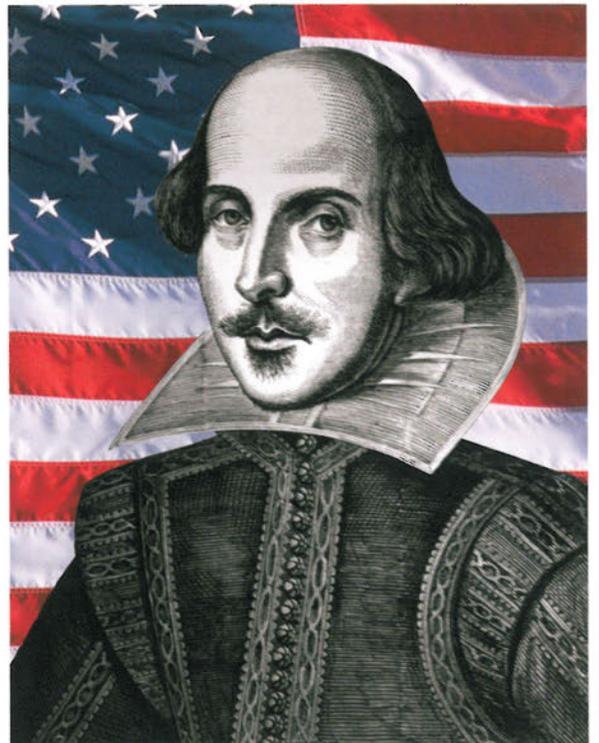


“Words  
without  
thoughts  
never  
to heaven  
go.”

HAMLET

# TEACHER'S GUIDE

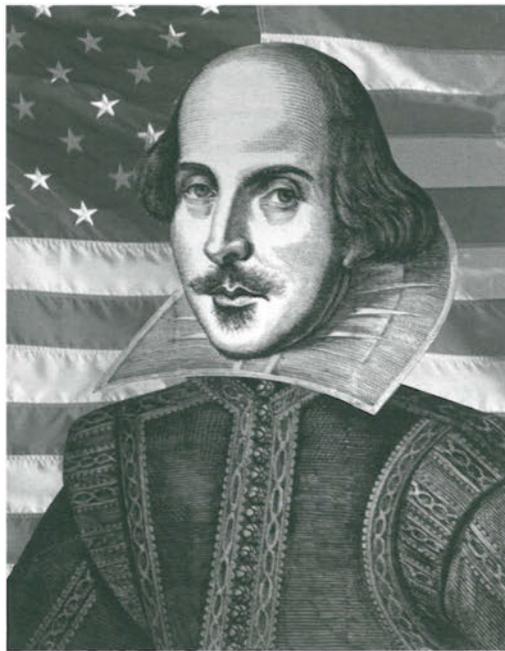
NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS  
PRESENTS



SHAKESPEARE  
IN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES™

# TEACHER'S GUIDE

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS  
PRESENTS



SHAKESPEARE  
IN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES™



*Shakespeare in American Communities* is a national theater initiative that introduces middle and high school students to the power of live theater and the masterpieces of William Shakespeare through performances by selected professional theater companies, and the distribution of free, multimedia educational resource kits. *Shakespeare in American Communities* is a program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest.



The National Endowment for the Arts was established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government. To date, the NEA has awarded more than \$4 billion to support artistic excellence, creativity, and innovation for the benefit of individuals and communities. The NEA extends its work through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector. For more information, visit [arts.gov](http://arts.gov).



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## INTRODUCTION: TO THE TEACHER

**T**he National Endowment for the Arts is proud to provide you with these special classroom materials for *Shakespeare in American Communities*. We believe that these print, audio, and video resources will greatly enrich the education of your students. Whether listening to James Earl Jones bring Shakespeare's poetry to life on our CD or using our lesson plans to rewrite one of the Bard's famous monologues in their own words, your students will find ample opportunities to expand their knowledge, creativity, and command of language.

*Shakespeare in American Communities* is one of the most ambitious projects in the history of the National Endowment for the Arts. But this project cannot succeed without your support and involvement. What happens in your classroom is just as important as what happens on the stage.

One great teacher can change a student's life. At the Arts Endowment, our great hope is to help dedicated teachers like you accomplish this magic.

## THE ELIZABETHAN AGE

Shakespeare lived during a remarkable period of English history, a time of relative political stability that followed and preceded eras of extensive upheaval. Elizabeth I became the Queen of England in 1558, six years before Shakespeare's birth. During her 45-year reign, London became a cultural and commercial center where learning and literature thrived.

When Queen Elizabeth ascended to the throne, there were violent clashes throughout Europe between Protestant and Catholic leaders and their followers. Though Elizabeth honored many of the Protestant edicts of her late father, King Henry VIII, she made significant concessions to Catholic sympathizers, which kept them from attempting rebellion. But when compromise was not possible, she was an exacting and determined leader who did not shy away from conflict. With the naval defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588, England was firmly established as a leading military and commercial power in the Western world. Elizabeth supported and later knighted Sir Francis Drake, the first sailor to circumnavigate the globe. She also funded Sir Walter Raleigh's exploration of the New World, which brought new wealth to her country in the form of tobacco and gold from Latin America.

Queen Elizabeth also recognized the importance of the arts to the life and legacy of her nation. She was fond of the theater, and many of England's greatest playwrights

were active during her reign, including Christopher Marlowe, Ben Jonson, and William Shakespeare. With her permission, professional theaters were built in England for the first time, attracting 15,000 theater-

### British Peerage and Nobility

The system of British Peerage in Shakespeare's time (which still exists — although altered — in modern-day Great Britain) determined one's position in society. Many of Shakespeare's characters carried titles that — in the Bard's time — would have immediately told audience members a lot about that person's rank, importance, and authority over his peers. Today's audiences will be less familiar with the British Peerage and Nobility, so here's a quick primer:

**Duke:** The highest rank in British Peerage; from the Latin *dux*, meaning leader. The female counterpart to a Duke is a Duchess.

**Marquess:** Second-highest rank, from the French *marquis*, meaning march. The female counterpart is the Marchioness.

**Earl:** This title comes from an old English term that referred to a military leader, and the rank corresponds to a Count in continental Europe. The female counterpart of an Earl is the Countess.

**Viscount:** A Latin-derived word that translates to vice-count.

**Baron:** The lowest rank of British Peer; someone who holds land directly from the King or Queen.



TUTTO VEDO &  
MOLTO MANCIA

E R



STNCHO RIPO  
SO & RIPOSATO  
AFFANO 1379

Queen Elizabeth I

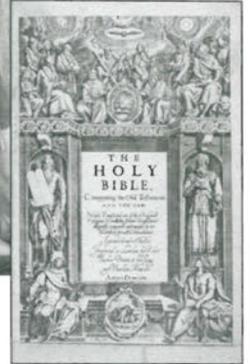
goers per week in London, a city of 150,000 to 250,000. In addition to Shakespeare's masterpieces of the stage, Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queen*, and Sir Philip Sidney's *Defence of Poesie* were all written during this golden age in the literary arts. The Shakespearean sonnet, Spenserian stanza, and dramatic blank verse also came into practice during the period.

