

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



THE EARLY YEARS

- Born in April 1564 in Stratford on Avon
- Parents John and Mary Arden Shakespeare
- Seven brothers and sisters
- His father - a fairly rich merchant



STRATFORD UPON AVON



SHAKESPEARE'S SCHOOLING



Shakespeare attended grammar school from ages 7 to 13.

WIFE AND CHILDREN

- Married Anne Hathaway in 1582
- Anne was 26, he was 18
- They had three children: Susana, the oldest and the twins, Judith and Hamnet
- The youngest, Hamnet died at the age of 11



MOVE TO LONDON

- went to London at 21
- joined a travelling company of actors
- worked as an actor and a writer



LONDON LIFE IN THE 16TH CENTURY

- Poor sewer system
- High crime rate
- 200,000 inhabitants
- the cultural and political heart of England



BUBONIC PLAGUE



- No sanitation, no indoor plumbing, no concept of germs or sterilization
- The streets were filled with waste, both human & animal.
- Two outbreaks of the bubonic plague (a bacterial infection also known as “Black Death”) occurred during Shakespeare’s life, forcing the theaters to close because people thought the plague was spread from human to human (not by fleas or rats).

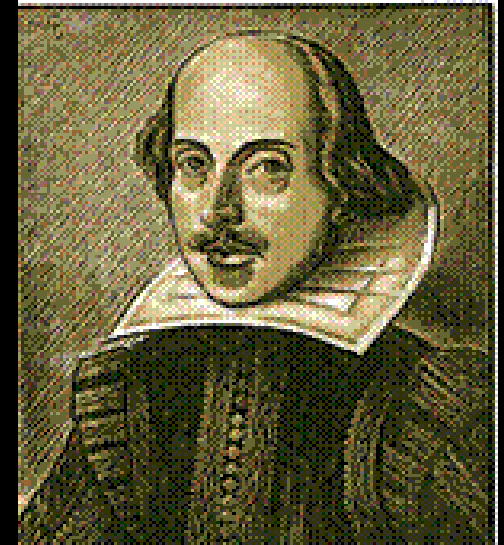
ELIZABETHAN ENGLAND

- Known as the Early Modern period or the English Renaissance (rebirth)
- Queen Elizabeth I was an anomaly (strange, out of place) of the time period. She was strong, intelligent, & a well-respected ruler.
 - Women during this time had little or no power & were seen as less than men, so her power was *not* typical.
 - By refusing to marry throughout her 45 year reign as queen, she retained her own power
 - Women, once married, had practically no rights.



SHAKESPEARE THE AUTHOR

- 37 plays are attributed to him, but there is great controversy over the authorship
- Some claim many authors wrote under one name
- He wrote 154 sonnets.
- His acting company was called Chamberlain's Men. After receiving a royal patent from King James I following the death of Queen Elizabeth, the name was changed to the King's Men.

