



# Insults & Exalts

## *A Shakespearean Insult & Compliment Generator*

Shakespeare's characters use some very creative insults! They also say some beautiful things to each other. Use this resource to create fun Shakespeare-inspired insults and compliments.

### Create your own insults

1. Create an insult by choosing one word each from Column 1, 2, and 3.
2. Find someone who's willing to trade playful insults with you.
3. Look that person in the face and, with a sense of power and playfulness, say "You..." and add your three words in the order of their columns. (For example, "You belching, sheep-biting clodpole!")
4. Now switch so that each of you has a chance to hurl and receive an insult.

#### 1

belching  
blasted  
brawling  
cankering  
churlish  
cogging  
cowardly  
crusty  
false  
feigning  
filthy  
foppish  
foul  
grumbling  
insolent  
irksome  
knavish  
pernicious  
rotten  
ruffian  
ruinous  
saucy  
shallow  
soulless

#### 2

abominable  
absolute  
beef-witted  
beetle-headed  
crafty-swearing  
disgraceful  
dissembling  
false-faced  
fell-lurking  
foul-spoken  
hyperbolic  
ill-composed  
injurious  
intolerable  
knotty-pated  
muddy-mettled  
perfidious  
self-endearing  
sheep-biting  
skimble-skamble  
tripe-visaged  
unmeritable  
vile-drawing  
wind-changing

#### 3

adversity  
barnacle  
buzzard  
cacodemon  
canker-blossom  
carbuncle  
cheater  
clodpole  
dishclout  
fantastico  
fool  
fustilarian  
geck  
hedge-pig  
iniquity  
lump  
miscreant  
pickthank  
rampallian  
rudesby  
spider  
thing  
villain  
worm

## Create your own "exalts"

Now that you've had fun creating your own insults, offer an antidote to your insults by creating some compliments (or "exalts," as we like to call them!).

1. Create an "exalt" by choosing one word each from Column 1, Column 2, and Column 3.
2. Find the person you've insulted. If you haven't insulted anyone, find someone who you would like to compliment.
3. Look that person in the face. With a sense of generosity and sincerity, say "You..." and add your three words in the order of their columns. (For example, "You gracious, celestial jewel!")
4. Now switch so each of you gets to give and receive a compliment.

1	2	3
blessed	all-cheering	allurement
brave	angelical	amazement
bright	beauteous	angel
dear	bedazzling	blossom
divine	celestial	cherubin
gallant	courageous	crown o'th'earth
glorious	exalted	darling
graceful	excellent	divinity
gracious	exquisite	enchantment
hopeful	delightful	flower
inspired	majestical	friend
kind	marvelous	heart
perfect	pleasant-spirited	jewel
precious	praise-worthy	marvel
radiant	precious-dear	sweeting
sweet	quick-witted	sweetheart
valiant	sweet-faced	treasure
wise	unmatchable	wonder

## Reflection questions

1. In creating your insults and exalts, what inspired your choice of words? What did you like about them? How many fun combinations can you find?
2. We're playing here, but what would it feel like to really insult someone? How would it feel to be truly insulted? What makes it clear that this is playful and not serious?
3. What did it feel like to exalt someone? How was that different from insulting them?
4. What did it feel like to be exalted? How did it feel different from being insulted?

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Let's give credit where credit is due! This exercise is the brainchild of Jerry Maguire, an English teacher at Center Grove High School in Columbus, Indiana. It was shared at the 1985 Teaching Shakespeare Institute hosted by the Folger Shakespeare Library and was included in the first volume of their series, *Shakespeare Set Free* (Washington Square Press, 1993). This is our variation.

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