

## William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare is known as the greatest English writer of all time.

Shakespeare was born in 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon, England. His father, John, was a glove maker and his mother, Mary, came from a farming family. He had two brothers and four sisters. William went to the village school.

In 1582, Shakespeare married a local woman named Anne Hathaway. Their daughter Susanna was born in 1583 and their twins, Hamnet and Judith, were born in 1585.

Nothing is known about Shakespeare's life from 1585 to about 1591. It is known that, by 1592, he was an actor living in London. He started writing poems about this time and later wrote more than 150 sonnets, which were published in 1609. He was also writing plays.

In 1594, Shakespeare and some other actors started a new theatre company. It was sponsored by a wealthy nobleman, the Lord Chamberlain. When James I became king, he sponsored their company and it became known as the "King's Men."

In 1599, the company built a new theatre, called the Globe. Shakespeare was one of its owners. For over 20 years, he wrote about two plays a year for the acting company to perform in the Globe theatre. Everyone, from royalty to peasants, came to see his plays.

Shakespeare became a wealthy man and bought a large house in Stratford. After about 1611, he spent most of his time there. He died on April 23, 1616, and was buried at Stratford. He was 52 years old.

Shakespeare's plays include comedies, tragedies, and histories. Scholars have studied his plays and poems for over 300 years. Some argue about whether he actually wrote some of the plays. Other scholars have tried to discover the identities of the man and woman he wrote about in his sonnets.

Today, all of his plays are still performed and enjoyed by people around the world.

### Pre-Reading Warm Up Questions ☀

1. Do you enjoy reading poetry?
2. Do you like going to live theater performances?
3. Have you ever read a play by William Shakespeare? If so, which one(s)?
4. What kind of books do you enjoy reading?
5. Who is your favorite writer?



### COMPREHENSION ✍

**A. True or False. Read the statements below. If the statement is true, write T beside the sentence. If it is false, write F. If it is false, correct the information.**

1. William Shakespeare's father was a farmer.
2. Anne Hathaway came from the same village as Shakespeare.
3. A rich nobleman helped Shakespeare start a theater company.
4. Only rich people came to see Shakespeare's plays.
5. People have been reading Shakespeare's plays for over 300 years.

**B. Practice asking and answering the following questions with your partner. Then write the answers in complete sentences.**

1. Where was William Shakespeare from?
2. What did Shakespeare do when he went to London?
3. How was Shakespeare able to start a new theater company?
4. What was the name of his theater company? What was the name of his theater?
5. What kind of plays did Shakespeare write?
6. In addition to plays, what else did he write?
7. How long have scholars been studying Shakespeare's writings?
8. Which period in Shakespeare's life do scholars know little about?



### DISCUSS

1. Do you prefer to watch comedies or tragedies? Have you seen any plays recently that you particularly enjoyed? If so, tell your classmates about them.
2. Have you ever written a poem? Do you like writing?
3. Scholars do not know anything about Shakespeare's life between 1585 and 1591. What do you imagine he was doing during this time?
4. Do you think Shakespeare would have become famous if he had not received support from a nobleman and the King of England?

### VOCABULARY REVIEW

**A. Choose the word(s) with the closest meaning to the underlined words in the following sentences.**

1. Shakespeare married a local woman.
  - a) poor
  - b) from the area
  - c) rich
2. Shakespeare wrote more than 150 sonnets.
  - a) a kind of poem
  - b) a story
  - c) a letter
3. A wealthy nobleman sponsored Shakespeare's theater company.
  - a) English
  - b) from the city
  - c) rich
4. A wealthy nobleman sponsored his theater company.
  - a) attended
  - b) liked
  - c) helped by giving money
5. Everyone from royalty to peasants came to see his plays.
  - a) very poor farmers
  - b) noblemen
  - c) children
6. Royalty came to see Shakespeare's plays.
  - a) teachers
  - b) poor people
  - c) people belonging to a king or queen's family
7. Shakespeare was buried at Stratford.
  - a) born
  - b) put in the ground
  - c) died
8. Shakespeare wrote many comedies.
  - a) funny stories
  - b) sad stories
  - c) long stories
9. Shakespeare also wrote many tragedies.
  - a) poems
  - b) funny stories
  - c) stories with very sad endings
10. Scholars have studied his plays for hundreds of years.
  - a) people who study all their lives
  - b) large schools
  - c) poets

## ANSWER KEY

### Please note:

The reading for this topic is also available in full-page format at the end of the lesson (page 4).

## PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1-5. Individual answer

## COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

### A. True or False

1. F            2. T            3. T            4. F            5. T

### B. Written Answers

1. William Shakespeare was from Stratford-upon-Avon, England.
2. When Shakespeare went to London, he worked as an actor, wrote poems, plays and sonnets, and started a new theater company.
3. Shakespeare was able to start a new theater company because he had the financial assistance of a wealthy nobleman, the Lord Chamberlain.
4. Shakespeare's theater company was called the "King's Men" and his theater was called the Globe.
5. Shakespeare wrote comedies, tragedies, and histories.
6. In addition to plays, Shakespeare wrote sonnets and poems.
7. Scholars have been studying Shakespeare's writings for over 300 years.
8. Scholars know little about Shakespeare's life from roughly 1585 to 1591.

## VOCABULARY REVIEW

### A. Choose the word(s)

1. b            2. a            3. c            4. c            5. a            6. c            7. b            8. a  
9. c            10. a

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