Upon the death of Elizabeth, King James I rose to power in England. A writer himself, he displayed a great love of learning, particularly theater. At the king's invitation, Shakespeare's theater company, Lord Chamberlain's Men, became known as the King's Men, and they produced new works under his patronage. King James also commissioned the translation of the Bible from Latin into English so that it might be more readily available to those who had not studied the language of the educated class. Completed in 1611 by a team of



Bettmann/CORBIS

*King James I and the King James Bible, right.*



scholars and monks, the King James Version of the Bible has become the best-selling and arguably the most-influential book in the world.

Unfortunately, King James surrounded himself with untrustworthy advisors, and

## Religion in the Elizabethan Age

Religion was central to the society for which Shakespeare wrote. Queen Elizabeth made attendance at Church of England services mandatory, even though many church-goers had to travel long distances. People who did not attend — for any reason except illness — were punished with fines. (Shakespeare's father and sister were reported as absent, though his father's debts probably were the cause of his inability to attend church.)

While it was not a crime to be Catholic in Elizabethan England, there was no legal way for Catholics to practice their faith. It was illegal to hold or to attend a Mass. Powerful people, however, were less likely to be punished than others. Many of the upper classes were exempt from the new oaths of allegiance to the Church of England, and often wealthy Catholic families secretly maintained private chaplains. Elizabethan policy allowed freedom of belief as long as English subjects did not openly flout the law or encourage sedition.

his extravagant lifestyle strained the royal finances and the patience of the Puritan-controlled Parliament. When James died in 1628, his son Charles I ascended to the throne, and tensions between Parliament and the Crown increased. King Charles I eventually lost a bloody civil war to the Puritans, who executed the King (his son Charles II fled to France). For a dozen years, the Puritans enacted many reforms which included closing the theaters. The Commonwealth lasted until Charles II returned from France, claimed the throne, and installed the Restoration. King Charles II also reopened the theaters, but England's theatrical highpoint had passed.

## Education in the Elizabethan Age

Boys were educated to be literate members of society. Teaching techniques relied heavily on memorization and recitation. The language of literacy throughout Europe was Latin, and students were expected to be proficient in it. Boys started grammar school at the age of six or seven. Their typical school day ran from 6:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Classroom discipline was strict, and often involved corporeal punishment. In the lower grades, boys studied Latin grammar and vocabulary. In the upper grades, they read the poetry and prose of writers such as Ovid, Martial, and Catullus. Most boys began an apprenticeship in a trade following grammar school. Sons of the nobility attended the university or the Inns of Court (professional associations for barristers).

Formal schooling was not encouraged for girls unless they were the children of nobility. For those who were educated, schooling focused primarily on chastity and the skills of housewifery. Young girls from wealthy families were often placed in the households of acquaintances where they would learn to read, write, keep accounts, and manage a household and estate. They were also trained in leisure skills such as music and dancing.

While no one would argue that Elizabethan England presented the greatest of opportunities for universal education, literacy significantly increased throughout the sixteenth century. By 1600, at least one-third of the male population could read, and Puritans pushed for significant increases in funding for grammar schools.

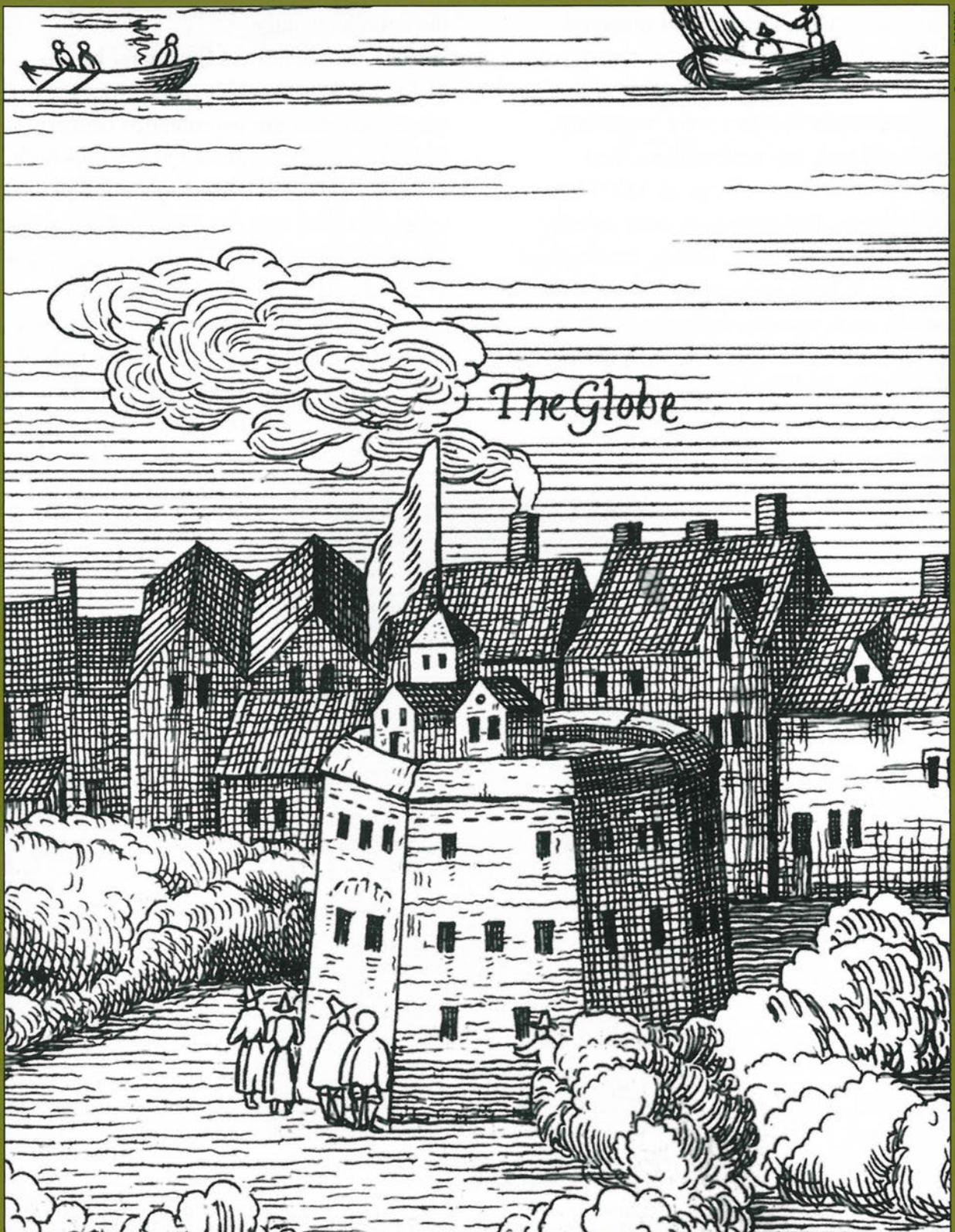
## ELIZABETHAN THEATER

**E**ven in an era when popular entertainment included public executions and cock-fighting, theater became central to Elizabethan social life. As drama shifted from a religious to a secular function in society, playwrights and poets were among the leading artists of the day. Toward the end of the sixteenth century, the popularity of plays written by scholars such as Christopher Marlowe, Robert Greene, John Lyly, and Thomas Lodge led to the building of theaters and to the development of companies of actors, both professional and amateur. These companies of players traveled throughout England, generally performing in London in the winter and spring, and navigating notoriously neglected roads throughout the English countryside during the summers when plague ravaged the city. Professional companies were also retained for the private entertainment of English aristocracy.

