Six quotations

1 Love cools, friendship falls off, brothers divide. (*King Lear*)

2 A friend should bear his friend's infirmities. (*Julius Caesar*)

3 No legacy is so rich as honesty. (*All's Well That Ends Well*)

4 This above all – to thine own self be true. (*Hamlet*)

5 The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves. (*Julius Caesar*)

6 There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so. (*Hamlet*)

Annotation

infirmity – physical or moral weakness

Tasks

1 Monologue

In turn, choose one of the Shakespeare quotations 1–6 and explain it in your own words.
Comment briefly on its message.

2 Dialogue

According to actor and writer Simon Callow, Shakespeare's work teaches "basic life lessons", "empathy and how people function". With a partner, discuss whether you agree with Callow's view. You may refer to Shakespeare's works as well as literature in general.

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1 Monologue

In turn, choose one of the Shakespeare quotations 1–6 and explain it in your own words.
Comment briefly on its message.

Please note: Most of these quotes can be interpreted in different ways. These are possible answers, but not the only solutions.

	Explanation	Comment	
		yes (agree)	no (disagree)
1	**Love cools …** All good relationships will go bad after a while.	Even though you may think a relationship will last forever, so many don't; people and circumstances change and people turn against each other. Just look at typical media reports.	Not always true (too pessimistic). Some relationships remain strong and with luck, a good friend, brother or lover can stay close and never stop supporting you.
2	**A friend should …** You should like and support your friend despite his/her imperfections.	Nobody is perfect and if you want to be called a friend, you should accept your friend's shortcomings/weaknesses.	Actually, if you want to be a true friend, it might be better to point out to your friend that he/she is making a mistake, or could improve something by changing.
3	**No legacy is …** The long-term consequences of honesty are worth more than anything else you could be given.	Being honest with someone means that they can trust you and know where they stand. In the long run it is better to be honest, because lies and deceit make life very complicated and it is painful to discover the truth after having believed lies.	Sometimes being honest can hurt people much more than if you don't tell the (whole) truth. As the proverb says: What the eye doesn't see, the heart doesn't grieve after. Alternatively, maybe the consequences of believing in ideals are better than being depressed by too many negative stories.
4	**This above all …** It is most important to be true to yourself – that could mean to look after your own interests more than others' interests, or to be honest with yourself, or not to allow others to change you.	You should never just follow the herd and do what other people expect you to do if you feel that it is wrong. You should believe in yourself and make sure your interests are protected.	It is very bad for any relationship or any society if everyone is just interested in what is good for themselves.
5	**The fault…** Don't blame fate for what happens to you; something in you/your behaviour up to now is to blame if you are not happy or satisfied.	We should always check whether we are doing/have done something wrong before we blame others, or blame fate.	It is not constructive to always look for faults in yourself to explain things that just happen. We can't change everything by trying to be perfect.
6	**There is nothing …** A situation can always be seen as good or bad; it depends on a person's (optimistic/pessimistic) perspective	It's possible to see something as much worse, or much better, than it really is. It would be better to try and see things neutrally or to see the positive aspects of a difficult situation.	Some situations are bad (or good) however you look at them, whatever you think about them.

2 Dialogue

According to actor and writer Simon Callow, Shakespeare's work teaches "basic life lessons",
"empathy and how people function". With a partner, discuss whether you agree with Callow's view.
You may refer to Shakespeare's works as well as literature in general.

Suggested arguments:

Pro	Con
Shakespeare/literature teaches basic life lessons, empathy and how people function.	Shakespeare/literature is not so important as other methods for teaching basic life lessons like empathy and how people function.
• Literature is a perfect way to get out of the narrow circle of what people know today and to give us a taste of what life is/was like in a completely different time, but at the same time we recognise that the characters' feelings, actions and reactions are surprisingly similar to our own. • Shakespeare's plays often have a moral (e.g. pride comes before a fall; love makes you blind) or touch familiar fears and feelings (e.g. whether you can trust friends; family and generation problems; love in difficult circumstances; ambition; jealousy). We learn from experiencing the consequences of strong feelings, and see what happens to the characters when extreme situations are played out, without having to go through them ourselves. • Shakespeare's plays and characters can be used as models for comparison with situations being experienced today, for a better understanding of motives, causes and effects.	• We can learn more from real social interaction and role play in modern situations than from trying to understand difficult plays from such a long time ago, or artificial situations in novels. • The distance between modern language and actions and those of Shakespeare's time means that today's young people cannot relate easily to the texts and don't make the connection between these and their own lives. • Shakespeare's characters acted differently, according to Elizabethan norms and culture. We have different problems to face today, and different ways of solving them.