

SHAKESPEARE IS DEAD



ONLINE RESOURCES

ONLINE RESOURCES SHAKESPEARE IS DEAD © Bell Shakespeare 2022, unless otherwise indicated. Provided all acknowledgements are retained, this material may be used, reproduced, and communicated free of charge for non-commercial educational purposes within Australian and international schools.

BELL
SHAKESPEARE



ABOUT SHAKESPEARE IS DEAD

Shakespeare Is Dead is a play written by Joanna Erskine, that follows a group of teenagers who embark on a journey of asking the ultimate question – Shakespeare is long dead so why are we still performing his plays? It features a smorgasbord of Shakespeare, from romance to tragedies to histories to comedies. Students will be introduced to a host of Shakespeare's characters, explore some of his most iconic scenes, plot devices, language techniques, iambic pentameter and even learn about the world Shakespeare was from. An ideal taster of Shakespeare, a collection of his 'best bits' and a wonderful way to blow all those stereotypical, negative ideas about Shakespeare out of the way before commencing your studies with junior secondary students.

Cover photo © Clare Hawley

FACTS ABOUT WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

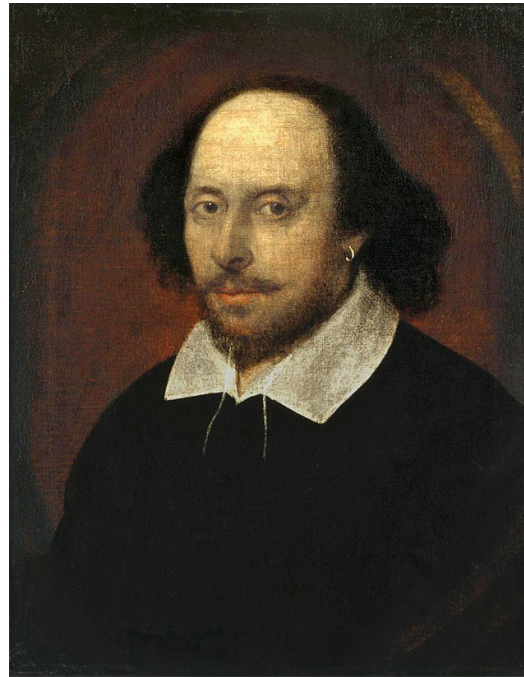
FACTS ABOUT WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Despite his popularity, relatively little is known for certain about William Shakespeare's life. Here are some facts that we do know about him, his plays, the Globe Theatre, his successful decades in London, and the legacy he left behind:

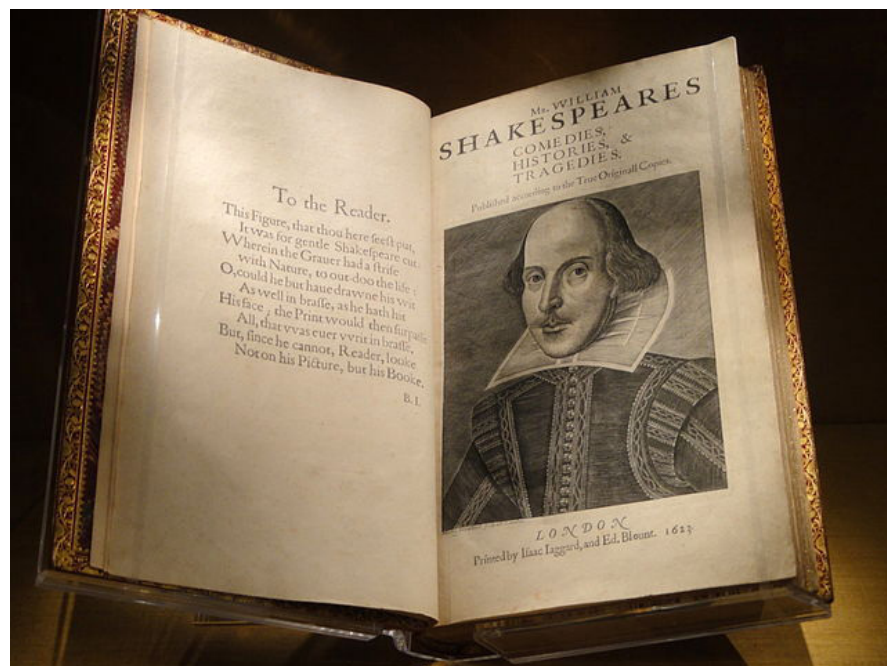
- Shakespeare was from a town called **Stratford-upon-Avon**, in the English countryside. The town was called this because it lies on the banks of the River Avon.
- He was believed to have been born and died on the same date, April 23.
- Shakespeare was baptized on April 26, 1564, three days before an outbreak of the deadly plague.
- He was one of eight children, only five of whom survived into adulthood.
- John Shakespeare, William's dad, had a number of different jobs during his life which included a glovemaker, leather worker, statesman (like a local politician), Mayor of the town, and ale taster!
- John Shakespeare got into trouble with the law four times for trading in wool and money-lending.
- Shakespeare went to school until he was about 15 years old, like many boys in his time. Girls were far less likely to go to school or be educated.
- In 1582, Shakespeare married **Anne Hathaway**. She was eight years older than him.
- Shakespeare had three children with Anne. Susanna, and twins Judith and Hamnet. The twins were named after Shakespeare's neighbours!
- There is no evidence for what Shakespeare did between 1585 and 1592. These are called the 'lost years'.
- Shakespeare is sometimes called 'The **Bard** of Avon' – a bard is another word for a poet.
- Shakespeare wrote **37 plays**.
- He also wrote 154 **sonnets**, which are love poems. Every sonnet has 14 lines.
- Some of Shakespeare's best-known plays are *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*.
- His plays were performed for Queen Elizabeth I and King James 1st
- The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations says that Shakespeare wrote about one-tenth of the most quotable quotations ever written or spoken in English.
- Although Shakespeare is usually considered an **Elizabethan** playwright, much of his greatest work was produced after James I took the throne. So Shakespeare can also be called **Jacobean playwright**.
- By 1597, Shakespeare's company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, leased The Theatre, but the owner wouldn't renew the lease. On December 28 1598, the actors and about a dozen workers pulled the theatre apart and rebuilt it on the other side of the Thames. The new theatre became known as the New Globe.