In spite of its popularity, the Elizabethan theater attracted criticism, censorship, and scorn from some sectors of English society. The plays were often coarse and boisterous, and playwrights and actors belonged to a bohemian class. Puritan leaders and officers of the Church of England considered actors to be of questionable character, and they criticized playwrights for using the stage to disseminate their irreverent opinions. They also feared the overcrowded theater spaces might lead to the spread of disease.

At times throughout the sixteenth century, Parliament censored plays for profanity, heresy, or politics. But Queen Elizabeth and later King James offered protections that ultimately allowed the theater to survive. To appease Puritan concerns, the Queen established rules prohibiting the construction of theaters and theatrical performances within the London city limits. The rules were loosely enforced, however, and playhouses such as the Curtain, the Globe, the Rose, and the Swan were constructed just outside of London, within easy reach of the theater-going public. These public playhouses paved the way for the eventual emergence of professional companies as stable business organizations.

Among the actors who performed in the Elizabethan theater, Richard Burbage is perhaps the best known. Burbage was the leading actor in Shakespeare's company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, and he is credited with portraying a range of dramatic leads including Richard III, Hamlet, Lear, and Othello. An actor himself, Shakespeare played roles in his own plays, usually as older male characters. Acting was not considered an appropriate profession for women in the Elizabethan era, and even into the seventeenth century acting companies consisted of men with young boys playing the female roles. Instead of clothing reflecting the station of their characters, Elizabethan actors wore lavish



Beckmann GORBIS

The Globe Theatre, London. Detail from a map of London, 1616.

costumes consistent with upperclass dress. In contrast, stage scenery was minimal, perhaps consisting solely of painted panels placed upstage.

Elizabethan theaters were makeshift, dirty, and loud, but nevertheless they attracted audiences as large as 3,000 from all social classes. Performances were usually given in the afternoons, lasting two to three hours. As in both ancient and contemporary theaters, each section of the theater bore a different price of admission, with the lowest prices in the pit below stage level where patrons stood to watch the play. Most performance spaces were arranged “in-the-round,” giving spectators the opportunity to watch both the play and the behavior of other spectators. Etiquette did not prohibit the audiences from freely

expressing their distaste or satisfaction for the action on stage.

The rich theatrical flowering begun by Shakespeare and his contemporaries continued into the seventeenth century, well beyond the reign of Queen Elizabeth. In 1642, however, with the country on the verge of a civil war, the Puritan Parliament closed the theaters and forbade stage plays in an edict that argued that theater distracted the fragmented nation from its efforts to “appease and avert the wrath of God.” When King Charles II took the English throne in 1660, the theaters were

reopened, and the arts were again celebrated. His reign became known as the Restoration, but the greatest period of England theater had already run its course.

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The Table of Contents from the First Folio, 1623.

## THE LIFE OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564–1616)

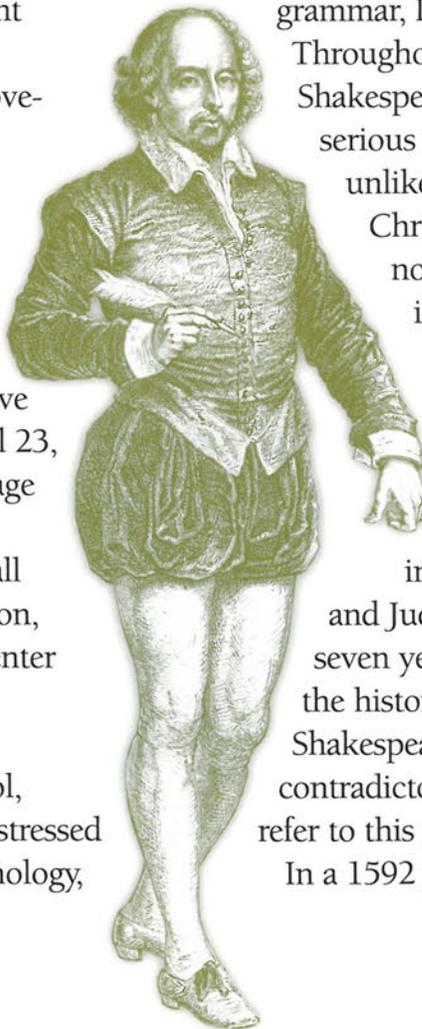
**W**ithin the class system of Elizabethan England, William Shakespeare did not seem destined for greatness. He was not born into a family of nobility or significant wealth. He did not continue his formal education at university, nor did he come under the mentorship of a senior artist, nor did he marry into wealth or prestige. His talent as an actor seems to have been modest, since he is not known for starring roles. His success as a playwright depended in part upon royal patronage. Yet in spite of these limitations, Shakespeare is now the most performed and read playwright in the world.

Born to John Shakespeare, a glove-maker and tradesman, and Mary Arden, the daughter of an affluent farmer, William Shakespeare was baptized on April 26, 1564, in Stratford-upon-Avon. At that time, infants were baptized three days after their birth, thus scholars believe that Shakespeare was born on April 23, the same day on which he died at age 52. As the third of eight children, young William grew up in this small town 100 miles northwest of London, far from the cultural and courtly center of England.

Shakespeare attended the local grammar school, King's New School, where the curriculum would have stressed a classical education of Greek mythology,



*An 1834 exterior view of Shakespeare's birthplace in Stratford-upon-Avon.*



Roman comedy, ancient history, rhetoric, grammar, Latin, and possibly Greek.

