

William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

England's genius

1. Shakespeare's life:

he was born in Stratford-Upon-Avon, on 23rd April 1564; his father was a glove-maker, and his mother came from a wealthy country family.

His father was a successful tradesman, but had a period of financial difficulties.



Shakespeare's house at Stratford-upon-Avon

Shakespeare was educated at the local grammar school, from the age of 7 to 13. He studied the classics.



When he was 18 he married Anne Hathaway, eight years older than him, who belonged to a country family, and they had 3 children.

This is her cottage, just outside Stratford:





William Shakespeare

2. Shakespeare's life




- In 1584 he went to London; he was **actor** and **playwright**.
- Between 1592 and 1594 theatres were closed because of the plague. In this period he wrote sonnets; his patron was the Earl of Southampton.
- He became a **shareholder** and the main playwright **of** the most successful company of actors in London, **the Lord Chamberlain's Men**, which later became **The King's Men**
- His company built the **Globe Theatre**.
- He was recognised as a genius in his own time.



William Shakespeare

2. Shakespeare's life

- In 1610 he retired from the theatre.
- In 1613 the Globe theatre burnt down.
- He died in 1616, near his birthday, April 23rd, at the age of 52. He spent the last part of his life in Stratford, and was buried in Holy Trinity Church.
- Seven years after his death some of his friends published the first collection of his plays, called the **First Folio**.



Shakespeare lost much money but was still wealthy; he helped rebuild the Globe theatre.



3. The language genius

- He created →
 - visual worlds for theatre audiences through language;
 - new words and phrases we still use today.
- He employed →
 - irony, imagery, rhythm and other literary devices.



He established
atmosphere, character, and intrigue.



William Shakespeare

4. The historian

(He wrote history plays mainly between 1590 and 1596)

Shakespeare's history plays

1. based on serious records like the Tudors' chronicles, and the civil wars between the Houses of York and Lancaster;
2. gave a portrait of the nation as a whole;
3. were part of a process by which people came to see themselves as belonging to 'England' rather than to families, households or local lords.



William Shakespeare

4. The historian

Shakespeare's history plays are divided into two '**tetralogies**' (= a group of four plays).

1. *Henry VI*, Parts One, Two and Three (1590-1592), and *Richard III* (1592-1593).
2. *Richard II* (1595-1596), *Henry IV*, Parts One and Two (1597-1598), and *Henry V* (1598-1599).



William Shakespeare

5. The comedian

(He wrote many comedies between 1593 and 1600)

- Shakespeare's **comedies** include



- disguise;
- frustrated love;
- mistaken identity;
- marital and romantic misunderstandings.

- They end in **multiple marriages**.
- They trace the passage of young people out of their parents' control and into marriage.



William Shakespeare

5. The comedian

Shakespeare's comedies

1592	<i>The Comedy of Errors; The Two Gentlemen of Verona</i>
1593	<i>Love's Labour's Lost</i>
1593-1594	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>
1595	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>
1596	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>
1598	<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>
1599	<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor; As you like it</i>
1601	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
1602	<i>Troilus and Cressida; All's Well that Ends Well</i>
1604	<i>Measure for Measure</i>
1608	<i>Pericles</i>
1610	<i>Cymbeline</i>
1611	<i>The Winter's Tale; The Tempest</i>



William Shakespeare

6. The tragic playwright

(He wrote the great tragedies between 1595 and 1605)

In Greek and Latin
classical tragedies

In **Shakespeare**

- the **protagonist** acts against inexorable destiny;
- the **action** is limited to one **place** and one **day**;
- the **turning point** is where the goals of the tragic hero seem within reach.

- real balance between fate and human choices, based on characters' flaws.
Human beings in control of their own destiny;
- Shakespeare **freely breaks the rule of place and time unities**;
- at the end the tragic hero is responsible for his own fall, although his plan was noble.
- Shakespeare considered many aspects of human life, but especially the nature of political power and the problems of powerful people.



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6. The tragic playwright

Shakespeare's tragedies

- 1593 *Titus Andronicus*
- 1595 *Romeo and Juliet*
- 1599 *Julius Caesar*
- 1601 *Hamlet*
- 1604 *Othello*
- 1605 *King Lear*
- 1606 *Macbeth*
- 1606 *Antony and Cleopatra*
- 1607 *Timon of Athens*
- 1609 *Coriolanus*

