reaction to hearing herself called Sebastian?
ACT FOUR
(page 116–130)

Why would Act Four be important in any production of the play?

Development of plot
• Sebastian is mistaken for Viola (Cesario) by Feste, then Sir Andrew and Sir Toby, and finally by Olivia.
• Sebastian beats Sir Andrew in a fight that Sir Andrew starts. Sir Andrew wants Sebastian arrested.
• Olivia takes Sebastian to a priest to be married and Sebastian readily agrees.
• Feste tries to convince Malvolio that he is mad, in a cruel twist to the joke on Malvolio.
• Sir Toby, worried that he has offended his niece Olivia, tells Feste to end the joke.
• Malvolio decides to write a letter to Olivia explaining his behaviour and that he is not mad.

Further illustration of themes and issues
• The idea of excess, and of time ending, is further explored through Sebastian and Olivia’s quick meeting leading to Olivia’s proposal of marriage.
• Madness is referred to a great deal in this act. Sebastian questions if he is mad by so quickly accepting a relationship with Olivia. He also questions if it is she who is mad. Malvolio claims to not be mad, though Feste accuses him of this. With Malvolio, the idea of madness is more than a metaphor; he is pushed close to a breakdown by Feste, revealing the darker side to the comedy in the play.

Development of character and relationships
• Sebastian’s character is further revealed. He is flattered by Olivia and could be seen as too easily agreeing to marriage.
• His need for advice and support from Antonio reveals how isolated both he and his sister Viola are in the play.
• Olivia is seen as almost rash in her actions.
OVERALL DIRECTORIAL INTERPRETATION AND DRAMATIC COMMENTARY

• It is Feste in this act who reveals the cruel streak in his intelligence that has previously not been shown. This is through his treatment of Malvolio, both in disguise and as Sir Topas.
• Malvolio’s strength of character is shown through his refusal to believe the accusations of madness and through his decision to write to Olivia.

Why might Act Four be important in your production of the play?

• How does this act develop your overall directorial interpretation?

• How will you stage the tormenting of Malvolio by Feste?

• How do you want Feste to be portrayed and acted? Do you want him to be seen as cruel, or do you want to show the audience the humour in his actions?

• How do you want Malvolio to be acted? How do you want the audience to feel about him at this point?
• How do you want Sebastian and Olivia to be acted? How do you want the audience to feel about them at this point?
ACT FIVE
(page 131–156)

Why would Act Five be important in any production of the play?

Development of plot
• Antonio is brought to Orsino and revealed to be an enemy of Illyria.
• Viola is accused of betraying Antonio, whom she does not know, and of attacking Sir Toby and Sir Andrew.
• Olivia arrives and claims, with the priest as evidence, that she is married to Viola.
• Orsino, feeling betrayed by Viola, threatens to kill her.
• Sebastian arrives, admits his love for Olivia, and his friendship with Antonio.
• Viola and Sebastian realise they are sister and brother. They are re-united.
• Orsino, having realised what has happened and that Viola has always loved him, asks her to be his mistress, and presumably his wife.
• Sebastian and Olivia have been married
• We discover that Sir Toby has also married Maria.
• Malvolio is brought in and the trick played on him is revealed.
• Malvolio swears revenge.

Further illustration of themes and issues
• The theme of love is most clearly shown through the reunion of the twins, Sebastian and Viola. The idea of them representing a union of souls is also suggested. This seems to be more important than the worldly joining of people in marriage, such as Sebastian and Olivia, Toby and Maria, Orsino and Viola. Love is only mentioned in the marriage of Viola and Orsino. Even then Shakespeare is daring in that Orsino continues to refer to Viola in her male identity as Cesario. To emphasise this, Viola never changes costume out of her male alter-ego, thus leaving a homo-erotic suggestion.

Development of character and relationships
• All the character strands are resolved.
• Orsino and Viola proclaim their affection for each other, as do Olivia and Sebastian.
• Sebastian and Antonio’s friendship is resolved.
• Viola and Sebastian are re-united.
• Malvolio is betrayed by all and swears revenge. This is the only really unresolved element of the play.

Why might Act Five be important in your production of the play?
• How does this act conclude your overall directorial interpretation?

• How do you want Viola’s confusion to be acted? Will it be humorous or serious?

• How do you want Olivia and Orsino to be acted? Will they be shown to be betrayed and angry? How will you show their sudden acceptance of each other?