Throughout his childhood, Shakespeare's father struggled with serious financial debt. Therefore, unlike his fellow playwright Christopher Marlowe, he did not attend university. Rather, in 1582 at age 18, he married Anne Hathaway, a woman eight years his senior and three months pregnant. Their first child, Susanna, was born in 1583, and twins, Hamnet and Judith, came in 1585. In the seven years following their birth, the historical record concerning Shakespeare is incomplete, contradictory, and unreliable; scholars refer to this period as his "lost years." In a 1592 pamphlet by Robert

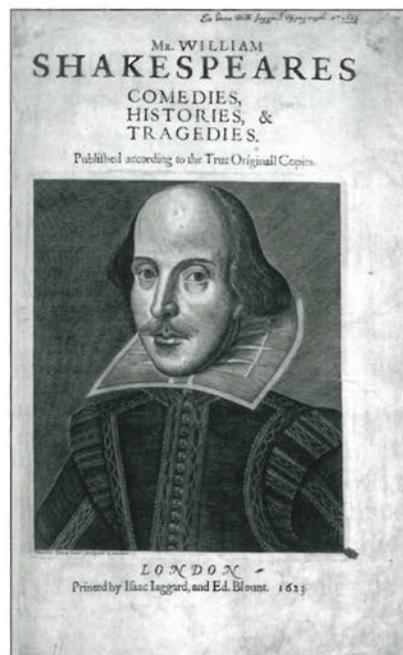
Greene, Shakespeare reappears as an “upstart crow” flapping his poetic wings in London. Evidently, it did not take him long to land on the stage. Between 1590 and 1592, Shakespeare’s *Henry VI* series, *Richard III*, and *The Comedy of Errors* were performed. When the theaters were closed in 1593 because of the plague, the playwright wrote two narrative poems, *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, and probably began writing his richly textured sonnets. One hundred and fifty-four of his sonnets have survived, ensuring his reputation as a gifted poet. By 1594, he had also written *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *Love’s Labour’s Lost*.

Having established himself as an actor and playwright, in 1594 Shakespeare became a shareholder in the Lord Chamberlain’s Men, one of the most popular acting companies in London. He remained a member of this company for the rest of his career, often playing before the court of Queen Elizabeth I. Shakespeare entered one of his most prolific periods around 1595, writing *Richard II*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, and *The Merchant of Venice*. With his newfound success, Shakespeare purchased the second largest home in Stratford in 1597, though he continued to live in London. Two years later, he joined others from the Lord Chamberlain’s Men in

establishing the polygonal Globe Theatre on the outskirts of London. When King James came to the throne in 1603, he issued a royal license to Shakespeare and his fellow players, organizing them as the King’s Men. During King James’ reign, Shakespeare wrote many of his most accomplished plays about courtly power, including *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*. In 1609 or 1611, Shakespeare’s sonnets were published, though he did not live to see the *First Folio* of his plays published in 1623.

In 1616, with his health declining, Shakespeare revised his will. Since his only son Hamnet had died in 1596, Shakespeare left the bulk of his estate to his two daughters, with monetary gifts set aside for his sister, theater partners, friends, and the poor of Stratford. A fascinating detail of his will is that he bequeathed the family’s “second best bed” to his wife Anne. He died one month later, on April 23, 1616. To the world, he left a lasting legacy in the form of 38 plays, 154 sonnets, and two narrative poems.

When William Shakespeare died in his birthplace of Stratford-upon-Avon, he was recognized as one of the greatest English playwrights of his era. In the four centuries since, he has come to be seen as not only a great English playwright, but the greatest playwright in the English language. Reflecting upon the achievement of his peer and sometimes rival, Ben Jonson wrote of Shakespeare, “He was not of an age, but for all time.”



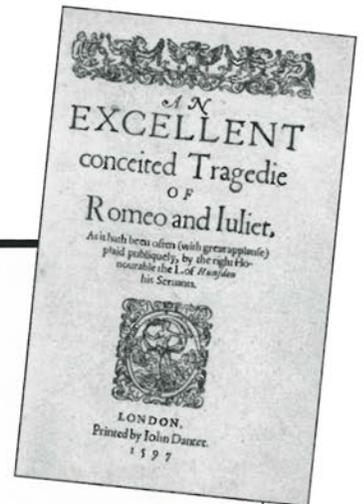
First Folio, 1623.

# SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

During his lifetime, many of Shakespeare's 38 plays were published in what are known as Quarto editions, often without the playwright's permission. Many were flawed versions, including or deleting entire passages. The first collected edition of his plays, the *First Folio*, was published after his death by two members of his acting company, John Heminges and Henry Condell. Since then the works of Shakespeare have been studied, translated, and enjoyed the world over as masterpieces of the English language.

Establishing the chronology of Shakespeare's plays is a difficult task.

It is impossible to know the exact order of succession because there is no record of the first production date of any of his works. Although dating is conjectural, scholars have decided upon a specific play chronology based upon the following sources of information: 1) historical events and allusions to those events in the plays; 2) the records of performances of the plays — taken from such places as the diaries of contemporaries; 3) the publication dates of sources; and 4) the dates that the plays appear in print (the production of a play immediately followed its composition).



## Iambic Pentameter

Shakespeare composed much of his plays in the form of poetry, often in a meter called iambic pentameter. Even today, iambic pentameter is the most common meter used in English-language poetry. A regular line of the meter contains roughly ten syllables, with heavier stresses falling on every other syllable. An *iamb* is a metrical unit, or a "foot" of meter, made up of one unstressed syllable followed by one stressed syllable ("alive," "forget," "a dog"). Pentameter refers to the number of iambs in the line (*penta* is the Greek word for five, as in a pentagon). So there are five iambs in a line of iambic pentameter. *Blank verse* is unrhymed iambic pentameter.

Here are two examples from *Romeo and Juliet*. ('-' means unstressed and '/' means stressed)

- / - / - / - / - /

My grave is like to be my wedding bed.

- / - / - / - / - /

But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?

## Approximate Chronology of Shakespeare's Plays

FIRST PERFORMED	PLAYS	FIRST PRINTED
1590-91	Henry VI, Part II	1594?
1590-91	Henry VI, Part III	1594?
1591-92	Henry VI, Part I	1623
1592-93	Richard III	1597
1592-93	The Comedy of Errors	1623
1593-94	Titus Andronicus	1594
1593-94	The Taming of the Shrew	1623
1594-95	The Two Gentlemen of Verona	1623
1594-95	Love's Labour's Lost	1598?
1594-95	Romeo and Juliet	1597
1595-96	Richard II	1597
1595-96	A Midsummer Night's Dream	1600
1596-97	King John	1623
1596-97	The Merchant of Venice	1600
1597-98	Henry IV, Part I	1598
1597-98	Henry IV, Part II	1600
1598-99	Much Ado About Nothing	1600
1598-99	Henry V	1600
1599-1600	Julius Caesar	1623
1599-1600	As You Like It	1623
1599-1600	Twelfth Night	1623
1600-01	Hamlet	1603
1600-01	The Merry Wives of Windsor	1602
1601-02	Troilus and Cressida	1609
1602-03	All's Well That Ends Well	1623
1604-05	Measure for Measure	1623
1604-05	Othello	1622
1605-06	King Lear	1608
1605-06	Macbeth	1623
1606-07	Antony and Cleopatra	1623
1607-08	Coriolanus	1623
1607-08	Timon of Athens	1623
1608-09	Pericles	1609
1609-10	Cymbeline	1623
1610-11	The Winter's Tale	1623
1611-12	The Tempest	1623
1612-13	Henry VIII	1623
1612-13	The Two Noble Kinsmen*	1634

\**The Two Noble Kinsmen* is listed as one of Shakespeare's plays because most scholars believe it to be a collaborative work of Shakespeare and John Fletcher, who was a prominent actor and Shakespeare's close friend. Fletcher succeeded Shakespeare as the foremost dramatist for the King's Men.

