

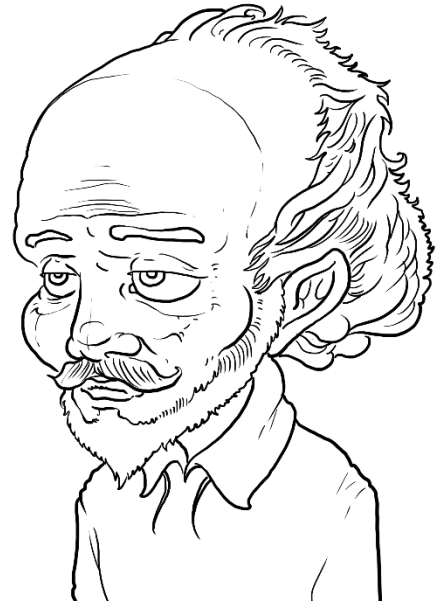
William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare was a very clever writer who wrote plays and poems. He lived hundreds of years ago but people still love and admire his work. Many people think he was the best writer who has ever lived.

His Life

William Shakespeare was born in 1564 and baptised on the 26th of April. His father was called John Shakespeare and he made and sold leather gloves. His mother was called Mary Arden and was the daughter of a rich man. William had two sisters and three brothers. The family lived in a small market town called Stratford-upon-Avon.

William got married aged eighteen to a woman called Anne Hathaway who was eight years older than him. They had three children together; a daughter called Susanna and twins called Judith and Hamnet. Hamnet died when he was only eleven years old.



William Shakespeare

Nobody knows for sure what William did for the seven years after the twins were born. People call these years 'The Lost Years'. But people do know that by 1592 he had gone to live in busy London without his family. He performed as an actor and wrote some plays. He was also paid to write some poems by a rich man called Henry Wriothesley, who was the Earl of Southampton. William helped to lead a group of famous actors called 'The Lord Chamberlain's men'. When James the First became the king of England, they changed their name to 'The King's Men'.

People really enjoyed his plays and even the Queen of England asked to see them! His writing made him rich and he was able to buy a large house called 'New Place' for his family in Stratford. He also had enough money to buy a posh new house in London on a fancy road called 'Silver Street'.

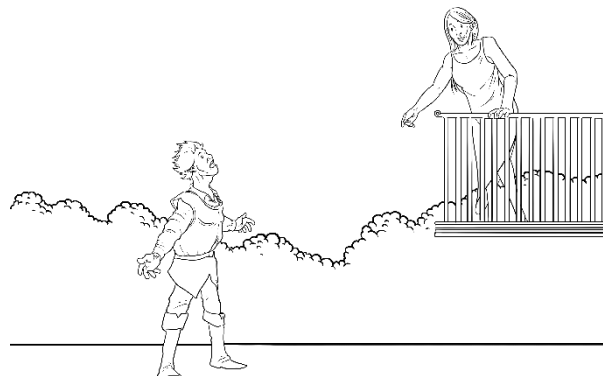
In 1611 William moved back to Stratford and spent the rest of his days there until he died in 1616, aged fifty-two. By the time of his death, he had written thirty-seven plays, 154 short poems and five long poems.

His Plays

Some of William's plays are happy and funny, and are known as 'comedies'. Some of them are sad and violent, and are known as 'tragedies'. Some of them are about events from the past and are called 'histories'.

Here are some of his plays:

The Comedy of Errors – This is a comedy about two pairs of twins who were separated at birth. In the play, they all end up in the same town and get very mixed up! At the end everything is sorted out and everyone is happy.



Romeo and Juliet

Romeo and Juliet – This is a tragedy about Romeo and Juliet, a young man and woman who love each other. But they are not supposed to see or marry each other because their families are fighting. They marry in secret but at the end of the play they both end up dying.

Richard the Third – This is a historical play about a nasty man called Richard who desires to be the king. He makes lots of evil plots and murders many people. At the end of the play there is a huge battle and Richard is killed.

His Words

William invented many new words and was the first person to write down lots of others. It is thought he made up over 1,700 of them! Lots of things we say every day were invented by him. He was very clever with words and people remembered the things he wrote because he was so good at describing life.