- **The Globe** burned to the ground in 1613 during a performance of Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*. A real cannon was used for special effects, which set fire to the thatch roof!
- In 1603, Shakespeare's company became the official players for King James I and renamed themselves **The King's Men**.
- In 1608, Shakespeare's company The King's Men opened the Blackfriar's Theatre, the template on which all later indoor theatres are based.
- Shakespeare's stole lots of his ideas from other writers. Many of his plays are based on others' earlier plays, histories, and poems. This was quite common at the time for writers to do!
- In Shakespeare's time, theatres had no lights, no curtains, and used little or no sets and costumes. Playwrights had to describe scenes using words.
- Elizabethan theatregoers in William Shakespeare's time could buy food and fruit to eat during the show. These snacks were sometimes thrown at the actors if people didn't like the show or characters!
- Shakespeare's plays contain the first-ever recordings of 2,035 English words, including such words as bump, bubble, manager, organ, relevant, critical, excellent, assassination, and countless more, including the word **countless!**
- Hundreds of excellent **phrases**, now commonly used by us in our modern speech, occurred first in Shakespeare's plays. These phrases include 'one fell swoop', 'vanish into thin air', 'play fast and loose', 'in a pickle', 'foul play', 'tower of strength', 'flesh and blood', 'cruel to be kind', and 'wild goose chase.'
- In 1616, Shakespeare revised his will. His signatures are shaky, suggesting that he was sick.
- In his will, Shakespeare left his 'second best bed' to his wife, Anne.
- Shakespeare is buried in the Holy Trinity Church in **Stratford-upon-Avon**. The stone over his tomb includes the following inscription, believed to have been written by Shakespeare himself:
*Good friend, for Jesus' sake forebear
To dig the dust enclosed heare;
Blest be the man that spares thes stones,
And curst be he that moves my bones.*
- Shakespeare's plays were published together in 1623 for the first time in one big book called **The First Folio** after Shakespeare had died, by two of his actor friends - John Heminges and Henry Condell. 18 of Shakespeare's plays would otherwise have been lost.
- About 235 of Shakespeare's First Folios still survive today. There is only one copy in Australia, and it is housed at the State Library of NSW.

- Some people claim that Shakespeare did not write his plays. However, there is more evidence that Shakespeare did write his own work than there is that he did not.
- Shakespeare's son, Hamnet, died in 1596. His daughter Susanna died in 1649. His youngest daughter Judith had three children, but all died before their mother and without children. His granddaughter Elizabeth, daughter of Susanna, died childless in 1670 so Shakespeare has no ancestors.



William Shakespeare (detail) c. 1600-1610
associated with John Taylor
oil on canvas
National Portrait Gallery, London.
Given by Francis Egerton,
1st Earl of Ellesmere, 1856
© National Portrait Gallery, London



The First Folio

FACTS ABOUT ELIZABETHAN AND JACOBEOAN ENGLAND

FACTS ABOUT ELIZABETHAN AND JACOBAN ENGLAND

Shakespeare wrote and performed in London during the reign of two different monarchs, Elizabeth I and James I. Here is an insight into the society these leaders created and the world Shakespeare was living in.