• How do you want Viola and Sebastian’s relationship to be acted?
OVERALL DIRECTORIAL INTERPRETATION AND DRAMATIC COMMENTARY

• How do you wish to portray Viola and Orsino’s relationship throughout the whole act, and the changes it undergoes?

• How will you show Malvolio’s reaction to the deception he has had?

• How do you want the other characters to treat Malvolio and how will you show this?

• How do you want the audience to feel at the end? What message do you want them to take away?

• How will you interpret the use of songs throughout the whole play?
Section 3

Acting roles

Viola
Viola is often thought of as the emotional heart of the play. Her role is to allow the other characters to escape from the circumstances in which they have been trapped. She herself remains trapped in the role she adopts as Cesario. While she might appear witty and light-hearted, she is a serious character. She moves from playfulness to torment and eventually to farce. There is forever a bitter-sweet edge to her character that is never satisfied. Even though she is finally paired with Orsino her love, and reunited with her brother Sebastian, she seems unable to stop being Cesario; so she remains in costume, a woman seen as a man. She is alone in the play, a go-between for Orsino, always misunderstood. She never even confides in the audience, as she has a lack of asides or soliloquies. She remains hidden and it is only at the end of the play that she is finally given her own name by her brother; but Orsino continues to call her Cesario. This is a rewarding role to play as it is all about disguise; however, it can challenge a performer to bring out a real sense of sympathy for such a closed character.

Olivia
Olivia is almost a balance for Viola. On the surface she moves from mourning through to happiness and marriage. Yet this is counter-balanced in that where Viola is emotional, Olivia is withdrawn. When Viola engages with others, Olivia removes herself. She has a passion in her that is restrained. It is both these similarities and contradictions that give her scenes with Viola an emotional energy. The difficulty for the actor is making her extreme reactions believable in such unbelievable and contrived circumstances. She is a beauty who is adored by all those around her, yet she gets few opportunities to show the qualities that others admire in her.

Orsino
Orsino’s love is self-absorbed. He seems not to know the person he loves and offers clichés and over-romantic ideals. For all that he is a leader, he is easily swayed by Cesario, and it is suggested that it is the feminine boy Cesario that he loves, more than the actual woman that Viola is. The actor playing Orsino has some beautifully poetic speeches. The challenge is to make this character
into more than a metaphor for discussing love and for playing other characters against.

**Malvolio**
Malvolio is the character that audiences have always enjoyed watching. In this comedy, his is the figure we delight in seeing fall, especially as it is through his own arrogance and hypocrisy that this happens. The role is possibly one of the most enjoyable to play, since he is the villain of the piece and yet has some of the most humorous aspects of the play to show off, all the while attempting to retain his dignity. He is the one character who is not educated out of his mistakes but punished; and he finishes the play leaving a darker note on this romantic comedy. The actor must decide on how far to attempt to gain the audience’s sympathy. Is Malvolio a puritan, trying to hinder the enjoyment of others; or does he only try to do his job as the steward of Olivia’s household, which is still meant to be in mourning?

**Sir Toby**
Sir Toby is a character around whom the farcical elements of the play revolve. He represents excess in all its forms. Yet while he is a character who drinks and seeks fun, he is also entirely selfish. He seems to live off his niece, and he encourages the fighting for pure spectacle. He seems to have little care for others and only wishes to stop the maltreatment of Malvolio in case he has offended Olivia too much. The actor must strike a balance between the loud, comic characterisation and the selfish aspects to the character.

**Sir Andrew**
Sir Andrew is the comic partner to Sir Toby. He is continually in the shadow of Sir Toby and Orsino. He is an effeminate man, in contrast to Cesario, the actual feminine man. He is seen as a fool throughout the play, yet there is a suggestion that he has once been loved. The actor’s challenge is make him into more than a device for the other characters to reveal themselves against, and offer the audience a means to engage with him as an individual rather than just as Sir Toby’s foil.

**Feste**
The Clown is the character that leads the audience through the play. He acts in many ways as a Greek Chorus, a commentator on the events as well as a participant in them. The actor in this role must show a great variety of skills. He uses language cleverly to offer truths in the play, is witty and yet there is beauty in the songs he sings. The performer of the role must find the humour and lightness in the character while also being able suddenly to show Feste’s cruelty in the manner in which he baits Malvolio.
Sebastian
Sebastian has limitations to his characterisation as he tends to be used as little more than a plot device. The actor will struggle to find depth in the role, with the scene between Sebastian and Olivia perhaps being the greatest opportunity for this. Sebastian can be seen as having a shallower side than his sister, through the apparent ease with which he decides to accept Olivia’s flattery and offer of marriage.

