



William Shakespeare



Watch the video and do the exercises

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ZeyxM2wzw0>

1. Fill in with the missing words

William Shakespeare was born in 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon, in _____. His father, John, was a glove-maker. His mother, Mary, was a farmer's daughter. He had two older sisters, two younger sisters and three younger brothers. William probably studied _____, Greek and history, and left school when he was 14 or 15.

Three years later he married Anne Hathaway. They had a daughter called Susanna and _____ named Judith and Hamnet. Sometime before _____ he left Stratford and went to London, the capital city of England.

London's first theatre opened in 1576. Shakespeare worked in London as an _____ and then started writing plays, too. In 1593 the plague, a terrible disease, killed thousands of people and theatres were closed. During this time William started to write _____ instead of plays. His short poems are called sonnets.

Shakespeare helped build a new theatre called *The Globe*. It opened in 1599. It was _____ and had space for 3,000 people. At The Globe some people stood in



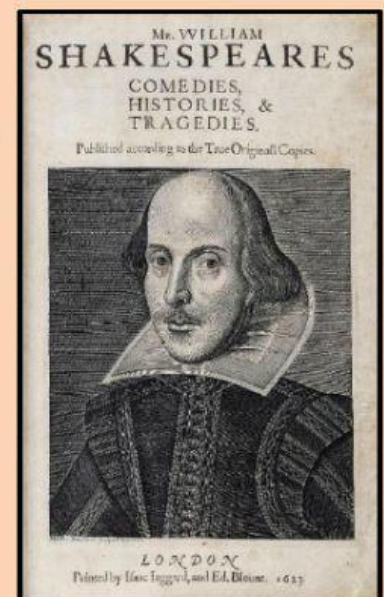
front of the stage and others had seats. The audience shouted, clapped, booed and laughed while they watched plays. Musicians created special _____ to make the plays more exciting and they had a cannon to make big bangs! No _____ acted in Shakespeare's time: men and boys played all the parts.

Shakespeare wrote _____ with happy endings, like A Midsummer Night's Dream. He wrote tragedies which had _____ endings, like Romeo and Juliet. His history plays are about _____ and queens, like Henry V. Shakespeare wrote 38 plays, maybe more.

He loved language and invented _____ words and expressions that we still use today.

William became rich and famous. He had houses in London and in Stratford. He died when he was 52 on 23 April _____.

His plays and poetry were very popular _____ years ago and they are still popular today. People all over the world _____ his work because he wrote wonderful stories about very interesting _____.



Interesting facts about William Shakespeare and his legacy:

- The original Globe Theatre burned down in 1613. It was rebuilt in 1614, but was then closed in 1642. A modern reconstruction of the Globe was built in London by American actor Sam Wanamaker. It opened in 1997.
- He wrote 37 plays in his lifetime averaging about 1.5 plays per year he was writing. Some scholars think that he wrote around 20 more plays that have been lost !
- His plays were performed for both Queen Elizabeth I and King James I.
- You can take the letters from "William Shakespeare" and write "I am a weakish speller."
- Shakespeare is considered by many to be the greatest writer of the English language. He is also one of the most influential. Through his works, he is credited with introducing nearly 3,000 words to the English language, even some bad ones. In addition, his works are the second most often quoted after the Bible.

2. Answer the following quiz

- 1. When was Shakespeare born?** a) 1564 b) 1616 c) 1558 d) 1594
- 2. Where was Shakespeare born?** a) London b) Stratford-upon-Avon c) Bath d) Oxford
- 3. Who did Shakespeare marry?**
a) Judith Chamberlain b) Anne Hathaway c) Susanna Hall d) Elizabeth
- 4. How many children did Shakespeare have?** a) 3 b) 2 c) 13 d) 1
- 5. When was The Globe Theatre built?** a) 1594 b) 1599 c) 1608 d) 1613
- 6. Who was the King in 1603?** a) George III b) James I c) Edward III d) Henry VIII
- 7. What was the name of Shakespeare's group of actors?**
a) The Globe b) King's Men c) Chamberlain's Men d) Earl of Leicester's Men
- 8. When did Shakespeare die?** a) 1599 b) 1616 c) 1623 d) 1642

