Early Modern English Grammar[©]

❧ The Second Person Familiar

Modern English has dropped a set of pronouns and verbs called the "familiar" or "thee and thou" forms once used among close friends and family and to children, inferiors, animals, and inanimate objects. These old forms did, though, survive into Elizabethan England and appear frequently in Shakespeare. They correspond roughly to the *tu* forms of the Romance languages, the *ty* forms of the Slavic languages, the *su* forms of Greek, and the *kimi* forms of Japanese. Shakespeare will have characters shift from the 'you' to the 'thou' forms with purpose.

	Singular			Plural		
	1st	*2nd*	*3rd*	*1st*	*2nd*	*3rd*
Subject [nominative]	I	**thou**	he/she/it	we	you	they
Object [accusative]	me	**thee**	him/her/it	us	you	them
Possessive adjective [genitive]	my mine*	**thy thine***	his/her/its	our	your	their
Possessive pronoun	mine	**thine**	his/hers/its	ours	yours	theirs

*Substitute forms used before a noun beginning with a vowel

(handwritten) ↳ = singular, lower social status, intimate, God, ghosts, supernatural

❧ Second person familiar verb inflections

Second person singular (familiar): adds the ending **-est**, **-'st**, or **-st**.

Examples: thou giv**est**, thou sing**'st**
irregular example: thou **wilt** hear

Some irregular verbs:

present:	*you*	*are*	*have*	*will*	*can*	*shall*	*do*
	thou	**art**	**hast**	**wilt**	**canst**	**shalt**	**dost**
past:	*you*	*were*	*had*	*would*	*could*	*should*	*did*
	thou	**wast**	**hadst**	**wouldst**	**couldst**	**shouldst**	**didst**

The negative of the second person familiar is formed by adding the word *not* after the verb.

Examples: thou art not, thou canst not, thou couldst not

❧ Third person singular verb inflections

The third person singular often substitutes *-th* for more modern *-s.*

Examples: she giv**eth** (for she gives), it rain**eth** every day (for rains).

(handwritten notes)

• "you" = plural or singular, equal or superior social status

• using "thou, etc." when "you" should be used is seen as an insult

When royalty speaks about themselves:
• we = authoritative ⟩ used to show degrees of legitimacy, show position is threatened,
• I = personal ⟩ claim credit, shift blame/motivation, emotional condition, security in position, etc.