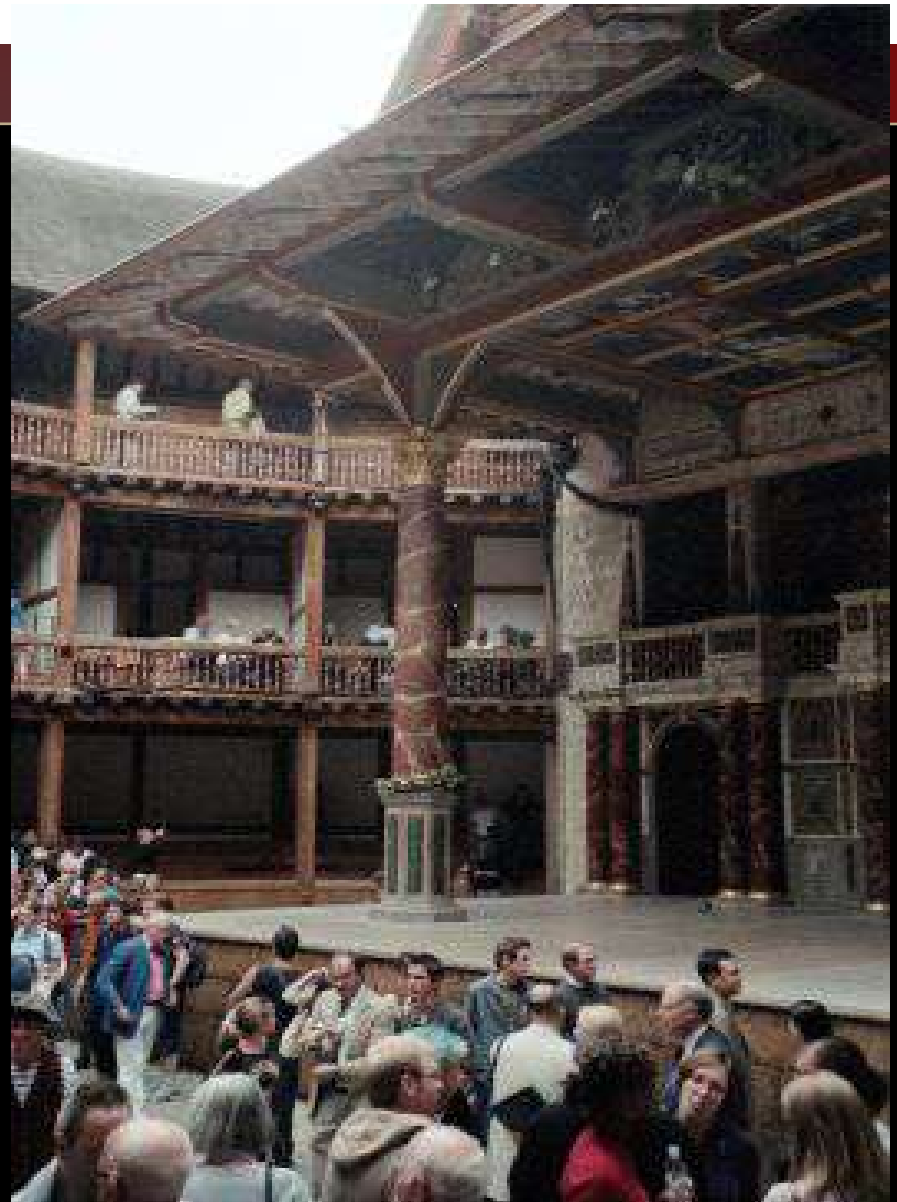


THE GLOBE THEATER

The theater at this time
was entirely outdoors

Wealthier people could
pay more to sit in the
balcony, while the
working class stood in
front of the stage
(groundlings)

Only men could act
(Juliet was performed
by a boy!)



WHO WAS SHAKESPEARE?

- Whether it was one person or many, the fact remains that Shakespeare's plays continue to be a dominant influence on our culture today.
- One can see references to Shakespeare in everything from music to movies.
- He is known to have invented dozens of words & phrases, such as "laugh it off," "hint," "lonely," "excellent," "fair play," & "catch cold"
- He is also believed to have the largest vocabulary of any writer in history.

THE END OF HIS LIFE

Return to Stratford
in 1610

Destruction of the Globe
Theatre in 1613 (the
Great Fire of London)

In 1616 Shakespeare
died on April, 23 (his
birthday!)



REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How old was Shakespeare when he died?
2. How long did Shakespeare go to school?
3. Why was this era called the Elizabethan Era?
4. How were women viewed during this time period?
5. Knowing the role of women during this time, why is it intriguing that Shakespeare wrote a play about a daughter defying her parents?
6. Who would have played the role of Juliet?
7. What are the origins of “Romeo and Juliet”?
8. In how many days did the play “Romeo and Juliet” take place?
9. Name two words/phrases Shakespeare created.
10. What is a pun and give an example.