Shakespeare's Influence

The English language owes a great debt to Shakespeare. He invented over 1700 of our common words by changing nouns into verbs, changing verbs into adjectives, connecting words never before used together, adding prefixes and suffixes, and devising words wholly original. Below is a list of a few of the words Shakespeare coined, hyperlinked to the play and scene from which it comes. When the word appears in multiple plays, the link will take you to the play in which it first appears.

academe	accused	addiction	advertising	amazement
arouse	assassination	backing	bandit	bedroom
beached	besmirch	birthplace	blanket	bloodstained
barefaced	blushing	bet	bump	buzzer
caked	cater	champion	circumstantial	cold-blooded
compromise	courtship	countless	critic	dauntless
dawn	deafening	discontent	dishearten	drugged
dwindle	epileptic	equivocal	elbow	excitement
exposure	eyeball	fashionable	fixture	flawed
frugal	generous	gloomy	gossip	green-eyed
gust	hint	hobnob	hurried	impede
impartial	invulnerable	jaded	label	lackluster
laughable	lonely	lower	luggage	lustrous
madcap	majestic	marketable	metamorphize	mimic
monumental	moonbeam	mountaineer	negotiate	noiseless
obscene	obsequiously	ode	olympian	outbreak
panders	pedant	premeditated	puking	radiance
rant	remorseless	savagery	scuffle	secure
skim milk	submerge	summit	swagger	torture
tranquil	undress	unreal	varied	vaulting
worthless	zany			

If you are looking for more words invented by Shakespeare be sure to read the wonderful book *Coined By Shakespeare* by Jeffrey McQuain and Stanley Mallessone. Each entry in the book comes with a history of the word.

(http://shakespeare.about.com/library/weekly/aa042400a.htm)

As if that were not enough, ask yourself how you could express yourself in normal conversation if Shakespeare had not put the following words together to make the language that you use in almost all the conversations that you have.

barefaced
fancy-free
catch a cold
disgraceful conduct
elbowroom
fair play
green eyed monster
heartsick
hot-blooded
housekeeping
lackluster
leapfrog
long-haired
pitched battle
clothes make the man
method in his madness
to thine own self be true
towering passion
ministering angel
dog will have his day
frailty, thy name is woman
neither a borrower nor a lender be
brevity is the soul of wit
mind's eye
primrose path
flaming youth
it smells to heaven
the lady doth protest too much
witching time of the night
it's Greek to me
live long day
breathe one's last
heart of gold
give the devil his due
too much of a good thing
naked truth
foregone conclusion
break the ice
strange bedfellows
wear one's heart on one's sleeve
all that glitters isn't gold
eat out of house and home
be all and end all
more sinned against than sinning
one fell swoop
the milk of human kindness
the course of true love never did run smooth

(http://www.nosweatshakespeare.com/shakespeare_words_phrases.htm)

Shakespeare also invented many of the most-used expressions in our language. Bernard Levin skillfully summarizes Shakespeare's impact in the following passage from *The Story of English*:

If you cannot understand my argument, and declare "It's Greek to me", you are quoting Shakespeare; if you claim to be more sinned against than sinning, you are quoting Shakespeare; if you recall your salad days, you are quoting Shakespeare; if you act more in sorrow than in anger, if your wish is father to the thought, if your lost property has vanished into thin air, you are quoting Shakespeare; if you have ever refused to budge an inch or suffered from green-eyed jealousy, if you have played fast and loose, if you have been tongue-tied, a tower of strength, hoodwinked or in a pickle, if you have knitted your brows, made a virtue of necessity, insisted on fair play, slept not one wink, stood on ceremony, danced attendance (on your lord and master), laughed yourself into stitches, had short shrift, cold comfort or too much of a good thing, if you have seen better days or lived in a fool's paradise - why, be that as it may, the more fool you, for it is a foregone conclusion that you are (as good luck would have it) quoting Shakespeare; if you think it is early days and clear out bag and baggage, if you think it is high time and that that is the long and short of it, if you believe that the game is up and that truth will out even if it involves your own flesh and blood, if you lie low till the crack of doom because you suspect foul play, if you have your teeth set on edge (at one fell swoop) without rhyme or reason, then - to give the devil his due - if the truth were known (for surely you have a tongue in your head) you are quoting Shakespeare; even if you bid me good riddance and send me packing, if you wish I were dead as a door-nail, if you think I am an eyesore, a laughing stock, the devil incarnate, a stony-hearted villain, bloody-minded or a blinking idiot, then - by Jove! O Lord! Tut, tut! for goodness' sake! what the dickens! but me no buts - it is all one to me, for you are quoting Shakespeare. (Bernard Levin. From *The Story of English*. Robert McCrum, William Cran and Robert MacNeil. Viking: 1986).