- The Elizabethan era was an important moment in English history and is often called '**The Golden Age**'. It saw the country emerge as a great naval and economic power. Sir Francis Drake, one of England's most celebrated sea captains sailed around many parts of the world during this era and sea voyages became the hot topic of society.
- This was an era that saw huge numbers of refugees taking asylum in England (particularly London), due to religious wars all over Europe.
- The population of London grew by 400% in the 1500's, the economy boomed and London became known throughout Europe as a leading hub of art, literature, theatre and culture.
- Death was a cruel and common reality during this era in England. In the second half of the 1500's around 20% of the infant population died every year, and London lost approximately 10% of its population each year to disease.
- **Queen Elizabeth I** is one of the most iconic figures in English history and reigned from 1558 until her death in 1603. She was a very popular queen, was called '**Gloriana**', and brought almost half a century of peace to England. Elizabeth's father was King Henry VIII and her mother was Henry's second wife Anne Boleyn, whose execution was arranged by Henry when Elizabeth was only young.
- One of Elizabeth's crowning achievements was the 1588 defeat of the Spanish Armada, giving her legendary status.
- **Chivalry** was an important part of Elizabethan culture. Elizabeth I gave nicknames to all the handsome men in the court. Her chief minister, Burghley, was called her 'spirit', her friend Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, was her 'eyes' and she cheekily called François, a French Duke, her 'frog'!
- Public image and fashion were held with the utmost importance and gave a clear indication of someone's social position. 'Sumptuary' laws that meant that citizens were fined or even arrested if they wore colours or clothing materials that were above their status.
- Elizabeth I always appeared at court dressed in lavish gowns of rich materials and vivid colours whilst her serving ladies were only allowed to wear black or white. Elizabeth was obsessed with her appearance, and she had an elaborate ritual of dressing. It took her serving ladies four hours a day to dress and undress her. She always wore white-faced makeup which got increasingly thicker as she got older. It was called her '**mask of youth**' and was a mixture of white lead and vinegar that was actually poisonous.

- Certain records say that some of Elizabeth I dresses were so heavy and weighed down with ornaments and jewels that she couldn't even walk in them. Instead she had to be wheeled around the court on a cart by servants.
- However, Elizabeth actually didn't spend as much money on clothes as other Kings did in the past, in fact she spent around five times less than the men did.
- **Social laws were strict** in general. People were fined or even arrested for things such as – not getting permission to have a guest stay at your house, allowing your geese to wander free on the town streets, and not attending church. If you had committed theft or murder and couldn't prove that you were literate, you suffered the death penalty. If you could read and write your life was saved, but they branded you with your crime by burning a 'T' or an 'M' into your skin with a hot iron.
- Entertainment at this time was quite gruesome, **bloodthirsty** and always a spectacle. For instance, some of the most popular events were cockfighting (roosters fighting to the death), bear-baiting (dogs attacking a live bear in a ring), shooting ranges, street archery (lots of civilians were killed by accident when people played this), public hangings, beheadings and fireworks.
- Queen Elizabeth I used to put the **heads of her traitors on spikes** on the **London Bridge** for everyone to see. As this was the main entrance to the city it would have been one of the first things people saw when entering London.
- **St Paul's Cathedral** in the centre of London, which is now a beautiful pristine church and tourist attraction, was then a noisy meeting point of tradesmen, lawyers, drunks, vagrants and people were known to even urinate in the corners of the building.
- When Queen Elizabeth I died in 1603, James 6th of Scotland became King and was known thereafter as **James the 1st of England** (His reign is known as the **Jacobean** era). Both James' parents were assassinated years earlier and he brought a lot of the personal fear and anxiety he suffered into the court.
- James offered patronage and support to the theatre, including to Shakespeare. As a mark of his support, in 1603 Shakespeare's company became known as *The King's Men*. They performed eight plays at court that winter.
- In 1604 James passed the **Vagabond and Witchcraft Act** which meant that many women were accused of witchcraft, hunted down, tried unfairly and burnt at the stake in public.
- In 1605 a group of Jesuit priests attempted to blow up parliament and take James' life. This is known as the **Gunpowder Plot**. It is interesting that Shakespeare performed *Macbeth* the following year, a play that warns of the consequences of murdering a King (and features witches).