## SHAKESPEARE IN AMERICA

When the English colonists sailed for the New World, they brought only their most precious and essential possessions with them, including the works of William Shakespeare. The earliest known staging of his plays in the colonies was in 1750. By the time of the American Revolution, more than a dozen of his plays had been performed hundreds of times in thriving New England port cities and nascent towns and villages hewn from the wilderness. The young nation, brought together under a unique Constitution and collective will, found common ground in a love of Shakespeare.

In his famous travelogue *Democracy in America*, the French writer Alexis de Tocqueville remarked on the popularity of Shakespeare across the new nation in the 1830s: “There is hardly a pioneer’s hut that does not contain a few odd volumes of Shakespeare. I remember that I read the feudal drama of *Henry V* for the first time in a log cabin.” One such log cabin belonged to the family of Abraham Lincoln, a frontiersman whose formative reading consisted mainly of the King James Bible, Blackstone’s lectures on English law, and Shakespeare. Like so many American presidents, Lincoln had a lifelong fondness for the Bard. “There is, assuredly, no other country on earth in which Shakespeare and the Bible are held in such general high esteem,” wrote the German journalist



*Edwin Booth, an American actor in the mid-1800s, wore this costume in Richard III.*

Karl Knortz in the 1880s.

Throughout the nineteenth century, Shakespeare was the most popular playwright in America. His plays were produced in large and opulent theaters and on makeshift stages in saloons, churches, and hotels. From big cities on the East Coast to mining camps in the West, his plays were performed prominently and frequently. In fact, Shakespearean actors from England came to America because the job prospects with touring troupes were plentiful and exciting. Shakespeare was so

integrated into American culture by the nineteenth century that Mark Twain had his young hero Huckleberry Finn travel along the Mississippi River by raft with a pair of rogues who tried to pass themselves off as Shakespearean actors to earn money in riverbank towns.

Shakespeare productions attracted a broad audience across socioeconomic and ethnic lines. Audiences articulated their knowledge of and reactions to the plays by hissing, whistling, stamping, clapping, and reciting passages along with the actors. The plays were often accompanied by music, acrobatics, dance, magic shows, minstrel shows, and stand-up comedy during breaks between acts. Shakespeare's most famous lines and scenes — such as “To be or not to be” — were parodied through short skits, brief references, and satirical songs inserted into other modes of entertainment, demonstrating how well performers and audiences alike knew his work.

Shakespearean allusions and quotations were a regular feature of nineteenth-century newspapers. In schools, his plays were taught as rhetoric. Students would memorize passages of his plays and recite them aloud. While audiences admired the playwright's gift for language, they found his themes to be representative of their own trials and tribulations. His characters coped with love, hate, jealousy, ambition, and mortality just as his audience members did in their own lives.

*Shakespeare's plays were performed by well-known film actors in the twentieth century. Here, Paul Robeson as Othello.*

Only in the twentieth century did the nature of Shakespeare's relationship to the American public change. He was still the most widely known, respected, and quoted dramatist, but his work gradually came to be seen as part of high culture rather than popular culture. His plays became more a form of education than entertainment, more the possession of an elite crowd than the property of all Americans. The accessible dramatist whom audiences once identified with, and even parodied, now became the sacred dramatist to whom everyday people could hardly relate.

There are many reasons for this change of reputation, among them an increasing separation of audiences, actors, and acting styles. Specialized theaters evolved that catered to distinct interests such as avant-garde theater, theater of the absurd, and musical theater. Radio, film, and television executives chose to feature



fewer Shakespeare plays because they were perceived as unprofitable. Simultaneously the oratorical mode of entertainment and education that was prevalent throughout the nineteenth century and which helped make Shakespeare popular did not survive.

Many scholars assert that the end of the nineteenth century, with the development of industrial manufacturing processes, changes to American work schedules, and resulting increased social classism, saw a significant decrease in the place of Shakespeare in everyday society. Education values really shifted because of the industrial revolution as well, with families knowing that a good laborer could support a family and didn't necessarily need an education that included strong literacy skills. The American language moved rapidly away from the rich Elizabethan style of Shakespeare, making his words alien to a people who once so effortlessly understood their power.

Still, for more than four centuries, Shakespeare has played a defining role in American culture. Today he remains America's most widely produced playwright—performed in theaters, on film, in schools, at festivals, and read in millions of homes across the country.

## Shakespeare in Contemporary Culture

Internet Movie Database (IMDb)© cites more than 600 titles in its catalog as adaptations of Shakespeare plays. Beyond the obvious — 63 versions of Hamlet featuring various actors including Laurence Olivier, Mel Gibson, and Ethan Hawke — some viewers might not even know they're watching a Shakespeare adaptation, while other popular titles attract well-known actors to the leading roles. Here's just a sample:

**Ten Things I Hate About You** (1999) — A remake of *The Taming of the Shrew*, set in a modern day high school and starring Heath Ledger and Julia Stiles.

**A Midsummer Night's Dream** (1999) — This comedic romp featured a host of stars, including Kevin Kline, Calista Flockhart, Michelle Pfeiffer, Rupert Everett, and Stanley Tucci as Puck.

**Romeo + Juliet** (1996) — Baz Luhrmann's stunning futuristic telling of the tragic love story starred Claire Danes and Leonardo DiCaprio.

**West Side Story** (1961) — This musical version of *Romeo and Juliet* tells the tragic tale of two youngsters from rival NYC gangs who fall in love (starring Natalie Wood and Richard Beymer).

**Throne of Blood** (1961, American release) — Famous Japanese director Akira Kurosawa adapted the tragedy of *Macbeth*.

**Forbidden Planet** (1956) — This sci-fi cult classic draws inspiration from *The Tempest* and stars Walter Pidgeon, Anne Francis and Leslie Nielsen.

# RESOURCES ON WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

## Web

[www.absoluteshakespeare.com](http://www.absoluteshakespeare.com)

Historical information, fun trivia, study guides, and more about Shakespeare

[www.bardweb.net](http://www.bardweb.net)

*The Shakespeare Resource Center*  
A resource for all things related to Shakespeare

[www.folger.edu](http://www.folger.edu)

*The Folger Shakespeare Library*  
Website for the world's largest collection of Shakespeare's printed works

[www.shakespearesglobe.com](http://www.shakespearesglobe.com)

A site about Shakespeare and the Globe Theatre

<http://shakespeare.mit.edu/>

*The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*  
Full-text versions of Shakespeare's plays

<http://web.uvic.ca/shakespeare/>

A guide to Shakespeare's life and times

## Books

Asimov, Isaac. *Asimov's Guide to Shakespeare*. Doubleday, 1978.

