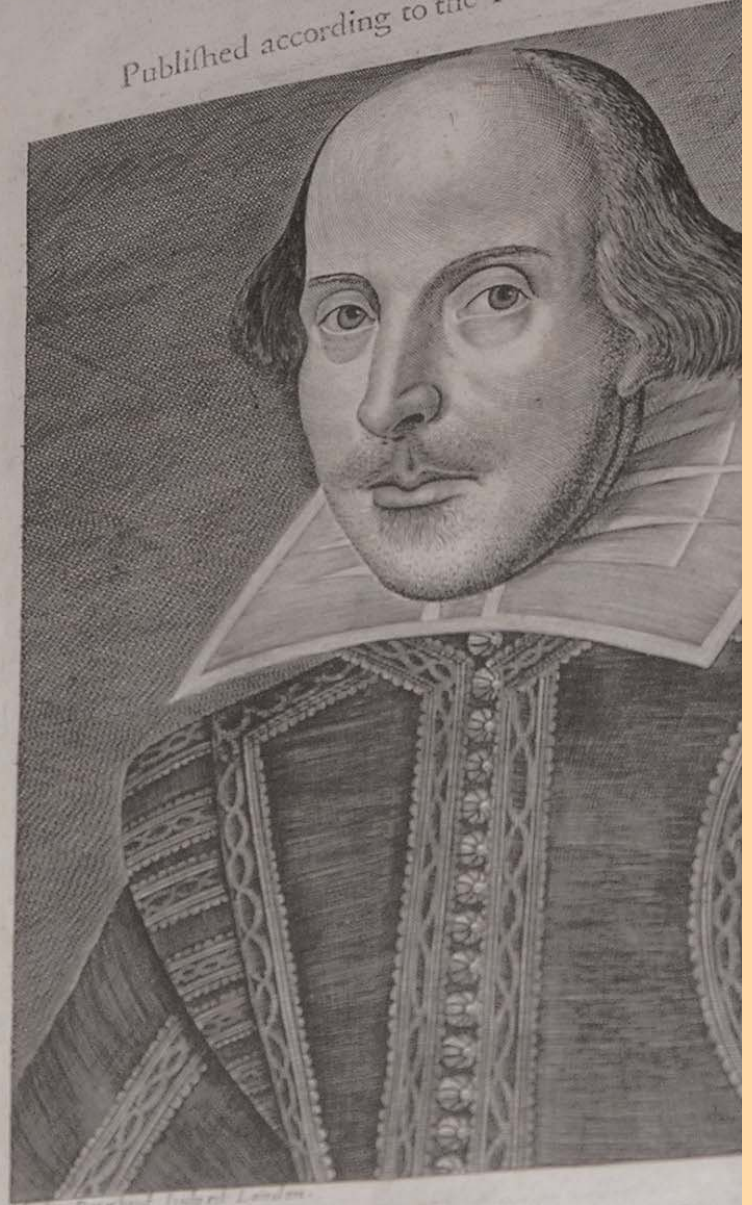


To the Reader.

figure, that thou here seest put,
was for gentle Shakespeare cut;
ein the Grauer had a strife
a Nature, to out-doo the life :
d he but haue drawne his wit
vell in brasse, as he hath hit
; the Print would then surpasse
hat vvas euer vvrit in brasse.
e he cannot, Reader, looke
n his Picture, but his Booke.

B. I.

Mr. WILLIAMS
SHAKESPEARE
COMEDIES,
HISTORIES, &
TRAGEDIES.
Published according to the True Originall Co



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LONDON
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A
Resource for
Grades K - 12
About the Works
and Language of
William
Shakespeare

Shakespeare Festival St. Louis' Education Tour offers a fine opportunity for live performance to become a part of the rich fabric of learning within your classroom. Watching a play or becoming an actor helps develop engaged students who enthusiastically take part in a comprehensive learning experience. Spending a little time introducing your class to Shakespeare and the play they will see will increase your student's ability to be an active, thoughtful and entertained audience member.

