

Sheet 7: Understanding Shakespearean Language

Worked example:

Read this line: 'The sun doth smile upon our morning walk.' What does 'doth' mean? A) did, B) does, C) will.

Answer: B) does

• **Read this extract: Pip the caterpillar gazes at the stars. 'O, what light through yonder window breaks? It is the moon, and Nova is the sun.'**

• **In the extract, what does the word 'yonder' suggest about the location of the moon?**

• **Why does Pip compare Nova the owl to the sun in this short poem?**

• **Shakespeare often used metaphors. What is being compared to the sun?**

• **Which word from the extract is an old-fashioned way of saying 'there' or 'over there'?**

light yonder breaks

• **If you were to rewrite 'O, what light through yonder window breaks?' in modern English, what would you say?**

Self-check: Check your answers against the provided answer key to ensure you identified the metaphors and archaic vocabulary correctly.

Ready for next: Once you understand how to translate old-fashioned language into modern meaning, you are ready to explore the complex sentences of a classic Victorian novel.