“I hate Shakespeare. He’s too difficult to understand”

Yep. He is difficult to understand. That’s why we’re going to learn about a few changes he made, so that you can understand him easier when reading.

Shakespeare wrote in iambic pentameter, which means each line has 10 syllables and every other syllable is accented. To accomplish this, he had to make a few changes to words. He would do things like take out letters, and add an apostrophe. Kids do it all the time when they say, “I’m”. “I’m” is really I am, just shortened.

Write out the full words:

‘cuz won’t haven’t
‘sup dancin’ couldn’t

You’ve got it?

**Try it with some of Shakespeare lines:**

“Look to ‘t, think on ‘t”

“Good gentle youth, tempt not a desp’rate man”

“The dagger has mista’en”

“’Tis he, that villain Romeo”

“Did my heart love till now? Forswear it sight/ For I ne’er saw true beauty till this night?”

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More weird things Shakespeare did:

Shakespeare also switched around word order. Yoda anyone? We put adjectives before nouns, and the subject before the predicate. We say, “Shakespeare can hard to understand” not “Hard to understand Shakespeare can be”

**Rewrite these into normal subject/predicate order:**

“Names must your fear be before banish it you can.”

“Mourn them do not. Miss them do not…the shadow of greed, that is.”

“Blind we are, if creation of this clone army we could not see.”

**Now, rewrite these Shakespeare quotes:**

“Smile the heavens upon this holy act.”

“Because their breath with sweetmeats tainted are”

“And then dream he of cutting foreign throats”

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