Bloom, Harold. *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*. Riverhead Books, 1998.

Epstein, Norrie. *The Friendly Shakespeare*. Penguin Books, 1993.

Gibson, Rex. *Discovering Shakespeare's Language*. Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999.

Gibson, Rex. *Teaching Shakespeare* (Cambridge School Shakespeare Series). Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Levine, Lawrence W. *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America*. Harvard University Press, 1990.

Linklater, Kristin. *Freeing Shakespeare's Voice*. Theatre Communications Group, 1992.

Kermode, Frank. *Shakespeare's Language*. Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 2000.

McQuain, Jeffrey, and Stanley Malless. *Coined by Shakespeare: Words & Meanings First Penned by the Bard*. Merriam Webster, 1998.

O'Brien, Peggy, ed. *Shakespeare Set Free*. Atria Books, 1993.

Pritchard, R. E. *Shakespeare's England*. Sutton Publishing Limited, 1999.

Papp, Joseph and Elizabeth Kirkland. *Shakespeare Alive*. Bantam Books, 1988.

## Videos

*Shakespeare: A Day at the Globe*. Guidance Associates Video, 1990.

*Shakespeare: Soul of an Age*. Warner Home Video, 1962.

*Standard Deviants on Shakespeare*. Cerebellum Corporation, 2002.

*That Fellow Shakespeare*. Meriwether Publishing Ltd.: Contemporary Drama Service, 1988.

*William Shakespeare: A Life of Drama*. A&E Television Networks, 1996.

## Audio

*The Complete Arkangel Shakespeare*. The Audio Partners, 2003. Based on *The Complete Pelican Shakespeare*, Shakespeare's 38 plays, complete and unabridged, are reproduced on 98 CDs with original scores for each play. Bringing together 400 British actors, this collection was created by Shakespeare scholar Tom Treadwell, film producer Bill Shepherd, BBC director Clive Brill, and composer Dominique Le Gendre.

# LESSONS

## Modernizing Monologues

<b>Brief Description</b>	After listening to and discussing selected monologues from the Shakespeare CD, students will write their own versions of the monologues, modernizing the diction and the situation, but preserving the structure, themes, and emotions. After an overnight revision, students will share their results in class.
<b>Supplies</b>	A stereo, the <i>Shakespeare in American Communities</i> CD, and photocopies of the selected monologues from the <i>Recitation Contest</i> booklet.
<b>Class Periods</b>	1.5
<b>NCTE Standards Covered</b>	1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 11
<b>Activity Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• On a stereo, the teacher will play three monologues from the Shakespeare CD, leading a brief class discussion between each selection. Through close reading of the text, students should attempt to understand the situation, the intentions, and the emotions of the character speaking. (The clues are in the language.) Allow five to ten minutes of discussion for each selection.</li><li>• Each student will now choose a monologue to rewrite. The new version should be written in verse and should preserve the circumstances of the original, although the diction and the details provided should be made modern. Students may wish to consult page 11 in the <i>Teacher's Guide</i> to learn how to write iambic pentameter.</li><li>• Allow the rest of the class period for students to work individually on writing their monologues.</li><li>• Students should revise and finish their monologues overnight.</li><li>• At the beginning of the second class, ask for volunteers to read their results aloud.</li></ul>
<b>Outcomes</b>	Students will use listening skills. Students will analyze a text through close reading and discussion. Students will emulate great writing. Students will work on public-speaking skills through reading aloud.

# LESSONS

## Stealing Love Letters

### Brief Description

Students will listen to the sections of the Shakespeare CD regarding the sonnet form and the recited selections. After the teacher leads a discussion about the form, the class will analyze the performed sonnets. Then the students will select a sonnet to transform into a love letter in prose. In the next class meeting, students will present their work.

### Supplies

A stereo, the *Shakespeare in American Communities* CD, and photocopies of the selected sonnets from the *Recitation Contest* booklet.

### Class Periods

1.5

### NCTE Standards Covered

1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 11

### Activity Description

- The teacher will play the sections of the Shakespeare CD regarding the sonnet, and will lead a class discussion about the sonnet form and the individual selections. Through close reading of the text, students should attempt to understand how the images are used and how the themes and language work together toward a certain effect. Allow five minutes of discussion for each selection.
- Each student will now choose a sonnet to transform into a love letter. Written in prose, the letter can be addressed to a boyfriend or girlfriend, a parent, a relative, or even a pet. The new version should include as many images and themes from the original sonnet as possible, though the diction and the situation may be made contemporary. Allow the rest of the class period for students to work individually on writing their love letters.
- Students should revise and finish their love letters overnight.
- At the beginning of the second class, ask for volunteers to read their love letters aloud. Upon hearing students read, other students should try to guess which of Shakespeare's sonnets was rewritten.

### Outcomes

Students will use listening skills.  
Students will learn about the structure of an important poetic form.  
Students will analyze a text through close reading and discussion.  
Students will write creatively.  
Students will work on public-speaking skills through reading aloud.

# LESSONS

## The Scene outside the Globe

### Brief Description

Using the *Teacher's Guide*, students will learn about the Elizabethan age. Then they will create characters and use structured improvisations to display their understanding and exercise their performance skills.

### Supplies

Provided “biographies” of historical and fictional characters from Elizabethan England that can be photocopied, cut into sections, and distributed to students.

### Class periods

1

### NCTE Standards Covered

1, 4, 9, 11, 12

### Activity Description

- The students will read pages 2-8 from the *Teacher's Guide* to learn about Elizabethan England. The teacher should answer questions about the reading material before beginning the performance component of the activity.
- Each student will receive a sheet with a “biography” of a person from Shakespeare’s world. Allow students several minutes to read their descriptions, keeping them secret from other students. Each card has a line of dialogue for the students to use in the improvisation, but they should feel free to create additional dialogue.
- While the students are reviewing their biographies, the teacher should write on the blackboard the complete list of characters to give students a general idea of who they are interacting with in their scene.
- The teacher will divide the class in half, making one group of students the actors and the other the audience. The teacher will tell the actors that their scene will take place on the street outside the Globe Theatre during the Elizabethan age. After giving them a moment to imagine their places in this society, the scene will begin. Without identifying themselves by name, the actors should try to convey who they are through their mannerisms, speech, and actions.
- The audience will watch for status conflicts between characters and determine each character’s role within the society. The audience should write down — don’t shout out! — the character each student is playing.

*continued*

# LESSONS

## The Scene outside the Globe (continued)

### Activity Description

- After five minutes, switch groups and resume the improvisation.
- Repeat the activity, allowing students to experience different roles.
- Discuss the activity with students.

