

Teacher's "Humour" Excerpt: *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act 2, Scene 1

CONTEXT: Nym is a loyal friend and servant of a man named Falstaff who is trying to trick some married women (including the wife of Master Page). In this speech to Master Page, Nym decides not to help Falstaff take advantage of these women, and instead reveals Falstaff's mischievous plans.

TASK: As you read Nym's speech, note that "humour" is used in different ways in one brief speech. The definition may be different from what you expect. Read the speech carefully, and do your best to **infer** the meaning of each use of "humour." Fill in synonyms for each use of "humour" in the blanks below.

This may be a challenging task for students. What is most important is that students realize that there is more to "humor" than the definition that is most commonly used today. Students may share their definitions in groups before coming back together as a class to discuss the correct synonyms.

NYM [to Master Page]

And this is true; I like not the **humour**
of lying. He hath wronged me in some **humours**: I
should have borne the **humoured** letter to her; but I
have a sword and it shall bite upon my necessity.
He loves your wife; there's the short and the long.
My name is Corporal Nym; I speak and I avouch; 'tis
true: my name is Nym and Falstaff loves your wife.
Adieu. I love not the **humour** of bread and cheese,
and there's the **humour** of it. Adieu.

Source: <http://etext.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/MobMerr.html>

And this is true; I like not the [characteristic, trait](#)
of lying. He hath wronged me in some [mood, temper](#): I
should have borne the [moody, emotional](#) (This use is more ambiguous than the others. It is
possible that multiple definitions apply here.) letter to her; but I
have a sword and it shall bite upon my necessity.
He loves your wife; there's the short and the long.
My name is Corporal Nym; I speak and I avouch; 'tis
true: my name is Nym and Falstaff loves your wife.
Adieu. I love not the [taste and effect](#) of bread and cheese,
and there's the [essence](#) of it. Adieu.