Maria
Maria is a character who is used by Shakespeare to make a commentary on others around her and to move the plot forward. She has insights into others and it is this aspect, along with her intelligence and scheming in Malvolio’s downfall, that the performer needs to focus on developing.

Antonio
Antonio has an interesting role in that he develops an instant devotion to Sebastian. The actor must decide clearly the relationship Antonio has towards Sebastian. Antonio’s feelings about the country of Illyria and his meeting with Orsino allow for further depths in the character to be shown, as do his unjustified feelings of betrayal by Viola.
Recommended acting pieces

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page reference</th>
<th>11–18 (Act One, Scene 3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening line</td>
<td>‘What a plague means my niece...’ line 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing line</td>
<td>‘...Ha, higher! Ha, ha, excellent!’ line 139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casting</td>
<td>2 male and 1 female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characters</td>
<td>Sir Toby, Maria and Sir Andrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximate length</td>
<td>6 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments</td>
<td>This scene is one of immense physical humour as well as word play. It is key for showing the relationships between the three characters who will be the co-conspirators against Malvolio. It is easy to play the characters as drunken stereotypes. However, comedy is often one of the hardest aspects to play. The status of the relations between the three characters must be clearly shown. This includes Maria as a servant, Sir Andrew’s weakness and Sir Toby’s immaturity and dominance. Consideration must also be given to the tunes of the song.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Page reference</th>
<th>32–37 (Act One, Scene 5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening line</td>
<td>‘The honourable lady of the house...’ line 169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing line</td>
<td>‘What is decreed, must be: and be this so.’ line 215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casting</td>
<td>2 female, plus two supporting roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characters</td>
<td>Viola, Olivia, Maria and Malvolio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximate length</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments</td>
<td>This scene is mainly between Olivia and Viola. It is difficult, as Viola must be convincing as a female pretending successfully to be a man. Olivia must also be convincing in changing from being distant to Viola to becoming smitten with her as Cesario. Olivia must show a wide variety of emotional changes throughout the scene so that the audience can accept her role. While the audience has knowledge of the real identity of Viola and can find humour in the scene, it is important that it accepts the seriousness of the scene as well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page reference:</td>
<td>55–62 (Act Two, Scene 4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opening line:</td>
<td>‘Give me some music.’ line 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing line:</td>
<td>‘My love can give no place, bide no denay.’ line 125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casting:</td>
<td>1 male, 1 female and 2 supporting roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characters:</td>
<td>The Duke, Viola, Curio and Clown (Feste)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximate length:</td>
<td>6 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td>This scene is important as it establishes Viola’s feeling for Orsino clearly, and yet he is oblivious regarding her true identity. It is a scene that is challenging for the performer playing Viola, as the audience must be able to understand the strength of love she has for Orsino and yet sympathise with the irony of her position as Orsino talks of women and Olivia. Orsino must establish his ability to be an authority figure in this scene. The supporting role of Feste is a challenge, in that he has to be convincing as a singer and entertaining in his wordplay.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Page reference:</th>
<th>74–78 (Act Three, Scene 1)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening line:</td>
<td>‘Save thee, friend, and thy music!’ line 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing line:</td>
<td>‘But wise men, folly-fall’n, quite taint their wit.’ line 69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casting:</td>
<td>1 female and 1 male/female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characters:</td>
<td>Viola and Clown (Feste)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximate length:</td>
<td>4 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td>While a shorter scene, this is a very strong scene for Feste and Viola. Feste here is shown to be more than just a comic foil, but almost a commentary for the audience and showing a depth of wisdom as a character. The dialogue must be quick, with timing being the key to a successful performance for both actors. Viola also reveals her own quick wit in this scene and her matching intelligence to Feste must be clearly demonstrated. It is a scene that allows for an interesting balance between the two characters in how they use the performance space.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Page reference: 79–84 (Act Three, Scene 1)
Opening line: ‘My duty, madam, and most humble service.’ line 96
Closing line: ‘That heart which now abhors, to like his love.’ line 166
Casting: 2 female
Characters: Viola and Olivia
Approximate length: 5 minutes
Comments: An outwardly simple scene where the conversation is full of hidden meanings that each character fails to understand. Each character reflects or echoes the other’s speech patterns and a closeness between the two characters is suggested. Viola hides the truth of her character with half-truths that only the audience are fully aware of. This is an intimate scene which will be a challenge to some performers in front of an audience, where the audience has to suspend disbelief to allow it to work.

