

William Shakespeare

advanced version

BASIC FACTS

- English poet, playwright and actor, widely regarded as the **greatest writer in the English language and the world's greatest dramatist**
- He was **born on 23 April 1564** in Stratford-upon-Avon
- He **died on the same day as he was born** (in 1616)
- Shakespeare's life in London can be traced **from 1592 onwards**, first as an actor, then as a reviser and writer of plays
- **A Shakespeare Festival is held every summer in Stratford**
- Shakespeare conformed to **the official state religion**
- **The Bible** was a **constant source of inspiration** to him

ERA

- He lived and worked in the 16th century **in the period of the English Renaissance**
- Other known writers from this era are for example **John Fletcher, John Ford**, In the era of Renaissance in other countries the famous writers are for example **Dante Alighieri, Francesco Petrarca or Lope de Vega**

EDUCATION

- He attended the local Grammar school
- **The „grammar“ schools were the most common form of education**, and they were free

FAMILY

- He was the **youngest son of a glove maker John and his wife Mary**
- **His father** was a **respected man** who took part in civic life
- He was the third of eight children, and the eldest surviving son
- **When he was eighteen he married Anne Hathaway who was 8 years older and already pregnant**
- **They had two daughters – Susan and Judith and a son Hamnet**
- **When Shakespeare was working in London, he did not leave his family for good**
- **Shakespeare left a will giving all his property to his eldest daughter Susanna and his 'second best bed' to his wife**

HIS WORK

- First Shakespeare **helped adapt or re-write older plays** but later he started to write **his own plays and he was very successful**
- **Shakespeare wrote:** 37 plays and beautiful sonnets, comedies, history plays and

tragedies:

Comedies: Comedy of Errors, A Midsummer-Night's Dream, Much Ado about Nothing, As you like it e.g.

History plays: Henry IV, Henry V, Henry VI, Richard III, Julius Caesar

Tragedies: Romeo and Juliet, Macbeth, Hamlet, King Lear, Othello

Romeo and Juliet

– Romeo and Juliet is about the unhappy love and death of Romeo and Juliet, the only children of two powerful houses of Verona – the House of Montague and the House of Capulet. These two houses hate each other and Romeo Montague meets Juliet at the ball. He falls in love with her although he knows that she is Capulet. They love each other very much and ask Friar Laurence to marry them. Their love and marriage are secret and by an unfortunate coincidence Romeo kills Tybalt who is Juliet's cousin. Prince of Verona sends Romeo to the exile outside Verona and young Juliet is forced to get married to a young nobleman called Paris. She asks Friar Laurence to help again and he gives her magic drops after which she falls asleep for several hours and looks as if she was dead. Romeo learns about Juliet's death in Mantua and hurries to the Capulet's Monument in a churchyard. He does not know about the trick and kills himself. Soon after the Juliet wakes up and when she sees Romeo dead, she kills herself too. Both Montague and Capulet Houses reconcile only after the death of their beloved children. Shakespeare's standard poetic form was **blank verse**, composed in iambic pentameter

- his verse was usually **unrhymed** and consisted of **ten syllables to a line**, spoken with a stress on every second syllable
- Shakespeare combined **poetic genius with a practical sense of the theatre**
- His plays have been **translated** into every major living language and are performed more often than those of any other playwright
- His plays **remain popular** and are studied, performed, and reinterpreted through various cultural and political contexts around the world
- Shakespeare **was not revered in his lifetime**, but he received a large amount of praise
- Shakespeare made enough money to build a comfortable life

INFLUENCE

- He expanded the **dramatic potential** of characterisation, plot, language, and genre
- Shakespeare influenced novelists such as **Thomas Hardy, William Faulkner, and Charles Dickens**
- His use of English language helped shape **modern English**

The theatre

- He was one of the builders of **The Globe theatre, It was open to the sky and its owners, including Shakespeare, shared its profits**

- **One day, during a performance off Henry VIII was the Globe destroyed by fire**
- **It is also important to remind that in Shakespeare's time here were no actresses and also women's roles were played by men and one actor played more roles than one**
- **Shakespeare performed for Queen Elizabeth I and James I, who both loved theatre**

Doplňující otázky

1. In what era did he work?

- He lived and worked in the 16th century **in the period of the English Renaissance**

2. What was the constant source of inspiration for him?

- It was **the Bible**.

3. How old he was when he died?

- **He was exactly 52 years old**, because he died on his birthday.

4. What was the name of his wife?

- His wife was **Anne Hathaway**.

5. How many children he had?

- **He had three children – two daughters – Susan and Judith and a son Hamnet**

6. In which town he worked?

- He worked **in London**, but he didn't leave his family for good.

7. Write a few examples of his work.

- Choose the most memorable for you. :)

8. What famous persons do you know from Renaissance (not only writers)?

- Dante Alighieri, Filippo Brunelleschi, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Sandro Botticelli.

9. Was Shakespeare revered in his lifetime?

- No he was not.

10. What was the name of his theatre?

- The name of his theatre was the Globe. Unfortunately the theatre was destroyed by fire.

11. What was his standard poetic form?

- Shakespeare's standard poetic form was **blank verse**, composed in iambic pentameter.

12. Have he influenced the language?

- His use of English language helped shape **modern English**

13. Were any of his works autobiographical?

- Some readers have posited that Shakespeare's sonnets are autobiographical.

14. Can we divide his work?

- His work is often divided into three periods:
 1. 1591–1600: Comedies and history plays from british history or from antics.
 2. 1601–1608: tragedies and sonnets
 3. 1608–1612: tragicomedy, romance

Důležitá slovíčka

Fonetická výslovnost není pro lepší srozumitelnost uvedena

coincidence	(koinsidenc)	náhoda, shoda
okolností		
conform	(konfrm)	odpovídat
glove maker	(glouf mejkr)	výrobce rukavic
influence	(influens)	ovlivnit
onward	(onwrd)	dále (do budoucna – v
čase)		
playwright	(plejrajt)	dramatik
plot	(plot)	děj
regard	(rigard)	považovat
revere	(revije)	vážít si, ctít
source	(sors)	zdroj