These study materials offer an entry point for stimulating interest and providing a context through which your students will have a deeper and enjoyable time watching the Shakespeare Festival touring production.

The materials are also helpful as a guide to learning about their role as the audience - and THAT is the key! Without an audience, the theatre does not exist. Shakespeare Festival Education Tour provides the performance, but only you and your students can complete the "Shakespeareance."

Without you, Shakespeare's brilliance is merely words on a page. Together we bring his plays alive, allowing his genius to inspire the audiences of the future!

Christopher Limber
Education Director
Shakespeare Festival St. Louis



Students at City Academy enjoy Education Tour 2007's *A Midsummer Night's Dream...In the Wink of an Eye!* Photo © J. David Levy.

“On Shakespeare’s Plays” Table of Contents & “Show Me” Standards

Shakespeare’s WorksPages 1 & 2
Show Me Standards CA7; FA5

Shakespearean ComedyPage 3
Show Me Standards FA 1, 2, 3 & 5

Language in ShakespearePages 4 & 5
Show Me Standards CA 1, 2, 5 & 7; FA 1, 2, 3

National Standards

Kennedy Center ArtsEdge Theatre Content Standard 2-8:

2. Acting by developing, communicating, and sustaining characters in improvisations and informal or formal productions
3. Designing and producing by conceptualizing and realizing artistic interpretations for informal or formal productions
4. Directing by interpreting dramatic texts and organizing and conducting rehearsals for informal or formal productions
5. Researching by evaluating and synthesizing cultural and historical information to support artistic choices
6. Comparing and integrating art forms by analyzing traditional theatre, dance, music, visual arts, and new art forms
7. Analyzing, critiquing, and constructing meanings from informal and formal theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions
8. Understanding context by analyzing the role of theatre, film, television, and electronic media in the past and the present

Standards for the English Language Arts Sponsored by NCTE and IRA (1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12)

National Standards for History 5-12: Era 6, Standards 3, 4, 6

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Special Thanks to The Shakespeare Theatre Company

**Education Tour 2009 is sponsored by
Jeanne and Rex Sinquefield**

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

Shakespeare's canon includes 37 plays, 154 sonnets and two epic narrative poems. During his lifetime, many of his plays were published in what are known as Quarto editions,

frequently without receiving

the playwright's permission. The Quartos are mostly flawed versions containing added material or missing entire passages from the original works. The first collected edition of Shakespeare's works is called the First Folio. It was published after the playwright's death in 1623 by two members of his acting company, John Heminges and Henry Condell. Since then the works of Shakespeare have been studied, analyzed, translated and enjoyed the world over as some of the finest masterpieces of the English language.

Establishing the chronology of Shakespeare's plays is a frustrating and difficult task. It is impossible to know in what order the plays were written because there is no record of the first production date of any of his works. However, scholars have decided upon a specific play chronology based on the following sources of information: 1) several 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 Shakespeare's contemporaries; 3) the

publication dates of sources; and 4) the dates that the plays appear in print (remembering that in the Elizabethan age a play was produced immediately after it was written, but may not have been published for years following the first production). Despite the fact that we have an accepted play chronology, we must keep in mind that the dating is only an educated guess, and there are many who disagree with the order of plays listed on the next page.

One should also keep in mind that these "genre" classifications were not determined by Shakespeare as he wrote each play but by others when his plays were published after his death. The editors of the First Folio divided Shakespeare's plays into theatrical genres—Tragedies, Comedies or Histories—perhaps to help readers of the time better understand the depth and scope of his creative work.



SFSTL 2008 production of *The Tragedy of King Richard the Third*. Claudia Robinson as Queen Margaret.



The cast of SFSTL's 2007 production of *Much Ado About Nothing*. Photos on this page © J. David Levy.

Shakespeare's Works

A listing of Shakespeare's works, by genre. Dates in parenthesis indicate scholars' best estimate of year written.

