

An Introduction to Shakespeare



William Shakespeare (bapt. 26 April 1564 – 23 April 1616)^[a] was an English playwright, poet, and actor, widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English language and the world's greatest dramatist. He is often called England's national poet and the "Bard of Avon" (or simply "the Bard").

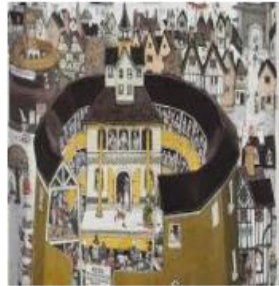
His works consist of some 39 plays, 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems, and a few other verses, some of uncertain authorship.

His plays have been translated into every major living language and are performed more often than those of any other playwright.

Shakespeare was born and raised in Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire. Shakespeare produced most of his known works between 1589 and 1613. His early plays were primarily comedies and histories and are regarded as some of the best work produced in these genres.

He then wrote mainly tragedies until 1608, among them *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*, all considered to be among the finest works in the English language.^[2]

In the last phase of his life, he wrote tragicomedies (also known as romances).



Form (Play)- Key Terminology 1

Scene- a brief moment in a play consisting of dialogue and action.

Act- several scenes following on from each other. Each act forms the different parts of the plot.

Stage Direction- an instruction in the script of a play, directing the movements of the actors, the arrangement of scenery, etc.

Audience- the people watching the play.

Playwright- the writer of the play

Soliloquy/monologue- an act of speaking one's thoughts aloud when by oneself or regardless of any hearers, especially by a character in a play.

Structure- Key Terminology 2

5 Act play- a drama is often divided into five parts, or acts, which some refer to as a dramatic arc

Exposition- the opening section where the setting is fixed in a particular place and time, the mood is set, and characters are introduced.

Rising Action- an exciting force or inciting event

Climax- the climax is the turning point, which changes the protagonist's fate.

Falling Action- the tension decreases and it wraps up the narrative, resolves its loose ends, and leads toward the closure.

Denouement- the ending with some sort of resolution and the tying up of loose ends.

Catastrophe- the final action that completes the unravelling of the plot in a play, especially in a tragedy. The hero meets his end.

Language- Key Terminology 3

Literary Devices:

Repetition- Repeated words or ideas

Imagery- Creating a mental picture for the reader through appealing to the senses (smell, touch, taste, see, hear).

Simile- Comparing one thing to another using like or as

Metaphor- Describes an object or action in a way that isn't literally true, but helps explain an idea or make a comparison

Connotation- What a word makes the reader feel, think or imagine.

Symbolism- the way an object is given greater meaning within the novel so it has added importance.

Motif- a recurring symbol within the novel

Personification- giving human characteristics to an inanimate object

DRAMATIC DEVICES

Foreshadowing: a device in which the writer gives a warning or indication of the future

Dramatic Tension: a sense of excitement or anticipation that the audience feels

Dramatic Irony: occurs when the audience are aware of a detail that characters on stage are not aware of.

Dramatic Tension: a sense of excitement or anticipation that the audience feels.

Pauses and cliffhangers: these techniques are used to give suspense to the play

Shakespeare's Style

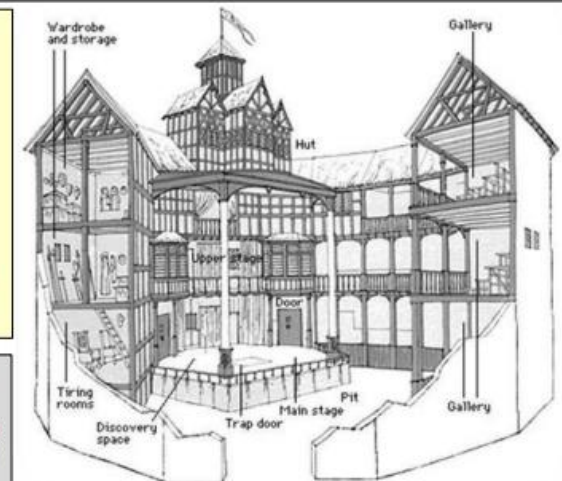
Verse: Speech written in poetic form

Blank Verse: a formal poetic form where each foot of a line is stressed on the second syllable (de-DUM) and each has five feet creating IAMBIC PENTAMETRE.

Prose: A form of written speech that reflects the style of ordinary speech without a rhythmic structure.

The **Globe Theatre** was a theatre in London associated with William Shakespeare. It was built in 1599 by Shakespeare's playing company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, and was destroyed by fire on 29 June 1613. A second Globe Theatre was built on the same site by June 1614 and closed down in 1642.

A modern reconstruction of the Globe, named "Shakespeare's Globe", opened in 1997 approximately 750 feet (230 m) from the site of the original theatre.



Macbeth Key Scenes

Act 1, Scene 2	Macbeth fights heroically in battle alongside Banquo; Duncan decrees that he will be rewarded with the title of Thane of Cawdor.
Act 1, Scene 3	Three witches prophecise that Macbeth that Macbeth will become king; they prophecise that Banquo’s sons will become kings.
Act 1, Scene 7	Macbeth has doubts about killing Duncan; Lady Macbeth’s intervention convinces him to go ahead and do the deed.
Act 2, Scene 1	Just before killing Duncan, Macbeth hallucinates and sees a floating dagger that is dripping with blood.
Act 2, Scene 2	Macbeth returns after killing Duncan; he believes that his hands will never been clean and that he will never sleep again.
Act 2, Scene 3	Macduff discovers Duncan’s dead body; Malcolm and Donalbain decide to leave Scotland.
Act 3, Scene 4	Macbeth hallucinates and sees Banquo’s ghost in his empty seat; Lady Macbeth takes control; Macbeth decides to see the witches again.
Act 4, Scene 1	Macbeth sees the witches; they tell him to beware of Macduff.
Act 5, Scene 3	Macbeth is isolated at Dunsinane Castle; Lady Macbeth is going mad.
Act 5, Scene 5	Macbeth is told that Lady Macbeth is dead; he is told that Birnam Wood appears to be moving towards Dunsinane.

Key Characters		Key Themes		Historical Context
Macbeth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thane of Glamis; made Thane of Cawdor • Kills Duncan • Killed by Macduff 	Ambition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads Macbeth to kill Duncan • Eventually destroys Macbeth • Also leads to Lady Macbeth’s suicide. 	<p><i>Macbeth</i> was most likely written in 1606, early in the reign of James I, who became king in 1603. He succeeded Elizabeth I. James I was Scottish.</p> <p>The play was first performed not long after the Gunpowder Plot. Shakespeare shows how the murder of a king leads to guilt, madness and eventual destruction.</p> <p>It was commonly believed at the time that kings were appointed by ‘divine right’ and were anointed by God.</p>
Lady Macbeth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wife of Macbeth • Ambitious and ruthless • Goes mad and kills herself 	Guilt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wife of Macbeth • Ambitious and ruthless • Goes mad and kills herself. 	
Banquo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Macbeth’s friend and brother-in-arms • Father to Fleance • Killed at the behest of Macbeth 	Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Macbeth is a ruthless warrior • He feels a deep sense of guilt after killing Duncan • Macbeth hires murders. 	
Macduff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thane of Fife • Loyal to King Duncan • Kills Macbeth. 	Kingship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duncan is a good king • Macbeth is a tyrant • Malcolm is eventually restored to the throne. 	
Witches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prophecise that Macbeth will be king • Prophecise that Banquo’s sons will be kings • Tell Macbeth to beware of Macduff 	Appearances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contrast between appearance and reality • Macbeth hallucinates twice • Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are unable to sleep. 	