**William Shakespeare – Life, Works & Legacy**

**1. Biography & Early Life**

* William Shakespeare was baptized on **26 April 1564** in **Stratford-upon-Avon**, Warwickshire. His exact birth date is unrecorded, but tradition celebrates it on **23 April**, coinciding with St. George’s Day and the date of his death [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Shakespeare?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[TIME](https://time.com/73579/shakespeare-450-birthday-april-23/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[Royal Society of Chemistry](https://www.rsc.org.uk/shakespeares-life-and-times/?utm_source=chatgpt.com).
* His parents were **John Shakespeare**, a glove-maker and local official, and **Mary Arden**, from a well-to-do farming family [Royal Society of Chemistry](https://www.rsc.org.uk/shakespeares-life-and-times/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[HISTORY](https://www.history.com/topics/european-history/william-shakespeare?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[Folger Shakespeare Library](https://www.folger.edu/explore/shakespeares-life/?utm_source=chatgpt.com).
* Likely educated at the **King’s New School** in Stratford, he would have studied a rigorous Latin curriculum, profoundly influencing his literary style [Royal Society of Chemistry](https://www.rsc.org.uk/shakespeares-life-and-times/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[BBC](https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/articles/zfw6d6f?utm_source=chatgpt.com).

**2. Family & Marriage**

* At age 18, Shakespeare married **Anne Hathaway** (later 26). Their first child, Susanna, arrived in 1583, followed by twins **Hamnet** and **Judith** in 1585 [Royal Society of Chemistry](https://www.rsc.org.uk/shakespeares-life-and-times/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[HISTORY](https://www.history.com/topics/european-history/william-shakespeare?utm_source=chatgpt.com).
* Tragically, Hamnet died at age 11 in 1596. Susanna and Judith survived into adulthood and married—Susanna to Dr. John Hall, and Judith to Thomas Quiney [Royal Society of Chemistry](https://www.rsc.org.uk/shakespeares-life-and-times/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[HISTORY](https://www.history.com/topics/european-history/william-shakespeare?utm_source=chatgpt.com).

**3. The “Lost Years” & Career in London**

* The period between **1585 and 1592** remains obscure, often referred to as Shakespeare’s **"Lost Years"** [Royal Society of Chemistry](https://www.rsc.org.uk/shakespeares-life-and-times/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[Folger Shakespeare Library](https://www.folger.edu/explore/shakespeares-life/?utm_source=chatgpt.com).
* By 1592, he had become a recognized playwright in **London**, as noted by critic Robert Greene [Royal Society of Chemistry](https://www.rsc.org.uk/shakespeares-life-and-times/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[HISTORY](https://www.history.com/topics/european-history/william-shakespeare?utm_source=chatgpt.com).

**4. Dramatic & Poetic Output**

* Shakespeare’s extant body of work includes approximately **39 plays**, **154 sonnets**, and several long narrative poems [Wikipedia+1](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Shakespeare?utm_source=chatgpt.com).
* Notable poems include *Venus and Adonis* (1593), *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594), *The Passionate Pilgrim*, *The Phoenix and the Turtle*, *A Lover’s Complaint*, and the *Sonnets* (1609) [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_works_by_William_Shakespeare?utm_source=chatgpt.com).

**5. Theatrical Involvement**

* A central figure in **The Lord Chamberlain’s Men**, which became **The King’s Men** after James I’s accession [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Shakespeare?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[ThoughtCo](https://www.thoughtco.com/biography-of-shakespeare-2985097?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[Royal Society of Chemistry](https://www.rsc.org.uk/shakespeares-life-and-times/?utm_source=chatgpt.com).
* Co-owner of the **Globe Theatre** from 1599, and instrumental in popular Elizabethan theatre [Shakespeare's Globe](https://www.shakespearesglobe.com/discover/william-shakespeare/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[ThoughtCo](https://www.thoughtco.com/biography-of-shakespeare-2985097?utm_source=chatgpt.com).

**6. Later Life & Death**

* Retired to Stratford around 1613, where he lived until his death on **23 April 1616**. He was buried two days later at the Holy Trinity Church [Wikipedia+1](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Shakespeare?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[Royal Society of Chemistry](https://www.rsc.org.uk/shakespeares-life-and-times/?utm_source=chatgpt.com).
* In **1623**, his colleagues John Heminges and Henry Condell published the **First Folio**, containing 36 plays, many published for the first time and essential for preserving his legacy [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Folio?utm_source=chatgpt.com).

**7. Legacy & Influence**

* Widely regarded as the **greatest writer in the English language**, Shakespeare’s works have been translated into every major language and remain staples in global literature and theater [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Shakespeare?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[HISTORY](https://www.history.com/topics/european-history/william-shakespeare?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[BBC](https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/articles/zfw6d6f?utm_source=chatgpt.com).
* Introducing hundreds of English words and phrases, his influence on the language is immense [BBC](https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/articles/zfw6d6f?utm_source=chatgpt.com).

**8. Historical Mysteries & Authorship**

* Many biographical details remain uncertain, leading to speculative narratives and inventive biographies over the centuries [Financial Times](https://www.ft.com/content/a05d7f23-ac7d-42e4-9bb3-030ff95b0b20?utm_source=chatgpt.com).
* Despite occasional theories questioning authorship, mainstream scholarship supports that William Shakespeare of Stratford wrote the works attributed to him [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shakespeare_authorship_question?utm_source=chatgpt.com).

**Summary Table**

| **Category** | **Details** |
| --- | --- |
| **Born / Died** | Baptized 26 Apr 1564; died 23 Apr 1616 |
| **Family** | Married Anne Hathaway; 3 children (Susanna, Hamnet, Judith) |
| **Career** | Actor, playwright, partner in theatrical company & Globe Theatre |
| **Works** | ~39 plays, 154 sonnets, narrative poems |
| **Legacy** | Preeminent English playwright; linguistic innovator |