Elizabethan society

The humours

Blood
Sanguine

Yellow bile
Choleric

Black bile
Melancholic

Phlegm
Phlegmatic
Humours quiz

What ‘humour’ are you?

• As we go through the quiz, make a note of the answers that best describe you as a person - (a), (b), (c) or (d).

• At the end, you will need to add up how many times you chose each letter.
1. You get up late and someone is hogging the bathroom. Do you:

a. Throw a strop and start yelling and slamming doors?

b. Have a laugh; you wouldn’t let a little thing like this get to you.

c. Don’t know - you’re still in bed. You always sleep in.

d. Sigh dramatically. You always get the worst deal in life.
English coursework is due in again. Are you:

a. Arguing with your teacher about how unreasonable it is to not give you an extension.
b. Laughing at those who haven’t done it.
c. Not bothered. You’ll do it eventually - your teacher can wait.
d. Sulking. Coursework is stupid. Life is stupid.
You walk in late to class. Do you:

a. Slam the door with a stroppy look. It’s not your fault - it’s the bus/day/weather etc.

b. Laugh along with your teacher’s jokes and comments - they always cheer you up.

c. Sit at the back of the class, yawning. It’s too early. You should be back in bed.

d. Sigh. It’s just another example of how hard your life is that you have to put up with this lesson.
Valentine’s day is just around the corner. Are you:

a. Getting annoyed with your girl/boyfriend! You’d better get something nice, or else ...

b. Hoping the one you fancy gets the message ...

c. You can’t be bothered - it’s too much hassle to go all the way to the shops.

d. Fed up. No one ever notices you anyway. You can’t sleep at night and you are off your food though ...
It’s almost the end of term. Are you:

a. Really annoyed - you bet that your teachers have organised loads of coursework again. They’re pure evil!

b. Looking forward to having a great laugh with your friends.

c. Looking forward to a lie-in and lazing around - you hate getting up early.

d. Fed up. You’ve got nothing to do, and you can’t be bothered with all the holiday spirit.
At break times, are you:

a. Having an argument with someone who tried to push in front of you in the queue.

b. Having a laugh with your mates. You really are very funny and amusing.

c. Yawning in a corner somewhere. You were up late last night and early mornings don’t suit you.

d. Spending it crying. You’ve been dumped and it hurts ...
Which animal best sums up your personality?

a. Tiger?
b. Hyena?
c. Slug?
d. Lovebird?
Which statement best sums you up as a person?

a. A feisty person: you are no push over.
b. A happy person: the life and soul of any party!
d. Full of teen angst: no one understands you!
Choose a favourite colour:

a. Red
b. Orange
c. Grey
d. Black
10 What is your favourite type of TV programme?

a. Soaps - especially when the characters are arguing. You love a good row!

b. Comedies - you like a laugh and don’t take life too seriously.

c. Anything that’s on at the time you want to watch.

d. Romantic or tragic stories where you can have a good cry.
Scoring time

• Now add up how many (a), (b), (c) and (d) scores you have.

• Which do you have the most of?
The results!

- Mainly (a) means that you are a **fiery character**. You have an imbalance of *choler* (yellow bile) and are a temperamental type of person. You are of the fire element.

- Mostly (b) means you are *sanguine*, a **jolly** and **lusty character**! You have a blood imbalance and you are of the air element.

- Mostly (c) means you are a **sluggish** / **slow person** with an imbalance of *phlegm*. You are the element of water.

- Mostly (d) means you are a **melancholic**, **sad** and **lovesick person**. You have an imbalance of *melancholy* (black bile). You are of the earth element.
The results!

- If you have an equal mixture of (a), (b), (c) or (d) then you are balanced and have a healthy mix of all the humours!
The humours:

Melancholy

- Element: Earth
- Quality: Cold and dry
- Nature: Melancholic (sad and lovesick)

Phlegm

- Element: Water
- Quality: Cold and moist
- Nature: Phlegmatic (sluggish / slow)
The humours:

Blood

- Element: Air
- Quality: Hot and moist
- Nature: Sanguine (jolly, lusty)

Choler

- Element: Fire
- Quality: Hot and dry,
- Nature: Choleric (angry and temperamental)
The humours in Shakespearean society

- People believed the humours were natural bodily fluids that corresponded to the four elements (air, earth, fire and water) and had various qualities: cold, dry, hot and moist.

- They also believed that if your humours were in balance, you would be healthy. If not, you would be ill.

- Doctors would bleed their patients to restore the balance because blood was considered to have pre-eminence over the other humours.

- When a piece of drama involved characters with extreme emotions - or an imbalance of the humours - it was considered a ‘humorous’ piece.