Comedies

The Comedy of Errors (1592-93)
The Taming of the Shrew (1593-94)
The Two Gentlemen of Verona (1594-95)
A Midsummer Night's Dream (1595-96)
Love's Labor's Lost (1594-95)
The Merchant of Venice (1596-97)
As You Like It (1599-1600)
Much Ado About Nothing (1598-99)
Twelfth Night, or, What You Will (1599-1600)
The Merry Wives of Windsor (1600-01)
All's Well That Ends Well (1602-03)
Measure for Measure (1604-05)

Histories

The First Part of Henry the Sixth (1591-92)
The Second and Third Parts of Henry the Sixth (1590-91)
The Tragedy of Richard the Third (1592-93)
The Life and Death of King John (1596-97)
The Tragedy of Richard the Second (1595-96)
The First Part of Henry the Fourth (1597-98)
The Second Part of Henry the Fourth (1597-98)
The Life of Henry the Fifth (1598-99)
The Life of King Henry the Eighth (1612-13)

Tragedies

Titus Andronicus (1593-94)
Romeo and Juliet (1594-95)
Julius Caesar (1599-1600)
Hamlet Prince of Denmark (1600-01)
The History of Troilus and Cressida (1601-02)
Othello, the Moor of Venice (1604-05)
King Lear (1605-06)
Macbeth (1605-06)
The Life of Timon of Athens (1607-08)
Antony and Cleopatra (1606-07)
Coriolanus (1607-08)

Romances

Pericles Prince of Tyre (1608-09)
Cymbeline (1609-10)
The Winter's Tale (1610-11)
The Tempest (1611-12)
*The Two Noble Kinsmen** (1612-13)

Poems

Venus and Adonis
The Rape of Lucrece
Sonnets
A Lover's Complaint
The Passionate Pilgrim
The Phoenix and Turtle

**The Two Noble Kinsmen* is listed although a few scholars do not believe it is an original Shakespeare work. The majority of the play was probably written by John Fletcher, Shakespeare's close friend who succeeded him as foremost dramatist for the King's Men.



SFSTL 2002 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Whit Reichert as Snug.



SFSTL 2003 Education Tour production of *Quick-Brewed Macbeth*. Clockwise from top: Josh Rowan, Blaize Azzara, Corey Jones, Matt Kahler. Photos this page © J. David Levy.

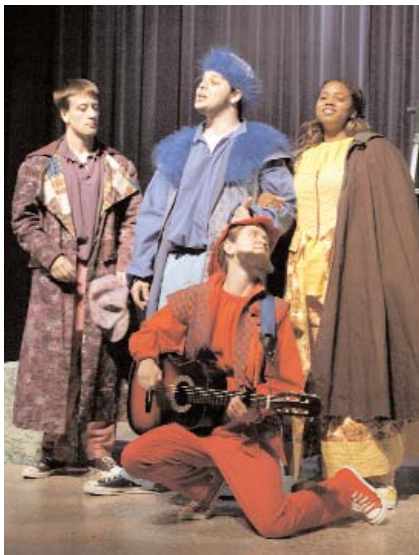
Shakespearean Comedy

In Shakespeare's day going to see a **comedy** guaranteed that you could expect specific things. When a comedy played at the Globe, audiences expected a shorter play, a lighter touch of storytelling and character, and definitely a happy ending. There were few historical truths, no great pageantry and no one came to an end, especially the main character.



SFSTL 2007 Education Tour: *Much A Doo-Wop About Nothing*. Anna Blair (center), students from Parkway South Middle School.

But Shakespeare's comedies were neither foolish nor meaningless; they were deliberately written to break conventions of the time and to explore the delightful truths of the human condition. In Shakespeare's greatest comedic characters, he examines human vulnerability and exposes foolish and unfortunate behavior. Many of his comedies are laced together and often tied up at the end with the human capacity for forgiveness and the ability to triumph over adversity. These purposeful points of departure and dramatic resonance expand the usual comedic fare of his time to include the magic of *The Tempest*, the redemption in *The Comedy of Errors*, and even the tragic elements like the unjust imprisonment of the tortured Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*.



