

Shakespeare's Famous Sayings and Phrases



William Shakespeare is certainly considered the greatest playwright of the English-speaking world. His characters and plots are certainly notable, but he also used language in creative and entertaining ways. Many common sayings and phrases used today were written originally by Shakespeare. Below are just a few of these, followed by the Shakespearean play in which they appeared. Write what you think each one means in the space underneath the saying or phrase.

1. "Good riddance" (Troilus and Cressida)
2. "Eaten me out of house and home" (Henry IV Part II)
3. "the green-eyed monster" (Othello)
4. "Kill with kindness" (The Taming of the Shrew)
5. "Neither a borrower nor a lender be" (Hamlet)
6. "Laughing stock" (The Merry Wives of Windsor)
7. "Forever and a day" (As You Like It)
8. "Break the ice" (The Taming of the Shrew)
9. "Wear my heart upon my sleeve" (Othello)
10. "Wild-geese chase" (Romeo and Juliet)

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Student's choice; correct answers should reference the following:

1. "Good riddance" (Troilus and Cressida)

Relieved to have an annoying person or thing gone

2. "Eaten me out of house and home" (Henry IV Part II)

Eating everything in the house

3. "the green-eyed monster" (Othello)

Jealous of someone, or jealousy

4. "Kill with kindness" (The Taming of the Shrew)

Overwhelm with attention that is well-meant, but has the opposite effect

5. "Neither a borrower nor a lender be" (Hamlet)

Don't loan money, and don't borrow money.

6. "Laughing stock" (The Merry Wives of Windsor)

Someone subject to public humiliation or embarrassment

7. "Forever and a day" (As You Like It)

Always or a long time

8. "Break the ice" (The Taming of the Shrew)

End an awkward or quiet situation

9. "Wear my heart upon my sleeve" (Othello)

Display my emotions to the world

10. "Wild-geese chase" (Romeo and Juliet)

To go after something that is impossible; unfruitful pursuit