Figure 3: Official portrait of Queen Elizabeth I

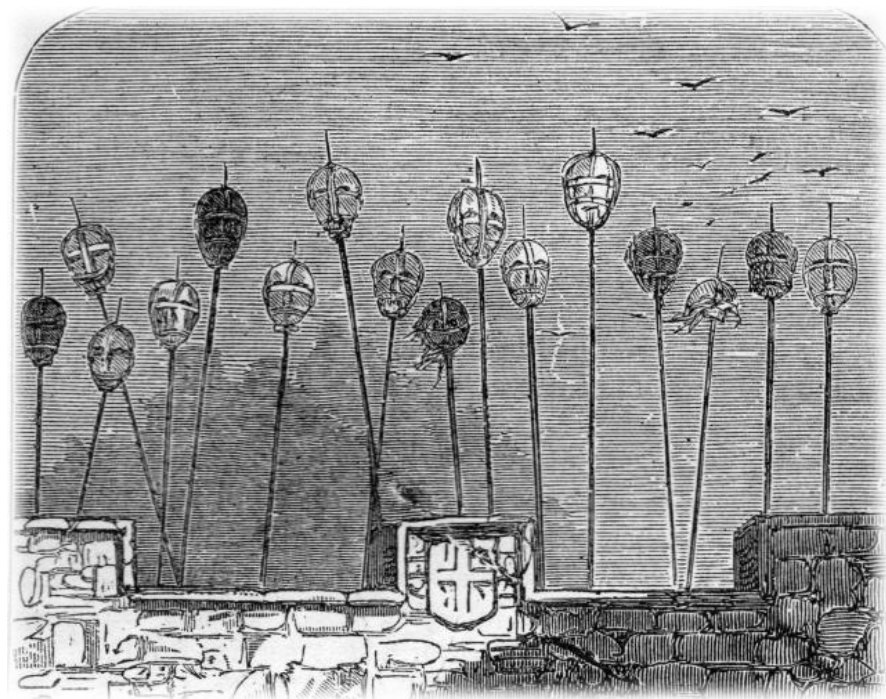


Figure 4: Heads of Elizabeth's traitors on the London Bridge

GENRES OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

Shakespeare wrote many different types of plays, not just in one style. Today we divide theatre and film into many categories, drama, horror, romance, film noir, action, etc. However, Shakespeare's works were originally divided into just three main styles or genres: Comedies, Tragedies and Histories. Shakespeare did not classify his plays in these genres, scholars gave them these labels later on. The wonderful thing about Shakespeare's works is that no play sticks entirely to its genre. Shakespeare fills the comedies with moments of loss, fear, truth and sadness, whilst the tragedies are often splattered with very human moments of mishap and comic relief. Each genre may have a particular way of ending, but each play is a different and complex web of real moments, decisions, consequences, love, hate, fear and more.

COMEDIES

Shakespeare's comedies are often extremely funny stories, involving romances, mistaken identity, magic, love potions, grand adventures, shipwrecks, long lost twins, clowns and comic hijinks. As a device, Shakespeare often has the characters in his comedies travel to new lands and explore distant and mysterious places, away from the structure of city or courtly life. This allows for much play, confusion and personal discovery for the characters. However, some of the stories classed as comedies are quite serious. What they all have in common, is that they all end well (that is, no characters die!), and most end happily. Most comedies end in a wedding or two, or sometimes more! And any characters who tried to derail the happy story, always get their come uppance.

Plays include: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *As You Like It*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Tempest*

TRAGEDIES

Shakespeare's tragedies are often based around a main character, or several characters, who are either faced with external pressures by family or society that they struggle to solve, or, these characters bring about their own downfall due to personal flaws. In other words they have a weakness or fatal flaw, such as pride, jealousy or ambition, that brings about their downfall or death. Tragedies are often epic stories, and can involve romance, war, family disputes, figures from history, kings and queens, power struggles, disillusionment with society, and much more. Tragedies do not end well and often feature death, and lots of it! Interestingly, as a whole Shakespeare's tragedies are often his most famous plays, and regarded as his greatest works.

Plays include: *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Julius Caesar*, *Titus Andronicus* (in every one of these plays, the title characters die!)

HISTORIES

Shakespeare wrote many plays about real people – mostly kings and queens from English History. However, he didn't always stick to the historical facts, and liked to adjust events and characterisations to make a good story. Some people didn't like that he did this. For instance, to this day, people still challenge Shakespeare's villainous portrayal of King Richard III, believing that the play was so powerful it changed this King's legacy to something far more negative than the reality. Shakespeare also wrote about historical figures from Rome and Egypt such as Julius Caesar and Cleopatra, however those plays are classed as tragedies.

Plays include: *Henry V*, *Richard III*, *Henry IV Parts 1 and 2*, *Richard II*, *Henry VI Parts 1-3*.

PROBLEM PLAYS

Some scholars also apply a fourth genre to Shakespeare's plays, the 'Problem Play.' This classification has long been controversial, and scholars do not even agree which plays fit this genre. Generally, it refers to the difficulty classifying some of Shakespeare's plays into a particular category. It can also refer to plays which deal with contentious or social problems, that characters in the play have differing views on. The critic Frederick Samuel Boas was the first to apply this idea to classifying Shakespeare's plays.

Plays include: *The Winter's Tale*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Merchant of Venice*

FEATURED PLAYS IN SHAKESPEARE IS DEAD

Shakespeare is Dead is like a buffet of Shakespeare – there are many plays and quotes hidden within each section that cover all of Shakespeare's genres. Shakespeare wrote 37 plays in total, and although we couldn't cover them all, we've crammed in a lot of them into this show.