Have you ever heard someone say that 'love is blind'? What about a joke which starts 'Knock, knock! Who's there?'. Have you ever heard of someone being sent on a 'wild-geese chase'? If you have, then you have heard some of Shakespeare's writing!

People like what William Shakespeare wrote. He was smart and witty and his stories are powerful. His words have the ability to either make people laugh or make people cry.

Shakespeare Today

William Shakespeare's plays and poems are very popular. People still read and enjoy them today. They are still acted out today and lots of them have been turned into films. His plays are seen all over the world and actors are always thinking of new ways to perform them. In Stratford-upon-Avon, Shakespeare's home town, there is an acting group called 'The Royal Shakespeare Company'. Famous actors and actresses come and perform Shakespeare's plays with them. William is now world famous. Not bad for the son of a glove maker from Stratford!

People like to learn about William Shakespeare's plays and poems. They think about what he wrote and what his stories say about the world and the way people are. People try to find out facts about him and think about his life. Now you can too!

William Shakespeare

Match the information to the place where you find it in the text.

Romeo and Juliet

His Words

words we use were made up by Shakespeare

Shakespeare Today

Shakespeare bought a new house in London

His Plays

Shakespeare's plays have been made into films

His Life

What had happened by 1592?

Find and copy the names of Shakespeare's children.

Was Hamnet a boy or a girl? How do you know?

Which of the three plays would you most like to see? Give a reason for your answer.

Which section was the most interesting? Why?

How old was Anne Hathaway when she got married?

Who is the 'son of a glove maker from Stratford'?

What sort of text have you just read? Tick one.

- A. play
- B. instructions
- C. information
- D. story

Read the last two paragraphs. What do you think the author wanted to achieve by writing this text?

Do you think the author admires Shakespeare's writing? Find and copy a phrase from the text which supports your answer.

Here are four extra pieces of information. Each one would make sense in a different section of the text. Which section would you put each of them in?

- A. Millions of copies of his writings are sold each year around the world in over 100 languages!

- B. Some words from his plays are so famous people know them off by heart, even if they have never seen the play!

- C. William's land ended up earning him sixty pounds per year, which was a lot of money at that time.

- D. Some of the plays are sometimes called 'tragicomedies' because they are both funny and sad.

William Shakespeare

Match the information to the place where you find it in the text.

Romeo and Juliet	His Words
words we use were made up by Shakespeare	Shakespeare Today
Shakespeare bought a new house in London	His Plays
Shakespeare's plays have been made into films	His Life

What had happened by 1592? **Shakespeare had gone to London and was working as an actor and playwright.**

Find and copy the names of Shakespeare's children. **Susanna, Judith and Hamnet**

Was Hamnet a boy or a girl? How do you know? **A boy, because the author says 'he' died aged 11.**

Which of the three plays would you most like to see? Give a reason for your answer.

Various answers; must be justified.

Which section was the most interesting? Why? **Various answers; must be justified.**

How old was Anne Hathaway when she got married? **Twenty-six years old**

Who is the 'son of a glove maker from Stratford'? **William Shakespeare**

What sort of text have you just read? Tick one.

- A. play
- B. instructions
- C. information
- D. story

Read the last two paragraphs. What do you think the author wanted to achieve by writing this text? **The author was hoping to give facts and information about Shakespeare in order to enable and encourage readers to participate in the activities described in the penultimate paragraph.**

Do you think the author admires Shakespeare's writing? Find and copy a phrase from the text which supports your answer. **The author does admire it. Various justifying quotations are possible, but must be positive and relating to Shakespeare's writing or works.**

Here are four extra pieces of information. Each one would make sense in a different section of the text. Which section would you put each of them in?

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- B. Some words from his plays are so famous people know them off by heart, even if they have never seen the play! **His Words**
- C. William's land ended up earning him sixty pounds per year, which was a lot of money at that time. **His Life**
- D. Some of the plays are sometimes called 'tragicomedies' because they are both funny and sad. **His Plays**