### Outcomes

Students will learn about the social structure of Elizabethan England through their reading.

Students will demonstrate their understanding of the reading material through improvisation.

Students will strengthen their performance and public-speaking skills.

### Cast of Characters

Queen Elizabeth I  
Earl of Derby  
Earl of Essex  
Sir Francis Drake  
The Master of Revels  
Boy Apprentice Actor  
Traveling Actor  
Secret Puritan  
Secret Catholic Priest  
Glover Maker  
Carpenter  
Storeowner  
Peasant  
Beggar  
School Boy  
Tutor  
Baker  
Doctor  
Apothecary  
Wet Nurse

## LESSONS

### The Scene outside the Globe (continued)

#### Queen Elizabeth I

You are the Queen of England and one of the most powerful leaders England has ever known. You are called “the Virgin Queen” by some because you’ve never married. You will not marry because you fear a husband would take power from you. You’ve had to prove yourself as a woman in this leadership role. As a leader, you’ve outdone most of the males who have preceded you. Your navy defeated the Spanish Armada years ago, making your country one of the most powerful in England. You are a patron of Mr. Shakespeare’s company and enjoy his work a great deal. Sometimes Shakespeare writes a play especially for you, such as *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. You often invite their company to Court but you also sometimes attend performances at The Globe. Your line is: “I pardon you.”

#### Earl of Derby

You are the Earl of Derby. Of noble birth, and therefore owner of a title, lands, and significant wealth, you have many servants to attend you. Your wife stays at home and tends to the children while you hunt, fence, gamble, and trade. You live a life of freedom and pleasure. You are in London to visit the Queen. While in London, you visit the marketplaces and perhaps purchase some new horses and armor. You also attend the latest popular play at The Globe by the young William Shakespeare. You dress in fine silks from France, small buckled shoes, and large feathered hats. You bathe once a month whether you need it or not. Your line is: “Excuse me, but isn’t that *my* carriage?”

#### Earl of Essex

You are a nobleman, of noble birth and title, and one of Queen Elizabeth’s favorites. You have been friends with the Queen since you were children. Some gossip that you have had a romantic relationship with the Queen. Nevertheless, you are plotting her overthrow. You are gathering the support of other nobles before attempting a coup and riot on the streets of London. You are one of the wealthiest men in England and have many servants to attend your every need. You attend The Globe and sometimes have been known to hire Shakespeare’s company to play “politically incorrect” plays, including *Richard II*, to stir up trouble with the people and the Crown. Your line is: “Have you seen the Queen?”

## LESSONS

### The Scene outside the Globe (continued)

#### Sir Francis Drake

You are a navigator and one of the greatest English sea captains of all time. You are revered as a hero in the fight against the Spanish Armada and despised as an upstart by the old nobility. You epitomize the self-made Elizabethan privateer. You love the hunt for treasure (especially Spanish treasure) and are daring and visionary in exploration. You and your crew are the first Englishmen to circumnavigate the globe, claiming a portion of California for Queen Elizabeth along the way. Your devastating naval raids earned you the fear and the grudging respect of the Spaniards, who call you El Draque, “The Dragon.” Your line is: “The Armada is destroyed!”

#### The Master of Revels

You are the Master of Revels in London, controlling and censoring London plays. It is your responsibility to insure that everything on stage is suitable and unthreatening to Crown, that the theaters are clean, and that the health of the public is secured. You often shut theaters down, because of health dangers like the plague or because the acting companies are presenting plays which are perhaps treasonable or slanderous to the Crown. You have complete control, under the Queen, to help a theater thrive or to destroy it. Your line is: “This theater is now closed!”

#### Boy Apprentice Actor

You are a young apprentice in Shakespeare’s company. You left home at an early age and joined a traveling troupe, which quickly led you to London. Barely 15 years old, you’ve been playing on the stage for almost five years now and have played Juliet, Viola, and Cordelia, amongst others, to great acclaim. You’re hoping, after your voice changes, to grow into male roles and stay on with the company. Few apprentices, however, grow into male roles and stay with the company because there are so few positions available. You feel your voice start to change and fear that you’ll soon be out of work. Your line is: “I think I can play Juliet one more time!”

## LESSONS

### The Scene outside the Globe (continued)

#### Traveling Actor

You are a traveling actor. In a company of actors, musicians, and jugglers, you travel from town to town, from estate to estate, scraping together just enough food and money to live. You depend on the patronage of your sponsor, the Earl of Leicester, to protect you from being thrown in jail as a vagabond. You mostly perform old-fashioned morality plays in small household theaters, barns, outside in the woods, or on the lawns of nobleman's estates. You mostly live on the road, sleeping and eating either in the company's wagon or outside. When your company occasionally stops in London, you always see the latest play at The Globe. You wish you could enter a resident company of actors like The Lord Chamberlain's Men and stay in London. Your line is: "To be, or not to be — that is the question."

#### Secret Puritan

You are of the newly formed Puritan faith. You believe in living simply, working hard, and worshipping God with a basic wooden cross. Because your faith is persecuted and frowned upon by the Crown, you must pretend to be a member of the Church of England, attending at least once a month, but you worship as a Puritan in a secret location. If caught, you will be persecuted as a religious heretic and as a traitor. You loathe the theater, as a place where people lie and indulge in vulgarities. You never go to The Globe and are organizing a movement to have the theaters closed permanently. You stand outside the theater, usually, and heckle those who are going in to see the shows. Your line is: "Boo! The theater is rank, full of sin, and hath the plague upon it!"

#### Secret Catholic Priest

You live secretly as a Catholic priest. Until 1558, when Queen Elizabeth ascended to the throne, you worked happily as a member of a monastery. Once Elizabeth abolished the Catholic Church from England, your monastery was shut down and your fellow priests imprisoned or converted. You barely escaped conversion by being taken in by a friendly noblewoman who secretly is still a practicing Catholic. You live on her estate and maintain a small church in the back of her garden where she worships with you several times a week. You constantly fear for your life and that members of Elizabeth's Court will find you and destroy your church. You have never been to the theater. Your line is: "I am not her priest. I am *clearly* her gardener!"

## LESSONS

### The Scene outside the Globe (continued)

#### Glove Maker

You are a London glover, making gloves, purses, and belts from various types of animal skin. Your hands are stained and stink from the dye you use. Your daughter and wife have both recently died from the plague, and you fear that if you stay in London, you will die soon too. You drink too much ale and are always tired with an upset stomach. Your business has dropped off recently and you're thinking of moving to the country. You come to The Globe in the afternoons to gamble and see the latest play. Your favorites are the comedies, such as *The Comedy of Errors* and *Twelfth Night*. Your line is: "You look like you could use some new gloves."

