











The Winter's Tale: (e) The significance of the title

 refers to links on www.crossref-it.info

- ❖ **Lesson focus:** To examine how an understanding of the title might affect our reading of the play.
- ❖ **Opening exercise:** Collect any stories known to the students which have 'tale' in their titles.
- ❖ **Discussion ideas:** What might be suggested by the choice of the word 'tale'?
 - Does 'tale' mean anything different to 'story'?
- ❖ What are the connotations of 'winter'?
- ❖ **Textual examination:** Divide the class into five groups, each to research one of the following:
 - The role of Time, and the use of narrators in drama. (See  Synopses > Act IV scene i)
 - The Bear and its effect (See  Synopses > Act III scene iii)
 - Autolycus (See  Characterisation > Autolycus)
 - The Pastoral (See  Themes and significant ideas > The pastoral tradition)
 - References to the theatre and acting in the play (See  Themes and significant ideas > Plays and playing)
- Groups should report back
- Try to draw out how Shakespeare has deliberately fictionalised the play (and why?)
 - Refer to teachers' prompt sheet (e)i to help.
- ❖ Re-read the final scene of the play (which is, after all, a 'performance')
 - Assess it according to the information and ideas students have found in the research exercise. (See  The structure of *The Winter's Tale* > The surprise ending) (Synopses > Act V scene iii)
- ❖ **Recreative task:** Retell *The Winter's Tale* as a children's story, perhaps with some illustrations.
- ❖ A more challenging task is to complete 'Mamillius' Tale' from II.i.
 - This should incorporate some of the themes of the play. (See  Characterisation > Mamillius)
- ❖ **Critical task:** How believable do you find the final scene?
 - How would you stage this scene in order to have an impact on the audience? (See  Synopses > Act V scene iii)
- ❖ **Extension task:** Find reviews of different productions of *The Winter's Tale* and watch filmed versions
 - How has the title of the play been used or interpreted in these performances? (See  The context of *The Winter's Tale* > The theatre > Design of theatres)