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

- **Act IV, Scene i:**
  - The figure of Time is unlike any other character in the play.
    - What might be the effect of this symbolic figure on the audience?
  - How else might Shakespeare have indicated a jump of sixteen years?
  - Consider also *The Tempest*, where events twelve years before are not seen by the audience but are recounted by Prospero to his daughter Miranda.
  - What does Shakespeare gain or lose by deliberately ignoring the classical idea of the Unities?
  - (See © Texts in detail > *The Winter’s Tale* > The structure of the play: The Unities.)

- **Act IV, Scene ii:**
  - What impression of Polixenes, as both a man and a ruler, is given to the audience in this scene, and by what means?

- **Act IV, Scene iii:**
  - Act IV scene iii is the first time we have seen Autolycus.
    - Start a list of his characteristics as they appear in this scene.
    - Go back to this list at the end of the play and ask:
      - Has your view of him changed or been added to in any way?
      - What would the play lose if Autolycus did not feature?
      - Is he just there to advance the plot, or does he add more?

- **Act IV, Scene iv:**
  - This very long scene contains some of the most important ideas of the play. Make notes on:
    - References to sun, heat, warmth, growth
    - Ideas of purity and chastity associated with Perdita and Florizel
    - The contrast between Perdita and Florizel and the other shepherds and shepherdesses
    - References to gods and goddesses
  - What do these add to the scene / the play?