Here are outlines of a few you might recognise, and some that you might like to find out more about. Some you will see scenes from, and some you will hear quotes from. How many do you know?

ROMEO AND JULIET

The story: Set in Verona, Italy, two 'star crossed lovers' from enemy families fall in love and marry in secret. After Romeo is banished for the murder of Juliet's cousin, and Juliet's marriage to another man is arranged, the young couple plan to escape Verona with the help of the Friar. When their plans fail, they take their lives, prompting the two enemy families to promise to reconcile.

Important characters: Romeo, Juliet, Mercutio, Tybalt, Nurse, Friar, Lord Capulet, Benvolio, Prince Escalus

Famous line: *O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?*

MACBETH

The story: Macbeth, a general in the Scottish army, is given a prophecy by three witches that he will one day become King of Scotland. With the help of his ambitious wife, he speeds fate and murders King Duncan, becoming King. He instantly regrets his actions, but sets in motion a dark chain of events and more murder. Macbeth is eventually killed by Macduff, and order is returned to Scotland.

Important characters: Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, Macduff, Banquo, King Duncan, Weird Sisters (Witches)

Famous line: *Is this a dagger which I see before me?*

HAMLET

The story: Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark, discovers that his father, the King, has died, and his uncle Claudius has married his mother Gertrude, becoming the new King and Queen. When the ghost of Hamlet's father visits him, the ghost tells him that Claudius murdered him to take the crown. Hamlet sets about a plan for revenge on his uncle and pretends to be mad. However, Hamlet faces many personal and philosophical issues that delay his plan, and he only kills Claudius in the final scene of the play, before he is killed himself.

Important characters: Hamlet, Gertrude, Claudius, Ophelia, Laertes, Polonius

Famous line: *To be or not to be, that is the question.*

HENRY V

The story: This play is part of a series of plays in which Shakespeare wrote about King Henry of England. This particular play follows Henry's successful conquest of France at the Battle of Agincourt. It features some very famous speeches including when Henry rallies his troops for battle, and the prologue performed by the Chorus. Shakespeare shows how Henry has changed from a wild young man in *Henry IV Parts I and II*, to him as a mature man capable of leading his country. After the battle, he woos and marries Princess Katharine of France.

Important characters: Henry V, Gloucester, Bedford, Princess Katharine, Falstaff

Famous line: *Once more unto the breach dear friends, once more.*

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

The story: One of Shakespeare's classic comedies, it follows three interconnecting stories about young lovers, fairies, and a group of mechanicals or tradesman who are amateur actors. The human world and the fairy worlds combine with hilarious and magical results, when a group of people head into the forest one night. Oberon, King of the fairies, and his servant Puck, play tricks on Titania, Queen of the fairies, some unsuspecting young lovers, and Bottom the weaver (a mechanical). After much confusion, all is set right in the end. The pairs of young lovers marry, and Bottom, now reunited with his theatre troupe, performs at the wedding celebration.

Important characters: Titania, Oberon, Hermia, Helena, Demetrius, Lysander, Bottom, Quince, Puck

Famous line: *The course of true love never did run smooth.*

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

The story: Katharina and Bianca are wealthy young women in Padua, Italy. While the younger sister Bianca has many suitors, her older sister Katherina has no intention of marriage. She is considered a 'shrew', because of her headstrong ways and habit of speaking her mind, in a society where women were expected to be quiet and obedient. Their father, Baptista, insists that Bianca cannot marry until Katherina does. Bianca's suitors decide to work together to find Katherina a husband, but only the witty Petruchio is up for the challenge. Petruchio challenges Katherina in many ways and although she is initially resistant, he wins her over and their relationship becomes more unified than others in Padua (although modern studies do question the equality in this relationship).

Important characters: Katherina, Petruchio, Bianca, Lucentio, Baptista Minola

Famous line: *Come on and kiss me, Kate!*

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

The story: Set in Messina, Italy, the story follows two romances in a time of peace. Beatrice and Benedick despise each other, but are made to believe the other feels the opposite through an elaborate plan concocted by their friends, and eventually fall for each other. Hero and Claudio fall for each other immediately, but their wedding is thwarted by the evil Don John. Claudio cruelly rejects Hero at the altar believing her unfaithful, and then Hero and her friends have Claudio believe she has died to enhance his guilt. The play ends happily, Hero is revealed to be alive, and both couples are married. Don John is captured and punished for his actions.

Important characters: Beatrice, Benedick, Hero, Claudio, Leonato, Don Pedro, Don John, Dogberry

Famous line: *I had rather hear my dog bark at a crow, than a man swear he loves me.*

TITUS ANDRONICUS

The story: Titus Andronicus is a general in the Roman army, who enacts revenge on Tamora, the Queen of the Goths, and her sons. When Titus' daughter, Lavinia, is violently attacked by Tamora's sons, he captures the two sons and cooks them into a pie, then invites Tamora to a feast. Once she has eaten the pie, Titus reveals the pie's contents to her horror. The play then ends in more murder and bloodshed, in what is Shakespeare's bloodiest play. It also features Aaron the Moor, one of Shakespeare's most evil villains.

