

atomy

atomy plural **atomi, atomies** NOUN

tiny being

• (RJ 1.4.57) *Mercutio describes Queen Mab's chariot as being 'Drawn with a team of little atomi'.*

atone VERB

△ *Don't read in the modern meaning of 'make amends for doing something wrong'. In the following situation, Desdemona has done nothing wrong.*

unite—make 'at one'

• (Oth 4.1.228) *Desdemona, talking of the row between Othello and Cassio, says she would 'do much / T'atone them'.*

attach VERB

△ *Don't read the modern meanings of 'joining one thing to something else' or 'being very fond of someone' into these senses.*

1 seize

• (Tem 3.3.5) *Alonso says he suddenly feels tired, 'attach'd with weariness'.*

2 arrest

• (Oth 1.2.77) *Brabantio tells Othello: 'I ... attach thee / For an abuser of the world'.*

attaint NOUN

1 sign of fatigue

• (H5 4.Chorus.39) *The Chorus describes Henry as someone who 'overbears attaint / With cheerful semblance'—hiding his tiredness by appearing to look happy.*

2 condemnation, punishment

• (KL 5.3.84) *Albany arrests Edmund for treason, and also Goneril 'in thy attaint'—punished along with him.*

➤ **unattainted** ADJECTIVE

not emotionally involved

• (RJ 1.2.87) *Benvolio tells Romeo to look at Rosaline 'with unattainted eye' when comparing her to other women.*

attask also spelled **attax** VERB

blame

• (KL 1.4.334) *Goneril accuses her husband of being often 'attax'd for want of wisdom'—badly thought of because he shows a lack of good sense.*

attent ADJECTIVE

attentive

• (Ham 1.2.193) *Horatio tells Hamlet to listen carefully, 'With an attent ear'.*

attribute NOUN

reputation

• (Ham 1.4.22) *Hamlet says that the carousing in the Danish court takes away 'The pith and marrow of our attribute'.*

atwain also spelled **a-twain** ADVERB

in two parts

• (KL 2.2.70) *Kent describes Oswald as one of those rogues who 'Like rats, oft bite the holy cords a-twain'—the special bonds that join people together.*

auger hole also spelled **auger-hole** NOUN

tiny hole made by a carpenter's drill

• (Mac 2.3.118) *Donaldbain tells Malcolm he is worried that their fate, 'hid in an auger hole may rush / And seize us'—treachery could come from out of the smallest place.*

aught NOUN

anything

• (Ham 3.1.96) *Hamlet tells Ophelia: 'I never gave you aught'.*

augur also spelled **augure** NOUN

[pronounced aw-gur]

prophecy

• (Mac 3.4.124) *Macbeth tells his wife that 'augures' can help reveal even the most secret murderer.*

➤ **augurer** NOUN

religious official in ancient Rome who could see into the future and foretell events

• (JC 2.2.37) *Caesar asks his servant: 'What say the augurers?'*

➤ **augury** NOUN

omens (good or bad)

• (Ham 5.2.204) *Hamlet tells Horatio: 'We defy augury'.*

aunchient see **ancient**

aunt NOUN

old woman

• (MND 2.1.51) *Puck tells how he tricks 'The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale'—telling a really serious story.*

👑 *'Aunt' usually has the same meaning as today, but here it refers to a gossiping old woman.*

Aurora NOUN [pronounced aw-roar-a]

in Roman mythology, the goddess of the dawn

• (RJ 1.1.130) *Montague describes the sun drawing 'The shady curtains from Aurora's bed'.*

avaunt INTERJECTION [pronounced a-vawnt]

go away

• (Mac 3.4.93) *Macbeth tells the ghost of Banquo: 'Avaunt and quit my sight!'.*

avouch NOUN

assurance

• (Ham 1.1.60) *Horatio says he would never have believed stories about the Ghost 'Without the sensible and true avouch / Of mine own eyes'.*

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avouch VERB

1 justify

- (Mac 3.1.122) *Macbeth tells the Murderers that he could easily get rid of Banquo 'And bid my will avouch it'—I have the power to do what I like.*

2 declare

- (MND 1.1.106) *Lysander tells Theseus that Demetrius once loved Helena, and will now remind him of it: 'I'll avouch it to his head'—tell it to his face.*

➤ **avouchment** NOUN

confirm (the word here is intended to be the verb 'avouch')

- (H5 4.8.34) *The Welsh captain hopes Henry 'will avouchment that this is the glove of Alençon'—will confirm that this is the glove of the French lord Alençon.*

aye ADVERB

always, ever

- (Ham 3.2.192) *The Player King tells his wife: 'This world is not for aye'—life on earth is not for ever.*

ay me see REGRETTING, p.250

B
b



Burbage

Richard Burbage was Shakespeare's lead tragedian and the first actor to play Richard III, Hamlet, Othello, and King Lear. Richard and Shakespeare may have first met when they were both children. Richard was in Stratford with the theatre company of his father James Burbage, who was also an actor, manager, and pioneering theatre maker.

Bacchanal NOUN [pronounced bak-a-nal]

a follower of the Roman god of wine, Bacchus

- (MND 5.1.48) *Theseus reads out the title of a play: 'The riot of the tipsy Bacchanals'—the rampage of the drunk followers of Bacchus.*

baffle VERB

⚠ *Don't read in the modern meaning of 'puzzle' or 'confuse'.*

treat shamefully

- (TN 5.1.357) *Olivia sympathizes with Malvolio about the way he has been tricked: 'how have they baffled thee!'*

balance NOUN

scales

- (MV 4.1.253) *Shylock asks: 'Are there balance here to weigh / The flesh?'*

baldric or **baldrick** see SWORDS AND

DAGGERS, p.156

ball NOUN

1 golden globe, held in the hand, showing that someone is a monarch

- (Mac 4.1.120) *Macbeth sees apparitions holding 'two-fold balls and treble sceptres'—implying they are shades of future kings.*

👑 *The two balls (or 'orbs') represent the crowns of England and Scotland. 'Macbeth' was written soon after James VI of Scotland was crowned James I of England in 1603.*

2 cannon-ball

- (H5 5.2.17) *Queen Isabel sees friendship in King Henry's eyes rather than 'The fatal balls of murdering basilisks'—balls fired from large cannons (with a nice pun on eyeballs).*

ballow NOUN

cudgel

- (KL 4.6.236) *Edgar dares Oswald to 'try whither your costard or my ballow be the harder'—see if your head is harder than my stick.*