Page reference: 92–97 (Act Three, Scene 4)
Opening line: ‘I have sent after him, he says he’ll come:’ line 1
Closing line: ‘Well, Jove, not I, is the doer of this, and he is to be thanked.’ line 84
Casting: 1 male, 1 female and two supporting actors
Characters: Olivia, Malvolio, Maria and Servant
Approximate length: 5 minutes
Comments: This is one of the most visually funny scenes in the play. It is important that Malvolio wears the yellow stockings. The actors have to remember that while this scene is very funny, the characters have no realisation of the humour and are serious in their roles. This is a wonderful scene for an actor playing Malvolio to really use his stage presence.
**DIRECTORY OF ACTING PIECES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page reference:</th>
<th>120–128 (Act Four, Scene 2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opening line:</strong></td>
<td>‘Nay, I prithee put on this gown, and this beard;’ line 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Closing line:</strong></td>
<td>‘Adieu, Goodman devil!’ line 132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Casting:</strong></td>
<td>1 male and 1 male/female and two supporting actors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Characters:</strong></td>
<td>Maria, Clown (Feste), Sir Toby and Malvolio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Approximate length:</strong></td>
<td>7 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comments:</strong></td>
<td>This is a difficult scene in that the performers must consider carefully how to stage it. Malvolio is in a darkened room but does not appear at the start of the scene. In particular, the difference in role between Feste and Malvolio allows the actors great scope to show variety in their performances. Again, this is a scene that allows for a great deal of comedy. However, there is a cruelty in Feste’s treatment of Malvolio and a strong performer should be able to reveal this subtlety.</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<th>Page reference:</th>
<th>136–140 (Act Five, Scene 1)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opening line:</strong></td>
<td>‘Here comes the Countess: now heaven walks on earth.’ line 95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Closing line:</strong></td>
<td>‘Hold little faith, thou hast too much fear.’ line 169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Casting:</strong></td>
<td>1 male, 2 females and one supporting actor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Characters:</strong></td>
<td>Duke, Olivia, Viola and Priest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Approximate length:</strong></td>
<td>4 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comments:</strong></td>
<td>The confusions of the whole play build to a climax in this scene. For the actors, their reactions to each other are as important as the lines they speak. Viola’s confusion and fear over how Orsino feels about her after Olivia’s pronouncements are a challenge. It is important that the performers do not descend to simple stereotyping of the characters. However, it is a scene that allows the performers to demonstrate their emotions strongly on stage.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bibliography

Reference texts

There is a plethora of Shakespeare texts available, and every month more are added. I list here only a small selection that I have found useful for myself and students in the teaching of Shakespeare in Drama. There is no particular order of preference as they are listed in alphabetical order by author.

Ackroyd, Peter; *Shakespeare: The Biography*, Chatto and Windus, 2005
Very easy to read, it gives an interesting historical life tale on Shakespeare and his world. It is written in a flowing style and does not attempt to be too literary.

Burgess, Anthony; *Shakespeare*, Jonathan Cape, 1970
A very readable biography that is well researched but not too long in detail.

Clayburn, Anne; *The World of Shakespeare*, Usborne, 1996
A children’s book which is clearly written. It has excellent and useful illustrations and photographs. It is written with a clarity that many ‘adult’ texts fail to achieve.

A good user’s guide to the works of Shakespeare, including modern film and audio adaptations.

Howard, John; *Twelfth Night: Cartoon Shakespeare*, Can of Worms Press, 2005
One in a series of the plays adapted into comic-strip form. Very easy access to the convoluted story, ideal for beginners.

This text gives clarity to the writing style of Shakespeare and explains in detail the meanings that different forms of writing in the plays have for the characters who speak them.
McDonald, Russ; The Bedford Companion to Shakespeare, Bedford, 1996
A book of immense detail, covering the cultural life and literary world of Shakespeare. It contains documentary evidence and all the reference material needed for anyone who wishes to have a deeper understanding of the works of Shakespeare.

Shapiro, James; 1599: A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare, Faber and Faber, 2005
A fantastic telling of the details of London life in one of the most important years in Shakespeare’s lifetime. This is an exciting read as well as being crammed full with insight and understanding. It is very accessible for all readers.

Tillyard, E M W; The Elizabethan World Picture, Chatto and Windus, 1943
While an older text, this gives a context to the attitudes and society of Elizabethan England.