Important characters: Titus Andronicus, Tamora, Lavinia, Saturninus, Aaron, Bassanius, Marcus, Chiron, Demetrius

Famous line: *Hark, villains! I will grind your bones to dust.*

RICHARD III

The story: Set in England, Richard III is brother to the King. He was born with physical deformities, and is mocked by his own family and those around him because of it. The play follows Richard's evil plan to take the crown, murdering almost everyone in his path. Not long after he is King, an army rises up against him, he is killed and order is restored.

Important characters: Richard III, King Edward IV, Duchess of York, Queen Elizabeth, Clarence, Lady Anne, Buckingham

Famous line: *A horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse!*

THE TEMPEST

The story: Prospero, the former Duke of Milan, has been shipwrecked on a remote island with his young daughter Miranda. Sent helpless to sea by his brother Antonio who usurped his position as Duke, Prospero plans to take revenge. Whilst on the island for many years, Prospero becomes a sorcerer with magical powers, and has two servants, Caliban and Ariel. He arranges a huge storm, or tempest, to shipwreck his brother Antonio, the King of Naples, the King's son Ferdinand, and others on the island. A magical mix of romance, wizardry, comedy and drama.

Important characters: Prospero, Miranda, Ariel, Caliban, Ferdinand, Antonio, Alonso

Famous line: *We are such stuff as dreams are made on.*

FROM THE WRITER, JOANNA ERSKINE

So – Shakespeare Is Dead – why did you give the play this title?

I wanted to create a show that was provocative, and that confronted the Shakespeare sceptics head on – adults and students alike! We know students struggle with Shakespeare, and we know every excuse under the sun as to why they protest his plays and language. So we hit them straight up with their own comments, and comments from others in history that have also ‘hated’ Shakespeare. Calling the show *Shakespeare Is Dead* is a bit cheeky, but the last thing we wanted to create it a show that earnestly implores students to love and appreciate Shakespeare. The aim is that we hit them with an unexpected, hilarious, rollercoaster ride of a show and they come to their own conclusion – Shakespeare might be dead but his stories and characters live on.

You cover a lot of elements of Shakespeare’s works in this play? What do you personally like the best... Shakespeare’s language, the romance, the fights, the gruesome deaths, and why?

I’m a sucker for all of it. I love the great romantic scenes as much as I revel in his bloodiest villains. Shakespeare was a writer of extremes – he could capture the best and worst in humanity. That’s why I included as many elements as possible in the play, to show students that there’s something for everyone – from young love to fairies to adventures to cross dressing to bloody battles to existential crises to parental clashes to magic to historical figures to kings and queens to the lowliest clowns and wittiest fools – it’s all in Shakespeare. These days writers tend to have ‘styles’ – Shakespeare was a master of comedy, history, tragedy, romance, war, domestic drama, all.

PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1: PRE-SHOW PREP

Class / Group discussion

Have a discussion with your class or assigned group about the upcoming performance. You may have seen many plays, or never had a live performance experience before, let alone having seen any Shakespeare! Regardless, it's helpful to recap your knowledge, understand your expectations, and discuss with your classmates the kind of material and language you will be experiencing.

As a class discuss the following questions:

1. What do you already know about Shakespeare?

- Do you know any facts about his life?
- Can you list any of his plays?
- Can you quote any famous Shakespeare lines?
- Have you seen any references to Shakespeare in pop culture, songs, TV shows, cartoons, etc?

2. Has anyone seen a Shakespeare play before?

- Where did you see it? What was the venue like?
- What play did you see? What was the story about?
- Did you understand the plot/story?
- Did the actors make Shakespeare's language clear for you?
- What did you like about the play? Anything you didn't like?

3. Has anyone seen a film of Shakespeare before?

- Where was it set?
- Was it traditional or contemporary?
- Did they use the original language or was it modern language?

4. Here is a list of things to look out for in the performance:

- Many of Shakespeare's plays are performed or discussed in this show. Look out for a play that particularly interests you
- Listen for a Shakespeare quote that you recognise
- Listen to the facts about Shakespeare's life and works and remember the fact that surprised you the most
- The actors are going to play many roles. Look out for the theatrical techniques they use to quickly and seamlessly change character

Note: Try and remember plays, historical facts, quotes, ideas or theatrical techniques that you observed whilst watching the performance. You can ask The Players about any of these after the performance in the Q&A session.

ACTIVITY 2: THE LIFE AND WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE – PROLOGUE

Research, Comprehension,
Creative Writing

As a group, or individually, do some background research into Shakespeare's life and the era he lived in. Read 'Facts about William Shakespeare' on page 3 – 6.