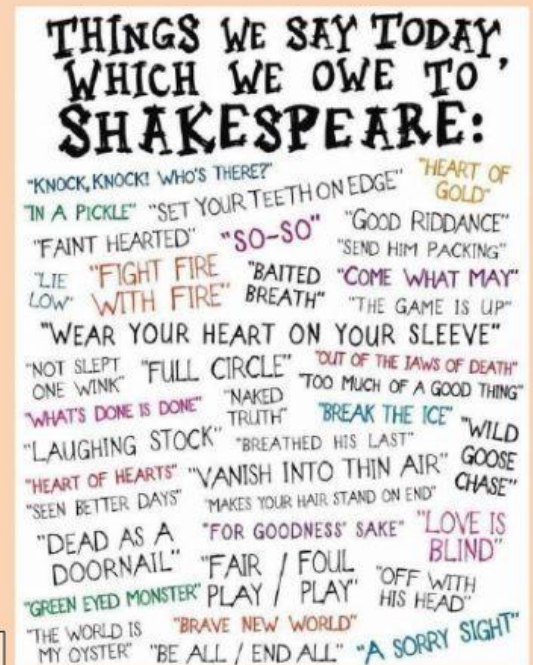


3. Match words and pictures.









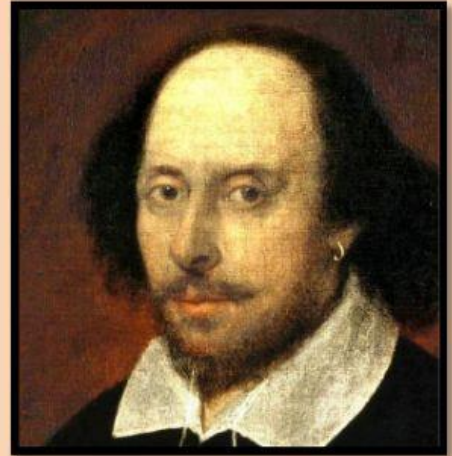
THE GLOBE	QUEEN ELIZABETH I
QUILL PENS	JAMES I
SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTHPLACE	SOME EXPRESSIONS INVENTED BY W.S.



SHAKESPEARE'S WORKS

Shakespeare wrote:

- plays: comedies, tragedies and historical plays
- 154 sonnets
- long poems



PLAYS

Shakespeare wrote at least 37 plays in about 23 years.

The plays are categorized as comedies, tragedies, or histories. Comedies are usually funny and have happy endings. Tragedies are dramatic and end sadly. Histories are fiction based on actual events. Sixteen of Shakespeare's plays are comedies, eleven are tragedies, and ten are histories.

The first collected edition of Shakespeare's plays is called the First Folio. It was published in 1623, seven years after his death, and for 18 of his plays it's our only source – we would have lost half of Shakespeare's works had it not been printed.

It gives us the first and the only verified image of Shakespeare and it's a really important book in that it made Shakespeare last not just in literary and cultural terms but in practical terms – it was a safe way to keep his work in a big, heavy book that doesn't get lost easily. The text was collated by two of Shakespeare's fellow actors and friends, John Heminge and Henry Condell, who edited it and supervised the printing. They divided the plays into comedies, tragedies and histories.

Shakespeare remains vital because his plays present people and situations that we recognize today. His characters have an emotional reality that transcends time, and his plays depict familiar experiences, ranging from family squabbles to falling in love to war. The fact that his plays are performed and adapted around the world underscores the universal appeal of his storytelling.

4. Match name and definitions

Comedies	They are fiction based on actual events.
Tragedies	They are usually funny and have happy endings.
Histories	They are dramatic and end sadly.

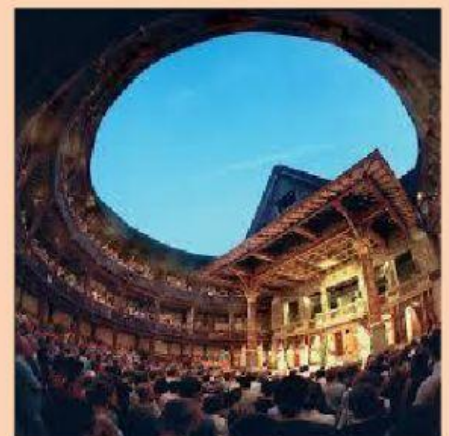
5. True or false ?



- | | | |
|---|------|-------|
| 1. Shakespeare wrote more than 100 sonnets. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 2. Shakespeare wrote less than 30 plays. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 3. The plays are comedies, tragedies and histories. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 4. Comedies are sad. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 5. Tragedies end sadly. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 6. Histories are based on actual events. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 7. Shakespeare wrote 17 comedies. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 8. Shakespeare wrote 10 histories. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 9. Shakespeare published his works in the First Folio. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 10. Today Shakespeare's works are still popular all around the world. | TRUE | FALSE |

6. Here are some of the most famous plays by Shakespeare. Translate the titles in Italian. You can find some help.

[https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/william-shakespeare %28Enciclopedia-dei-ragazzi%29/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/william-shakespeare_%28Enciclopedia-dei-ragazzi%29/)



Henry VIII = _____

The Taming of the Shrew = _____

Romeo and Juliet = _____

Hamlet = _____

The Comedy of Errors = _____

Richard III = _____

Henry VI = _____

Othello = _____

The Tempest = _____

King Lear = _____

Twelfth Night = _____

Macbeth = _____

Anthony and Cleopatra = _____

A Midsummer Night's Dream = _____

The Merchant of Venice = _____

7. Comedy, Tragedy or History ? Organize the plays in ex. 6 in the table below. You can click on the following website for some help.

<https://www.rsc.org.uk/shakespeares-plays/tragedies-comedies-histories>

COMEDY	TRAGEDY	HISTORY

Ex. 8 Can you match the picture to the title of the play?

Hamlet – A Midsummer night's dream – Romeo and Juliet - Macbeth





