

Individual Learning Packet

**Teaching Unit**

**As You Like It**

by William Shakespeare

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Item No. 201349

# As You Like It

## Notes

All references come from the Dover Thrift edition of *As You Like It*, copyright 1998.

*As You Like It* was written around 1599 and, as its title suggests, was meant to be a crowd-pleaser. It belongs to the pastoral literary tradition, in which life at the court is contrasted unfavorably with life in the country. *As You Like It* is known for containing more songs than any other Shakespeare play, for being dialogue-based rather than plot-based, and for Jaques' notorious speech beginning, "All the world's a stage." It is best known, however, for its witty, gender-bending protagonist. Considered one of Shakespeare's most appealing heroines, Rosalind has been portrayed by Katharine Hepburn and Helen Mirren, among others.

Teachers will want to make sure students know that female characters were played by males in Shakespeare's day, as the fact adds a second layer of meaning to many of the play's jokes.

"Jaques" is pronounced "Jayqueeze," a sarcastic affront to French affectation.

# As You Like It

## Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. define pun, allusion, metaphor, simile, irony, and dramatic foil and find examples of each in *As You Like It*.
2. compare and contrast the following:
  - life in the court and life in the forest
  - Rosalind and Celia
  - Jaques and Touchstone
  - the characters that have always lived in the forest and those that are visiting the forest.
3. identify key features of the pastoral genre and explain why *As You Like It* is a pastoral play.
4. discuss the extent to which the play addresses the familiar notion that “the clothes make the man.”
5. identify the different forms romantic love takes in *As You Like It*, as exemplified by the following couples: Rosalind and Orlando, Phebe and Silvius, Celia and Oliver, and Audrey and Touchstone.
6. describe the role of the fool in Shakespeare’s plays as revealed in the character of Touchstone.
7. demonstrate an understanding of Shakespeare’s diction and syntax by translating passages from the play into modern English.
8. identify passages in *As You Like It* in which the fact that female characters were played by males in Shakespeare’s time adds a second layer of meaning.
9. identify the ways in which *As You Like It* both mocks and upholds conventional literary depictions of love and the lover.
10. discuss the significance of Touchstone’s name.
11. discuss the significance of the play’s title.

# As You Like It

## Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. Compare and contrast life in the court with life in the country in *As You Like It*. What are one's "enemies" in each locale? What can be accomplished in one setting that cannot in the other?
2. Which stereotypes about love and lovers does Rosalind challenge? Which, if any, does she uphold?
3. Discuss the extent to which *As You Like It* addresses the familiar idea that "the clothes make the man." Does the play seem to agree or disagree with that notion? Back up your answer with specific details from the text.
4. Discuss the different forms romantic love takes in *As You Like It*, as exemplified by Rosalind and Orlando, Phebe and Silvius, Celia and Oliver, and Audrey and Touchstone. Does Shakespeare seem to favor any one form?
5. As Ganymede, Rosalind has the opportunity to "train" her future lover. What do you think she is trying to teach Orlando? How will her lessons prepare him for married life?
6. Discuss the significance of fatherhood in *As You Like It*. Why do Rosalind and Duke Senior feel predisposed to like Orlando?
7. "All the world's a stage," says Jaques famously. What other characters refer to the concept of living life as "acting in a play"? Using specific examples from the text, discuss the extent to which "acting" helps to bring about the conclusion of *As You Like It*.
8. When held against another object, a "touchstone" can determine whether or not the object is genuine. How does Touchstone the fool live up to his name?
9. Consider the conversation Rosalind and Celia have about Nature and Fortune in Act I, Scene II. What is the difference between Nature and Fortune? Can people have an impact on either? How does this conversation pave the way for the rest of the plot?
10. Before they disguise themselves, which of the cousins seems bolder and wittier, Rosalind or Celia? Back up your choice with specific examples from the text.
11. The question of whether different qualities or characteristics are inherent in males and females remains in debate today. Which side of the argument do you think *As You Like It* takes?

# As You Like It

## Act I, Scene I

1. What privilege has Oliver denied Orlando?

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2. What does Oliver “plentifully” give to Orlando?

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3. Of their father, Orlando says that Oliver is “nearer to his reverence.” Why is Oliver more deserving of respect than Orlando?

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4. After Oliver calls Orlando a villain, Orlando tells him, “thou hast railed on thyself.” In what way has Oliver “railed” on himself?

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5. What is troubling Charles about his impending wrestling match with Orlando?

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6. According to Oliver, how do the local people feel about Orlando?

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**Act III, Scene II**

1. What does Corin tell Touchstone about good manners in the court and in the country?

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2. How does Corin describe the life of a “true labourer” and resident of the forest?

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3. What does Touchstone refer to as “bad fruit”?

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4. When Rosalind learns that Orlando is in the forest and is the author of the love poems, she cries, “Alas the day! what shall I do with my doublet and hose?” What is Rosalind concerned about?

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5. How does Rosalind (as Ganymede) account for her sophisticated accent to Orlando after having claimed to be a native of the forest?

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6. In brief, what sort of appearance does a man in love have, according to Rosalind?

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7. Orlando tells “Ganymede” that he wishes he could make Ganymede believe that he (Orlando) is in love. Ganymede answers, “Me believe it! you may as soon make her that you love believe it.” Why is Ganymede’s statement ironic?

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