1. Gather general information, around the following questions:

- When was William Shakespeare born?
- What country and town did he live in?
- What was the period of history called, that he lived in?
- What was Shakespeare's occupation/s?
- What other occupations existed in the theatre at this time?
- What are five plays that Shakespeare wrote?
- What was the Globe Theatre? How was it different to our theatres today?
- Find three different portraits of William Shakespeare. Which one do you like the best, and why?
- Find images of some of Shakespeare's fellow actors and writers. What do they tell you about the theatre industry at this time?
- Was being an actor or writer a respected profession at this time?
- What was life like for someone living in London at this time?

2. Using the facts, you have gathered above, write a letter, diary entry, or short story about a fictional person working in the theatre in London during Shakespeare's time. The character and story is completely fictional, but must be based on historical evidence from the time. Use the following questions below to guide you:

- What was their role in the theatre?
- Are they successful and well known?
- Was there a particular theatre they worked in?
- Did they know any royalty and perform, write or make costumes for court?
- Where did they live and was it a tough life?
- How did they spend their free time in London?
- Is there an incident at work, or a play they are working on that they want to talk about?

Depending on the style you choose for your creative writing piece, make a conscious choice whether you write in first or third person. Choose a section and read it to the class!

ACTIVITY 3: HOW TO SPEAK SHAKESPEARE

Research, Drama,
Creative Writing

Shakespeare put words together to create a lot of phrases that are still used today and are now considered clichés. You may be aware of some of them, but others may be unfamiliar to you.

1. Research Shakespeare's famous phrases and find a list of the most common ones and their meanings. i.e. **"Break the ice"**: meaning – get to know someone, opening up conversation with a new friend or acquaintance.
2. With your list of phrases and their meanings, get into pairs and improvise a short conversation using the phrases. Take turns at speaking and responding to each other. You **must use one phrase** each time it is your turn to speak. You can include modern speech around the phrase to set the context and make it more conversational.

i.e. Student 1: 'Hey, it's nice to meet you let's **"break the ice"** and have a chat.'
Student 2: 'Oh you're so sweet, you really **"wear your heart on your sleeve."**
3. In your pair, following on from the work you have just done, write a short script with two characters that is ten lines long (five lines for each character). Each line should include a phrase from Shakespeare, and the dialogue should form a logical conversation or argument.

You can even choose a genre and setting for your script to help give yourselves a topic, for instance: romance, gangster film, rom-com, action.

ACTIVITY 4: HOW TO FALL IN LOVE IN SHAKESPEARE

Literacy, Vocabulary,
Creative Writing

Shakespeare's quotes about love are very famous and are still used every day in greeting cards, on posters and t-shirts, in movies, in memes, and more. Some of them you may have heard before and some might be completely new to you.

1. Research and make a list of five different quotes about love from Shakespeare's plays.

- Which play is the quote from?
- Which character is saying it and what does it mean?
- Is there a metaphor or imagery that is being used?

2. Now create or find five modern love quotes or sayings that people use today, or you think people might use. Try and use modern imagery in your sayings. How are they different from Shakespeare's language?

3. Write a scene:

Now use a selection of the quotes and create a modern love story that you might see today in a film. There should be two characters in the short scene and it must have a clear ending. Do they end up together? Or does it end sadly? Use contemporary language along with the quotes to make the scene flow. Use the following questions to guide you:

- Who are the characters in the scene?
- Where is it set?
- What has happened just before this scene? Have they just met, have they been fighting, is it a secret love that has just been revealed?
- What is the main conflict in the scene?
- Is there one particular quote that really shifts the scene, shocks someone, or is a huge discovery?

4. Perform your scene for the class!

- Ask your classmates if they understood what was happening in the scene
- Was there a quote that really stood out for the audience?
- Was it a modern or Shakespearean quote?
- Could they tell which ones were which?

ACTIVITY 5: HOW TO FIGHT IN SHAKESPEARE

Comprehension,
Research and Creative
Thinking

There are many diverse types of fighting in Shakespeare's texts. Sometimes it is comical, or over something trivial, and at other times it could mean the downfall of an entire nation. People could lose their lives, make discoveries, or even just be made a fool of.

1. Research and look through different types of Shakespeare's characters who are famously known to be tough and strong willed, whether on the battle field, in the town square, or just in everyday life.

Here's a list of a few to get you started, either choose one from below or look up your own:

- Macbeth
- Beatrice
- Juliet
- Henry V
- Paulina
- Othello
- Lady Macbeth
- Laertes
- Viola
- Richard III
- Macduff

2. Find a character guide online, or look up quotes from the play to answer the following questions:

- Make a list of all the strong qualities your character possesses
- How are they described by other characters?
- How do they demonstrate these qualities?
- What challenges do they face?
- How do they fight? Is it physical or verbal?
- Do they use any insults?
- What is their language like?
- Do they perform any brave acts?
- Do they inspire others to be strong?
- Do they defend others whilst fighting?

