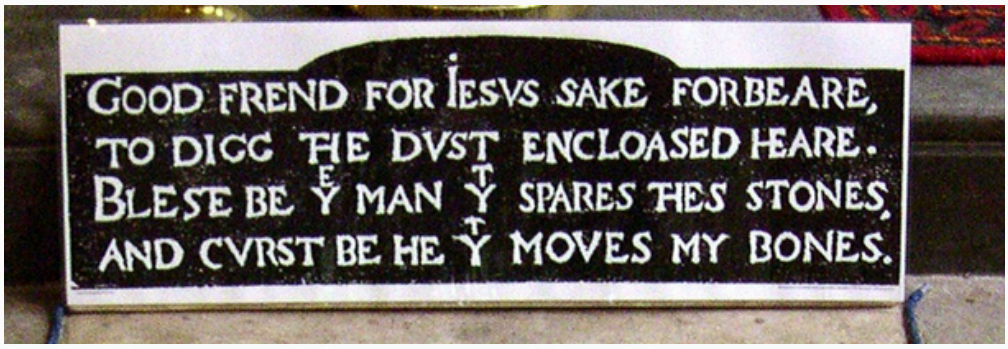
Letter writing

In Shakespeare's time, letter writing held great importance and significance. Being able to write and communicate through letter writing was not something everyone could do. Without telephones, electronic or digital forms of communication, letters were one of the main ways to send messages between people.

In 'Twelfth Night', Maria writes a trick letter to Malvolio which he believes is from his mistress, Olivia. In the play Maria is a servant but she still must have had some form of education as she was able to write and copy Oliva's handwriting.

Letters that have survived through time provide us with written evidence and insight into what life might have been like hundreds of years ago.

The first letter of an important document could sometimes be decorative. They are sometimes known as illuminated letters. In Shakespeare's day, the lowercase letter 'V' was often substituted for the letter 'U'. One example of the substitution of the letter 'U' with a 'V' is on the engraving found on Shakespeare's grave. Can you work out what it says?



William Shakespeare's grave at Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon

Activity

Write your own letter to someone. It could be a trick letter, a love note, or a letter asking someone for help. You could even try writing using the Tudor alphabet on the next page.

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Twelfth Night

English

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