SFSTL 2004 Education Tour: *As You Like It - Lickety-Split!* Standing: Adam Hale, Josh Rowan, Erica Sutherlin; kneeling: Elizabeth Watt.

In Shakespeare's comedies the characters learn, change and discover as a result of the events around them. They are often taught a lesson, like Falstaff and Master Ford in *Merry Wives*, or they discover their ability to fall in love, like Rosalind in *As You Like It*. These unexpected moments of reality and heartfelt joy, embarrassment, redemption or discovery make his comedies meaningful and enduring—much more than simple escapism or entertainment.

Shakespeare knew that theatre had the power to transform—that entertainment enriches when it enchants and enlightens. Comedies become exceptional through the careful ordering of laughter and sadness in the same breath. This welding of tone allows his comedies to rise above mere amusement by providing insight into our shared and fragile humanity.



SFSTL 2008 Education tour production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream...In the Wink of an Eye!* Jennifer M. Theby, Robert A. Mitchell. All photos on this page © J. David Levy.

Shakespeare's comedies...were deliberately written to break conventions of the times and explore the delightful truths of the human condition.

In Shakespeare's time, playgoers expected formulaic tragedies using traditional conventions. These tenets included a hero who avenges a crime committed against a family member or a personal injustice. By taking the law into their own hands and working outside the traditional power structure, these tragic protagonists pull out all the stops to reclaim their personal or familial honor.



In *Macbeth*, the title character destroys all sense of natural, human and divine laws by eliminating all those who stand in his way, including the King himself, as he assumes what he thinks is his rightful place on the throne. The Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy had two distinct features: 1) the person seeking revenge typically pretends to be mad, and, 2) for various reasons, vengeance is delayed. Contemporary writers in Shakespeare's time believed strongly that certain rules should be followed in Elizabethan tragedies. The form was as important, sometimes almost more important, than the story itself.

Writers of this time believed tragedies should be written according to Aristotle's *Poetics*. Aristotle states that a tragedy should contain a hero in a stately position such as a king or general. As opposed to his fellow playwrights and scholars, Shakespeare's audience was not concerned with rules and conventions. He wrote plays primarily to please his patrons. His tragedies do

center on characters of such estate, but the Bard writes these figures as human beings dealing with realistic issues and concerns with which his audience can identify as opposed to untouchable, invincible members of high society. Take, for example, young Hamlet. While he is the Prince of Denmark, he is also a God-fearing man in love, concerned with the murder of his father. Although the emotions and situations are exaggerated, we can easily empathize and can learn from the hero's downfall.

Another common Elizabethan belief is that a tragic hero has a flaw that brings about his downfall. While many of Shakespeare's tragic characters contain a flaw, sometimes such flaws are practically indecipherable due to their complex and layered characterization. It is often argued that Othello does not have a traditional tragic flaw, but is justifiably and purely human; he is a loyal man who is affected by jealousy and pushed by Iago into a deeply troubled state of mind.

The Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy had two distinct features: 1) the person seeking revenge pretends to be mad, and, 2) for various reasons, vengeance is delayed.

In addition to the tragic flaw, Shakespeare's contemporary playwrights wrote tragedies that ended with a revelation of self-knowledge or lesson learned by the story's hero about how his own frailty has brought about his and others' downfall. There is a general consensus that Shakespeare's first tragedy, *Titus Andronicus*, does not contain any lesson. All the audience is left with is a disconcerting pile of bodies and a pool of blood. While Shakespeare did not always diverge from the expected norms of an Elizabethan tragedy, he wrote plays which he banked on to delight and titillate his audience. He gave little credence to the "rules."

Elizabethan audiences expected action. They wanted sword-fighting, spectacle, blood and death. While Shakespeare used these features in his tragedies, he also infused his writings with profound inner battles and relevant personal issues, often dramatized with soliloquies and griping dialogue. By acknowledging the popular interest in physical conflict and fusing it with relatable characters dealing with ordinary concerns, Shakespeare created accessible, dramatic and spellbinding meditations on the human condition.