3. Once you have compiled this information about your character, write a short paragraph about them in your own words, ie. a character description from your perspective. Can you relate to them? Do they inspire you? Do they use their strength and power to fight for good or evil? What is their strongest quality?

POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1: FIVE ACT CHALLENGE

Class / Group discussion

Which was your favourite 'Act' section of the performance?

- Act I: How to speak Shakespeare
- Act II: How to fall in love in Shakespeare
- Act III: How to fight in Shakespeare
- Act IV: How to die in Shakespeare
- Act V: How to survive in Shakespeare

Complete each of the five challenges below. There is one from each section. You could even compete with your class and see who finishes first.

Are you **READY** for the **FIVE ACT** challenge? Okay... GO!

1. Act I: How to speak Shakespeare

Write a modern line or sentence that is in perfect iambic pentameter. To give you a clue, remember that each line has **five heartbeats** to it...

da dum da dum da dum da dum da dum...

2. Act II: How to fall in love in Shakespeare

Name one character that falls in love in Shakespeare's plays that was in the performance. How do they fall in love?

3. Act III: How to fight in Shakespeare

Macbeth is a little bit nervous about a certain act he has to carry out. What does he have to do that scares him? He gets so scared that he starts to see things. What object does Macbeth envision floating in front of him?

4. Act IV: How to die in Shakespeare

Titus Andronicus cooks two young men into a pie in Shakespeare's most gruesome play. He then feeds that pie to who? What was their name?

5. Act V: How to survive in Shakespeare

Lots of characters do survive to the end of Shakespeare's plays, but this usually occurs in the comedies. How do Shakespeare's comedies traditionally end? What happy event generally happens?

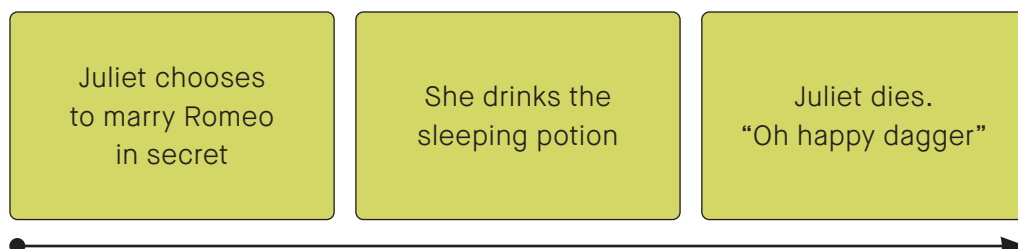
How did you go? Did you manage to answer every question? Who won the race?

ACTIVITY 2: HOW TO DIE IN SHAKESPEARE!

Research, Visual
Comprehension, Analysis
and Critical thinking

A lot of characters die in Shakespeare's plays. Can you remember the number of deaths in total from the performance? Was there one death in the show that you found interesting, disturbing or that stood out for you?

1. Choose one death that you remember from the show. What play was it from? What was the character's name?
2. Look up a synopsis (short description of the story) of the play that this character is from, and make a list of all the things that happen to this character before they die.
3. Now make a visual map or chart and place all the events in this character's journey in chronological order. For example, some moments from Juliet's life might be...



From the evidence on your map:

- What do you think caused the character's downfall?
- What caused the tragedy, was it their fault or was it someone else's?
- Do you think they deserved their fate? Why/why not?
- Do you think it could have been avoided?

ACTIVITY 3: HOW TO SURVIVE IN SHAKESPEARE

Group Work, Research,
Creative Thinking

Shakespeare's tragedies all end with death, loss and destruction in some form or another, but what if the events went in a different direction?

1. Get into groups of 4 or 5, and choose one play from the list below:
Macbeth, Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet
2. Answer the following questions about your chosen play:
 - How does it end?
 - Who dies in the end and what is lost?
 - Is there a point in the play where everything goes wrong?
 - Who survives until the end of the play and why?
 - Do you like this ending? Why/why not?
 - What do the characters learn, if anything?
3. In your groups, brainstorm some ideas about how things could have gone differently in this play to bring about a different ending.
 - Could everyone have lived? How would that have affected things?
 - Could it have ended in a marriage or celebration instead of a war?
 - Was there a new twist, or some new information that came out towards the end of the play that changed everything?
 - Did one character make a different choice somewhere along the way?
4. Following on from this discussion, create an alternative ending to your play of choice. Write a short passage or description of what happens. If there is time, present these to the class. Each group might create a short improvisation in modern language to show what happens in their new ending.

Once you have heard or seen each presentation, discuss each one:

- Did you like the alternative ending?
- Did this new ending work, and was it believable?
- How does it affect the audience's experience of watching the play?
- Do certain characters now have different discoveries?
- Do you feel differently about the play, with its new ending?