#### Carpenter

You are a carpenter from just outside London. You are a member of a craft guild, the workers' union of your time. You apprenticed for years before becoming a full carpenter, and you do not respect those who do not *work* for a living. You do not consider the theater a "profession" or a "craft" and are angry that those whose "play" can make a decent living. You dislike the theater and only attend to mock it and throw vegetables at the actors. You are in London to attend a guild meeting and to find out if there will be any new taxes levied by the Crown this year. Your line is: "I could build that theater better myself."

#### Shopowner

You own a small shop in London that sells leather goods such as horse whips, purses, belts, and book covers. You rarely can take an afternoon off to go to the Globe. But when you can, you greatly enjoy it. You also enjoy all the business in your shop generated by the nearby theater. Before and after shows, your shop fills with people from outside London seeking bargains on leather goods before leaving town. You try to see every new play, at the cheap price of a penny. Sometimes you stand in the cheaper gallery, but usually you gain a seat on one of the lower levels. Your line is: "I can't see over all these ruffians."

## LESSONS

### The Scene outside the Globe (continued)

#### Peasant

You are a peasant. Living just outside London on the lands of the Earl of Essex, you work hard tending the Earl's chickens and gaming hens. You sleep and eat in a shack, which only has dirt floors and a leaky roof. You have no family and little social life. You eat stale bread and ale, leftovers from the Earl's dinners. You come into London every few months to try and find better work. But, being without any trade skills, you never find better employment. Lately you've begun to feel ill and you fear you have the plague. When the Earl gives you a scrap of money, you come to The Globe to see the latest play. You never bathe, have never touched soap, and have various small bugs living in your hair. Your teeth will soon all be rotten. Your line is: "Do you have any bread to spare?"

#### Beggar

You are a London beggar, homeless and living on the filthy streets of London. You beg each day and, if you're lucky, get a scrap of stale bread from off the streets. The streets are filled with human waste, garbage, and dead animals thrown into the ditches. Your skin is covered in boils; you almost always have a fever; and, with winter coming, you fear this might be your last year alive. You sleep in a ditch by the river with other homeless people. You rarely get into the theater because you have no money. Sometimes, though, you manage to sneak in. You always crouch down on the floor amongst the other groundlings, trying not to get noticed. Your line is: "A penny? I can't afford a penny!"

#### School Boy

You ran to school this morning and barely made it on time for the 6:00 a.m. bell. After prayers, you work till about 9:00 a.m. when you are permitted breakfast, then you work till 11:00 a.m. Lunch is from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The school day ends at 5:30 p.m. Yesterday you were caught talking to your friend Thomas during your lesson, and your knuckles were rapped with a stick in front of the whole class. Only boys go to your school. Your sister's education is accomplished at home. Noble children receive their education at home, from private tutors. You study Latin, rhetoric, reading, writing, and arithmetic. As a young boy you will read lots of plays written by Greeks and Romans, and today you and your classmates are reading Seneca's *Medea* to improve your Latin. Your line is: "I've learned my Ovid and I'm ready to go home!"

## LESSONS

### The Scene outside the Globe (continued)

#### Tutor

You spend the day keeping the young Earl of Derby on schedule. From 7-7:30 a.m. you oversee his dancing instruction. You then usher your young lord to the schoolroom to begin his French lesson. You work from 8 to 10:30 a.m. covering Latin, writing, drawing, and French. At 10:30 a.m. you join the household in prayers, recreation, and dinner. This is the second household for which you have taught. The last family with which you worked had only one son. This family has three, meaning you will have a stable job for years to come if you do well with the eldest. At 1:00 p.m. you usher all three boys back to the schoolroom. The lord has his Cosmography class as well as more Latin and writing, and you begin arithmetic and letters with the two younger sons. At 4:30 p.m. your day is almost finished as you bring your young student downstairs for evening prayers and supper. After a long day educating young children you curl up at the fire with a copy of Aristotle. Your line is: "If you don't learn your Ovid, you will not play tomorrow!"

#### Baker

You are one of the three bakers in Lord Derby's household. In the kitchen you work under the Head Baker and Head Cook. There are two girls who keep the fire and run errands with whom you like to flirt. As Lord Derby's servant you must follow some strict rules. You must not be absent from morning or evening meals or prayers or you will be fined two pence each time. Every time you swear, you are fined a penny. If you ever provoke a fight or strike a man you would be liable to dismissal. Last week you were fined a sixpence for wearing a dirty shirt on Sunday. Since servants are paid on the traditional Quarter Days (so called because they divide the year into quarters), you will be paid next week. Curiously, each of these falls on or about an equinox or solstice, so you will be able to buy your sweetheart a present for May Day. Your line is: "If my bread does not rise, I am in for another beating."

## LESSONS

### The Scene outside the Globe (continued)

#### Doctor

You believe everything in the world is composed of four elements: Earth, Air, Fire, and Water. In the human body, the humours (choler, blood, phlegm, and black bile) are the natural bodily fluids that correspond to the elements and have various natures. When the humours are all in balance in a person, he or she is completely healthy. If they get out of balance, illness results. Today you had to bleed a patient to restore her balance. Bleeding is performed with a lancet and a bowl. You prefer leeching because there is less blood to clean up, but leeches are only used for other operations. You bled the arm of a woman because she was feeling much too sluggish and needed phlegm drained. After pouring the blood into the streets, you wipe off your lance and go to your next patient's home where you bleed his foot with the same lance. Your line is: "Just let me bleed you a bit more, then you'll be fine!"

#### Apothecary

You are the Earl of Hertford's personal apothecary and work with his surgeon and physician. Medicines prescribed by physicians are made up by you, the apothecary. Since apothecaries belong to the Grocers Company, you had to serve an apprenticeship before you became the Earl's personal apothecary. While traveling with your lord you serve his entire household. You frequently make willow bark tea for her ladyship's frequent headaches. Tomorrow you plan to go to a local woman who sells dried and fresh herbs in town. The woman is rumored to be a witch, but you are in desperate need of nightshade and dandelion weed. Your line is: "Careful. This potion is deadly."

#### Wet Nurse

You are a young mother working for the Earl of Derby. You help the Head Nurse raise his lordship's four children. Currently you are nursing their youngest daughter, a four-month-old baby. Your own child was weaned a year ago and is being raised at home by your elder sister. It is your job to nurse and care for the infant, and you spend your entire day in the nursery. While the three older children are at lessons with the tutor, you and the Head Nurse like to sit and gossip about Lord Derby and Lady Derby. Lady Derby hasn't been home for two months. Your line is: "I feel like these children are my very own!"

# NCTE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS

1. Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
2. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.
3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
4. Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
5. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.
6. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.
7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.
8. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.
9. Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.
10. Students whose first language is not English make use of their first language to develop competency in the English language arts and to develop understanding of content across the curriculum.
11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.
12. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).



[www.shakespeareinamericancommunities.org](http://www.shakespeareinamericancommunities.org)

Not for sale — the Shakespeare in American Communities teacher toolkit can be ordered free-of-charge from [www.shakespeareinamericancommunities.org](http://www.shakespeareinamericancommunities.org).