

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S BIOGRAPHY.

Shakespeare's early life.

William Shakespeare was born in 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon, a town northwest of London. His father, John, was a leather merchant. His mother, Mary, was a farmer's daughter. He was the third of six children (he had two sisters and three brothers). Shakespeare went to study to the local school, where he learnt about poetry, Latin, Greek and history.

When he was eighteen, he married Anne Hathaway. They had three children, a daughter called Susanna and twins named Hamnet and Judith.



Shakespeare's house in Stratford-upon-Avon

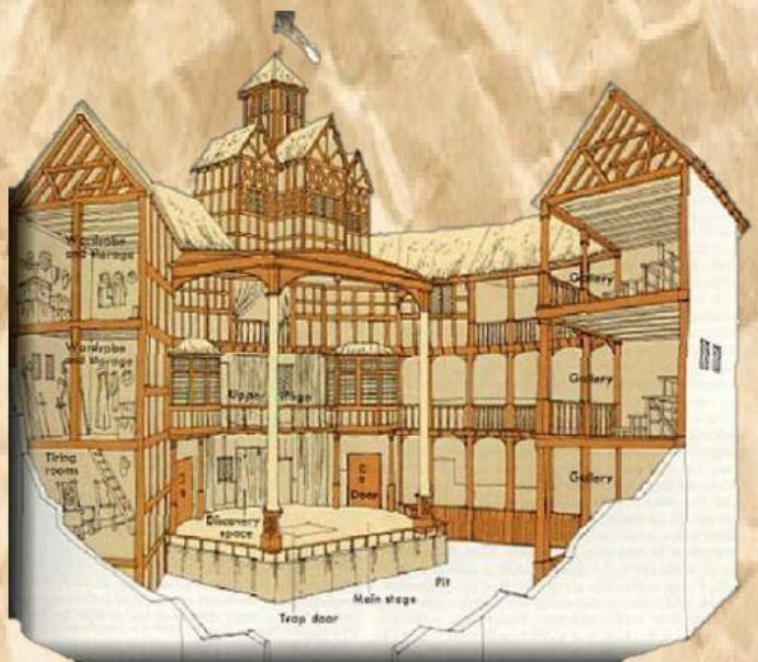


Tower Bridge in London.

Before 1590 he left Stratford and went to London, the capital city of England. There, he worked as an actor in an acting company. These companies were formed by around ten actors, where young boys played women's roles because women couldn't act in plays. He also began to write plays. In 1593 the plague killed thousand of people and theatres were closed, so he started to write sonnets (a kind of short poems).

The Globe.

He helped to build a new theatre called 'The Globe'. This theatre was round and big, where 3000 people could see his plays. Some people stood in front of the stage, and others could sit down. There were musicians to do special noises and even, there was a cannon to make big bangs.



'The Globe'. Shakespeare's theatre.

Shakespeare's plays.

Shakespeare wrote 38 plays, maybe more. He loved language and invented new words.

Shakespeare wrote comedies with happy endings, like "A Midsummer Night's Dream". He wrote tragedies with sad endings, like "Romeo and Juliet", and others are about kings and queens like his famous ones: "Hamlet", "Macbeth" or "King Lear". His plays became the most popular ones in London.

Hamlet.

Hamlet is the Prince of Denmark. He sees his father's ghost that tells him about his own brother Claudio killed him while he was sleeping. As a revenge, Hamlet wants to kill his uncle (the new king).

Hamlet said the famous sentence:

'To be or not to be, that is the question'



Hamlet:
'To be or not to be, that is the question'

'Romeo and Juliet'.



Romeo and Juliet at a balcony.

Many years ago in Verona, Italy, there were two families: the Capulets and the Montagues. These families were always fighting. The Montagues have a son, Romeo. The Capulets have a daughter, Juliet. Romeo met Juliet and they fell in love. They decided to get married, but they knew that their families would be very angry. After some fights, the Prince of Verona exiled Romeo out of the city. Juliet drank a substance-similar to a poison, to pretend to be dead, so she could meet Romeo later. Romeo didn't get the message about the plot, drank a real poison and he died. When Juliet woke up, and knew about the death of her lover, she committed suicide too.

William became rich and famous. He had houses in London and in Stratford. He died when he was 52, on 23rd April 1616. His plays and poetry were very popular 400 years ago, and they are still popular today. People all over the world love his books because he wrote wonderful stories about very interesting people.

1.- Look up these words or expressions on a dictionary:

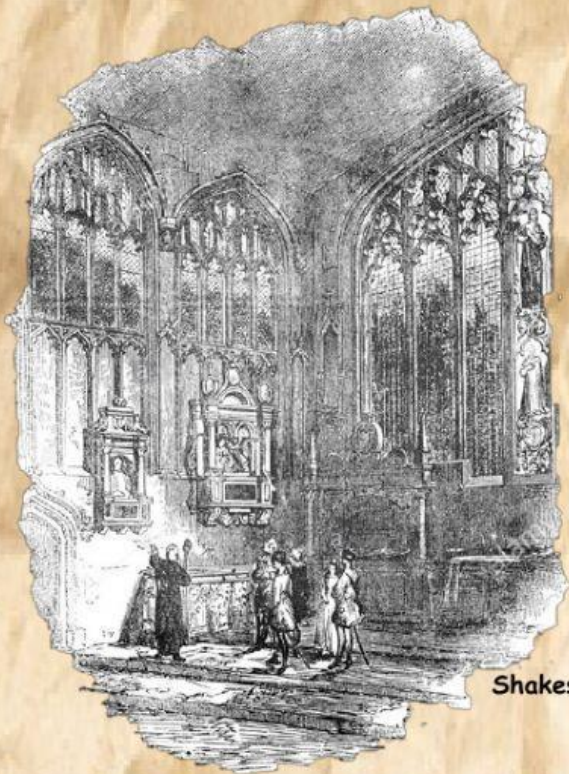
northwest:	leather:	merchant:
local school:	poetry:	twins:
capital city:	acting:	company:
role:	play: <i>obra de teatro</i>	plague:
sonnet:	even:	bang:
cannon:	maybe:	midsummer:
comedy:	tragedy:	ghost:
revenge:	many years ago:	
to fall in love:	to get married:	
fight:	to exile:	to pretend:
to be dead: <i>estar muerto</i>	message:	plot:
poison:	dead:	lover:
to commit suicide: <i>suicidarse</i>		

2.- Answer these questions about the text:

- 1.- When was William Shakespeare born?
- 2.- Where was he born?
- 3.- How many brothers and sisters did he have?
- 4.- Where did he go when he left Stratford?
- 5.- When did the plague get to London?
- 6.- What is a sonnet?
- 7.- How was 'The Globe'?
- 8.- Who did special noises during plays?
- 9.- Write the name of a comedy written by Shakespeare:
- 10.- Write the name of two tragedies:

3.- Fill in the gaps in these sentences:

- 1.- Hamlet is a prince of
- 2.- Hamlet saw his
- 3.- When did Hamlet's aunt kill Hamlet's father?
- 4.- The most famous sentence from Hamlet is:
- 5.- Juliet was from
- 6.- Romeo is a Capulet Montague
- 7.- Juliet is a Capulet Montague
- 8.- Romeo and Juliet
- 9.- Juliet drank a substance similar to a
- 10.- When Romeo thought that Juliet was dead, he
- 11.- William Shakespeare died on
- 12.- Write the name of another famous writer that died the same day
in the same year::



Shakespeare's monument in Stratford Church