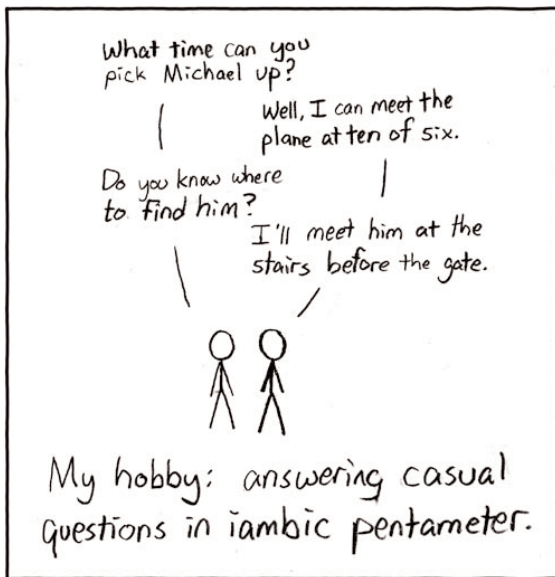
SFSTL 2008 Education Tour: *Macbeth*. Khnemu Menu-Ra and Michael B. Perkins. Photo © J. David Levy.

Language in Shakespeare

During the Elizabethan period, "English" was a relatively young language (only about 160 years old), combining Latin, French and Anglo-Saxon. There was no dictionary or standardized literacy education. People in Shakespeare's London spoke much more than they read, causing the rules of grammar and spelling to be quite fluid. Writers created new words daily and poets expressed themselves in a new form of writing known as blank verse, first appearing in 1557 in *Certain Booke of Virgiles Aeneas* by the Earl of Surrey:

They whistled all, with fixed face attent
When Prince Aeneas from the royal seat
Thus gan to speak, O Queene, it is thy will,
I should renew a woe can not be told:
(Book II, 14)

That the verse was "blank" simply meant that the poetry did not rhyme, allowing rhymeless poets such as Virgil and Ovid to be translated and Elizabethan playwrights to emulate the natural rhythms of English speech within *iambic pentameter*.



Web comic courtesy of "Toothpaste for Dinner."

A typical line of verse from this time contains five units of meter or feet. Each foot contains two syllables. When the first syllable is unstressed and the second syllable is stressed (dee DUM), it is an iamb (iambic meaning push, persistency or determination). The prefix penta means five, as in the five-sided shape: a pentagon. Iambic pentameter is therefore one line of poetry consisting of five forward-moving feet.

It was this new tradition of blank verse in iambic pentameter that Shakespeare inherited as he embarked on his career

as playwright and poet. Similar to the human heartbeat, a horse gallop or the beat of a piece of music, iambic pentameter drives and supports Shakespeare's verse, moving the language along in a forward flow that emulates the natural speech and rhythms of life. Here is a standard line of verse in iambic pentameter from *Romeo and Juliet*:

But soft! What light through yonder window breaks?
(Act 2, Sc. 2)

If we were to say the rhythm and not the words, it would sound like this:

dee DUM dee DUM dee DUM dee DUM

When we scan a piece of text, we simply tap out the rhythm of the line, based on "dee DUM dee DUM dee DUM dee DUM" to see if the line is structured in iambic pentameter:

But soft! What light through yonder window breaks?

Embracing the rules of this new verse, Shakespeare's early writing operated almost entirely within strict iambic pentameter.

Prose (language that is not poetry), in Shakespeare's work, is not in iambic pentameter and relies more heavily on other literary devices for its speed and rhythm. These devices include: antithesis (setting opposite words against each other), lists (series of actions or descriptive words that build to a climax) and puns (the use or misuse of a word to mean another word). Shakespeare used prose to express conversation between the lower classes, like the Mechanicals in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, or familiar or intimate scenes, as with Henry and Katherine at the end of *Henry V*. He also utilized prose to express madness or vulgarity, as in the nunnery scene of *Hamlet*. The exact meaning

of a shift from verse to prose is not constant, but it always signals a change in the situation, characters or tone of a scene. Only *Much Ado about Nothing* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* rely almost entirely on prose. In the following passage from

Similar to the human heartbeat, a horse gallop or the beat of a piece of music, iambic pentameter drives and supports Shakespeare's verse.

