

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER

Overview

William Shakespeare (1564-1616) was a British playwright and poet (he wrote plays and poems).

He is often considered to be the most **talented writer** of all time. His plays and poems are still studied and performed 400 years later!

Shakespeare lived in the **16th and 17th centuries**, throughout the reigns of Queen Elizabeth I and King James I. They are both known to have watched his plays.

Some of his most famous plays include **Romeo and Juliet, Macbeth, Hamlet and Much Ado About Nothing.**

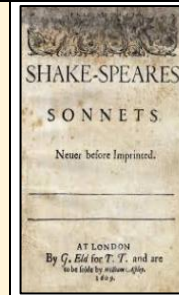
Some of the phrases that Shakespeare wrote have become a part of our **everyday language!**

A portrait thought to be of William Shakespeare, from around 1600.



Answers to Important Questions and Key Vocabulary

What kind of poems did Shakespeare write?



-Shakespeare wrote a type of poem called a sonnet.
-Sonnets are poems of 14 lines, which are normally about love.
Shakespeare wrote a particular type of sonnet, which is now called a Shakespearean Sonnet. There are three stanzas (paragraphs) which each have 4 lines, and rhyme ABAB. After this, there are two final lines that rhyme together (a rhyming couplet).

Key Vocabulary

Playwright
Poet
Actor
Chamberlain's Men

Was Shakespeare popular during his life?



-There is no doubt that Shakespeare was a popular playwright at the time that he was alive – his plays were performed in some of the best spots in central London! However, he has become more and more popular as his works have stood the test of time!

The Globe

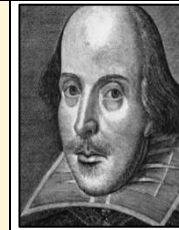
What are Shakespeare's most famous plays?



-Romeo and Juliet is possibly Shakespeare's most famous play. It is a tragedy about two young people who are in love, but their families do not like one another!
-Another famous Shakespeare play is Macbeth, about a soldier (Macbeth) who killed the King so that he could be king himself. Things do not turn out so well for Macbeth!

Sonnet
Comedy
Tragedy
Theatre

What else do we know about Shakespeare?



-Considering that he is now so famous, we know little about William Shakespeare as a person.
-Shakespeare lived a long time ago, when there was no photographs, TV, or social media!
-He was not from a famous family, and so many of his early records either don't exist or have been lost!

Bard
Sonnet
Rhyming Couplet

Times in His Life

Early Life



-Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1564, although we don't know the exact date!

-He was the son of John Shakespeare, who was a successful glover. William was the 3rd of 8 children!

-He is thought to have been educated at King's New School.

Marriage and Move

-At the age of 18, Shakespeare married 26-year-old Anne Hathaway.

-They are known to have had at least 3 children.

At some point around 1592, Shakespeare moved to London and began writing.

Elizabethan Work

-The reign of Queen Elizabeth was a largely happy time in Britain, and this is shown in Shakespeare's works from the time, he wrote lots of comedies.

-His plays began to be performed by his theatre group, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, in 1594. They were known to be popular.

-Shakespeare wrote many sonnets at this time, and Romeo and Juliet in 1595.



Jacobean Work

- After the death of Queen Elizabeth, her relative King James of Scotland came to rule in England. This was a darker time, and Shakespeare wrote more tragedies.

-James became the official patron of The Chamberlain's Men, and so their name was changed to 'The King's Men.' The Globe Theatre had been built at this point, and so most of Shakespeare's plays were performed there – a sign of his popularity.



Top 10 Facts!

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| 1. Shakespeare's three children were called Susanna, Hamnet and Judith. | 6. Shakespeare's first play was called Henry VI. |
| 2. In total, Shakespeare wrote 154 sonnets and around 40 plays. | 7. Another theatre that Shakespeare's plays were performed in was Blackfriars Theatre. |
| 3. He was sometimes called 'The Bard of Avon.' A bard is another word for a poet. | 8. Some of Shakespeare's phrases that are still used today include 'wild goose chase', 'green-eyed monster', and 'neither here nor there.' |
| 4. The Globe Theatre was shaped like an octagon, with eight sides. | 9. A Midsummer Night's Dream is Shakespeare's most performed play. |
| 5. Not many people could read at the time, so Shakespeare hung up coloured flags to let people know the type of play to be performed. | 10. Some believe that Shakespeare never existed, and was a different writer using a pen name. |

William Shakespeare Timeline

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| 1564: Shakespeare is born in Stratford-upon-Avon | 1582: Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway. | 1592: The earliest records of Shakespeare in London. | 1593: Shakespeare's first poems were published. | 1594: Shakespeare's first plays were performed by Lord Chamberlain's men. | 1599: The Globe Theatre was built in London. | 1603: James I became King. Shakespeare's theatre group was renamed the 'King's Men.' | 1609: Shakespeare's sonnets were published. | 1611: He retired back to Stratford-upon-Avon. | 1616: William Shakespeare died. |
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