

Biography of Shakespeare

By Lindsay Parsons

Stratford-upon-Avon is a small town located on the Avon River in England. It was a large market for merchants, traders, and farmers. It was also the birthplace of William Shakespeare. His estimated birthday, April 23rd, 1564, is based on baptismal records. He married Anne Hathaway, a woman 8 years his senior, when he was just 18 years old. Together they had three children, Susanna, Judith, and Hamnet. Shakespeare began his career acting and writing plays for the Lord Chamberlain's Men theatre company, later known as the King's Men after James I became King in 1603.



The Globe Theatre rebuilt in 1997



William Shakespeare is the most famous playwright who ever lived. Here is a glimpse into what we know of his life...



Stratford-upon-Avon

Fun Facts!

- Shakespeare died on his (estimated) 52nd birthday: April 23, 1616
- He survived the Black Death, a plague that killed over 33,000 in London alone
- He never attended university, after his early marriage he had to support his family

- Average person's vocabulary is about 10 – 15,000 words, Shakespeare's was over 29,000 words
- He was an actor in many of his own plays
- Wrote approximately 37 plays and 154 sonnets
- Much of Shakespeare's life is largely unknown
- His family was illiterate
- The majority of his plays were published after his death
- Credited for inventing 1,700 words in the English language
- The Globe theatre was not only the location for many of Shakespeare's shows, it was also a bear pit, brothel, and gambling house
- Performed plays for Elizabeth I and James I
- James I was a huge fan of Shakespeare, so he gave his theatre company to him. Shakespeare in return honored him by changing the name of the company to The King's Men.

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Shakespeare's Lasting Impact on Literature

By Tammy Whynot

When reflecting upon the influence of Shakespeare's plays on literature, it is striking that there seems to be hardly a lone segment of English literary history untouched by the hand of the Bard. Scholars have examined his impact upon the works of giants such as Goethe, Voltaire, Byron, Milton, Keats, Dickens and Faulkner; his plots have been re-interpreted over and again, seen in recent decades in modern stories for young adults such as *West Side Story* and *The Twilight Saga*.

Shakespeare's works are dominated by classic narrative structures that, although not invented by Shakespeare, were arguably applied better by him than any author since. Chief among these are the heroic or romantic tragi-comedy. In the heroic plot, a social power is disrupted, perhaps by the overthrowing of a king or an invasion; in the romantic plot, lovers meet, fall into a conflict, and are separated (Hogan, 2006). The key difference between a tragedy and a comedy in either case is the resolution: in a comedy, lovers are reunited or political