Investigate!  
*The Winter’s Tale: Act III*  

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**Act III, Scene i:**
- How frequently have the gods (or goddesses, or heaven) been mentioned so far in the play?  
  - Keep a log of references (looking back over the two previous Acts and continuing until the end of the play, including synonymous ideas – e.g. ‘powers divine’ in Act III, scene ii)  
- What is the possible effect of all the references to divine powers on the audience?  
  - How might they affect the audience’s potential view of the universe within which the world of the play operates?

**Act III, Scene ii:**
- Read out loud the speeches of Hermione in this scene  
  - As you do so, assess how Shakespeare creates the sense of unassailable dignity with which he endues the queen.  
- Read out loud the speech of Paulina beginning, ‘What studied torments, tyrant’  
  - What methods does Shakespeare use to create a sense of her outrage and anger?  
- The words of the Oracle of Apollo do not at first change Leontes’ mind  
  - What does?  
  - Why?

**Act III, Scene iii:**
- Re-read Antigonus’ account of his vision of Hermione  
  - Consider the impression this vision and Hermione’s words may have  
    - On an audience seeing the play for the first time, who at this point think she is dead  
    - For an audience who knows the play, and are aware that this is a vision of the living Hermione.  
- The mood changes, and humour is introduced, with the arrival of the shepherds  
  - Examine their speeches to see how Shakespeare makes them comical even when they are discussing the deaths of Antigonus and his party.