Language in Shakespeare

The Merry Wives of Windsor, note the use of antithesis in Ford's comparison of himself with Page. Note the list of things Ford would rather "trust others with" than his "wife with herself" and observe the pun on "effect:"

Ford:

Page is an ass, a secure ass; he will trust his wife, he will not be jealous. I will rather trust a Fleming with my butter, Parson Hugh the Welshman with my cheese, an Irishman with my aquaviva bottle, or a thief to walk my ambling gelding, than my wife with herself. Then she plots, then she ruminates, then she devises; and what they think in their hearts they may effect, they will break their hearts but they will effect. God be praised for my jealousy!

(*Merry Wives*, Act 2, Sc. 2)

As his writing skill increased, Shakespeare gradually employed alliteration (the repetition of a vowel or consonant in two or more words in a phrase), assonance (resembling vowel sounds in a line) and onomatopoeia (words with sounds imitating their meaning) to create deeply poetic, vibrant images on stage for the characters and his audience. Examples of these three literary devices are found in the following four lines:

Chorus: From camp to camp through the foul womb of night
The hum of either army stilly sounds,
That the fixed sentinels almost receive
The secret whispers of each other's watch.
(*Henry V*, Act 4, Sc. 47)

The hard "C" is repeated in the first line (alliteration), the "O" is heard in "through", "foul" and "womb" (assonance) and the word "whispers" in the last line imitates the sound whispers produce (onomatopoeia).

By the time Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet*, he sometimes allowed a character's thoughts to overflow their usual pentameter lines with an extra beat, often ending with a soft or feminine ending. He also utilized more and more enjambement or run-on lines, allowing thoughts to continue from line to line, rather than finishing a thought per line. He grew to express the inner life of his characters and the size of their thoughts within the structure and the scansion of the text. In this famous passage from *Hamlet*, notice the overflow in the first line of Hamlet's huge thought beyond the regular pentameter, forming a feminine ending:

To be, or not to be: that is the question.

(*Hamlet*, Act 3, Sc. 1)

With this overflow, Shakespeare expresses the enormity of Hamlet's thought, his situation and the uneasy exploration of this argument. (It is important to remember, however, scanning is subjective and must be decided by the individual actor or reader.) This line might also be scanned:

To be, or not to be: that is the question.

This creates a trochee, or an iamb of reversed stress: DEE dum.

Eventually, in *Othello*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth*, Shakespeare became a master of building, breaking and reinventing rhythms and language to create an entire tone or world for a play. Continuously experimenting and exploring the combination of form, meaning and language, he used short and shared lines between characters more and more, as in *Macbeth*, allowing the speed and rhythm of characters' thoughts to meet and collide.



SFSTL 2004 Education Tour: *As You Like It - Lickety-Split!* Erica Sutherland as Aliena. Photo © J. David Levy.

Lady Macbeth: I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry.
Did not you speak?

Macbeth: When?

Lady Macbeth: Now.

Macbeth: As I descended?
(*Macbeth*, Act 2, Sc. 2)

By the time Shakespeare gives his final farewell in *The Tempest*, believed by many to be his last play, his verse is so varied and specific to character and situation that it is extremely difficult to scan. Shakespeare broke, rebuilt and reinvented the verse form so many times that he played the literary equivalent of jazz in the rhythms of *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*. At the end of *The Tempest*, in Prospero's powerfully simple epilogue, Shakespeare brings his work full circle by returning to the simplicity of regular verse. Having created almost 3,000 words, timeless characters and the greatest poetry in the history of the English language, Shakespeare "buries his art" and returns to the form with which he began.