Wells, Stanley; Shakespeare For All Time, Macmillan, 2002
A text that explores the writing, life and lasting effect of Shakespeare. An invaluable reference and resource.

The World Wide Web
One of the dangers of the World Wide Web is that anyone can say whatever they please about anything at all. It is an unregulated mass of opinion, some wonderfully academic and scholarly, some woefully shoddy and infantile.

Websites are endlessly changing addresses, changing names, changing content, or disappearing completely. This is the nature of the internet. This bibliography offers some sites as examples of what existed at the time of going to print (summer of 2006). Offered too is as brief a commentary as possible. Some sites may be unavailable for purely temporary technical reasons. Many sites have a better visual than textual content. Dive in, and ‘surf’ around. There is a lot of waste product but there is also a great deal to admire and enjoy.

Searching for Twelfth Night or William Shakespeare on the web leads you to a lot of sites that have little information, are adverts for videos or DVD sales, book companies, or want to sell essays about English Literature responses.
Often theatre companies have images available from past productions.

It is still of more use to read a good book than make a limited website search. The best reference material of all is of course the work of William Shakespeare himself.

**Twelfth Night: the text**

[http://absoluteshakespeare.com/guides/twelfth_night/twelfth_night.htm](http://absoluteshakespeare.com/guides/twelfth_night/twelfth_night.htm)
An excellent resource. This site looks at all aspects of the play from a literary viewpoint.

[http://www.pathguy.com/12n.htm](http://www.pathguy.com/12n.htm)
An intelligent, Shakespeare fan’s site. This has useful information and even more useful links and pictures. It is from the USA and so has a bias to US productions.

[http://www.william-shakespeare.info/shakespeare-play-twelfth-night.htm](http://www.william-shakespeare.info/shakespeare-play-twelfth-night.htm)
Good general site if fairly basic. It is useful for introducing students to the text.

[http://www.twelfthnightsite.co.uk/](http://www.twelfthnightsite.co.uk/)
A basic education site. It contains quizzes and summaries of the scenes and characters.

[http://www.literature-study-online.com/essays/twelfth-night.html](http://www.literature-study-online.com/essays/twelfth-night.html)
A site analysing the form and structure of the play. It is aimed at a literature-based study of the play.

the website enotes is an online essay site. That said, there is some useful information on the play here.

An excellent site, with particular emphasis on characterisation. It is again aimed at the English literature student.

[http://homepage.ntlworld.com/bradsweb/12night.htm](http://homepage.ntlworld.com/bradsweb/12night.htm)
Student character revision notes.
Twelfth Night: productions

http://www.rsc.org.uk/picturesandexhibitions/action/viewExhibition?exhibitionid=11&sectionid=5
A fantastic series of images from past RSC productions of 
Twelfth Night.

http://www.thestage.co.uk/reviews/review.php/9935/twelfth-night
Review of the Theatre Royal Plymouth production starring Matthew Kelly 
that toured the UK in 2005.

http://www.cam.ac.uk/societies/marlowe/showarchive/twelfthnight/
An interesting site on the production from the Marlowe Society.

http://www.thestage.co.uk/reviews/review.php/9772/twelfth-night
Review of the West Yorkshire Theatre production.

http://www.albemarle-london.com/g-twelfthnight.html

http://www.shakespeares-globe.org/navigation/pdfs/Twelfth%20Night.pdf#search='twelfth%20night%20performances'
Unique documentation of the process of the above Globe production.

http://www.guardian.co.uk/print/0,3858,5003653-110430,00.html
Review of the 2004 Albery Theatre, London production. They transposed the 
play to modern India.

http://www.picks.plus.com/howard/twelfth2.htm
Detailed reviews of the 1966 RSC performance.

Review of the film version of Kenneth Branagh’s original stage performance 
in 1988.
Shakespeare

http://www.bardweb.net/index.html
A simple Shakespeare resource site, with basic information, background and context.

http://www.shakespeare.org.uk/
The website of Shakespeare’s Birthplace Trust.

http://www.shakespeare-online.com/
General Shakespeare information.

http://www.shakespeares-globe.org/
Official site for the Globe Theatre.

http://www.stratford-upon-avon.co.uk/soawshst.htm
The Stratford-upon-Avon site, with some good pictures as well as brief information on the world Shakespeare grew up in.

http://www.william-shakespeare.info/
Excellent general Shakespeare site.

http://shakespeare.about.com/od/funandgames/
A great site with lots of fun and silly Shakespeare activities.