

1º & 2º E.S.O.

# SHAKESPEARE RETURNS



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## SESSION 1: SYNOPSIS AND CHARACTERS



### Activity 1: Shakespeare

Read the passage below carefully, then answer the questions beneath.

William Shakespeare was an English actor, poet and playwright. He was born in the small medieval market town of Stratford Upon Avon in the middle of the 16th century. The town, which sits alongside the river Avon, is now a famous tourist hotspot and attracts thousands of people all year round who come to see the town and visit the house where he once lived with his family.

He was born on the 23rd April 1564, to parents Mary Arden and John Shakespeare. His upbringing was modest, however his subsequent fame and success brought both wealth and title to his family.

Facts around Shakespeare's early life are speculated, although it is thought he attended a local Grammar School in Stratford where he learnt Greek and Latin Literature, Rhetoric and Christian Ethics. At the time, only boys could attend school. Girls were not allowed the same privileges and were educated at home. Shakespeare stayed in education until the age of fifteen, and unlike most people in Britain today, he did not go on to study at University.

At the age of eighteen, William Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, a local woman who was eight years his senior. Six years after their marriage, they had a daughter, Susanna. Two years later, Anne bore twins: Hamnet and Judith. Tragically, Shakespeare's son Hamnet died in 1596 from a drowning accident.

There is a paucity of information about Shakespeare's early career as a playwright. Prior to starting his career writing and acting, he is thought to have worked alongside his father as a law clerk. He also served as a soldier or sailor defending England during the threat of Spanish invasion.

Shakespeare wrote his extraordinary body of words during a period of 30 years from 1590 to 1620. He started writing comedies before moving towards writing histories and tragedies. His farewell to the stage was *The Tempest*.

Shakespeare had his own company of players (actors) known as the Lord Chamberlain's Men who travelled the country performing his plays. In 1599 The Globe Theatre was built for the company to perform at in London. Sadly, the original Globe Theatre burnt to the ground on 29th June 1613. It was rebuilt on the same site in 1614, but later closed in 1642. A modern reconstruction which is known as 'Shakespeare's Globe' opened in London in 1977 and stands approximately 200 metres from the site of the original theatre. Shakespeare plays are performed all year round at the modern Globe theatre and attract many tourists as well as Londoners.



## SESSION 1: SYNOPSIS AND CHARACTERS



1. Which town is known as the birthplace of Shakespeare?

.....

2. In what century was Shakespeare born?

.....

3. Where was Shakespeare educated and what did he study?

.....

4. Did Shakespeare go to University?

.....

5. Did Shakespeare marry and if so, who did he marry?

.....

6. In his early work-life, who did Shakespeare work with?

.....

7. What was the last play Shakespeare wrote?

.....

8. What was the name of the theatre that burnt down?

.....



## SESSION 1: SYNOPSIS AND CHARACTERS



### Activity 2: Creating new words

Shakespeare is known for his use of the English language. He often made up new words where there were none. He is responsible for some of the everyday phrases we now use in English today.

- a) oft
- b) farewell
- c) methinks
- d) nay
- e) wherefore
- f) swear
- g) lest
- h) 'twas
- i) prithee

- 1) No
- 2) It was
- 3) please
- 4) promise
- 5) I think
- 6) often
- 7) Unless
- 8) goodbye
- 9) Why

**SESSION 2: UNDERSTANDING THE PLAY****Activity 3: The words missing**

The senses below each have a word missing. Using the Shakespearean words above, try to fill in the gaps to make the sentences complete.

1. I ..... think of thee.
2. .... I might have an idea!
3. .... we forget.
4. .... a cold winter's night.
5. .... art thou Romeo?
6. .... Juliet, parting is such sweet sorrow.

**SESSION 2: UNDERSTANDING THE PLAY****Activity 4: Anne**

Listen to Track 5, a scene from Act II. Then try to tick the correct answer to following questions.

**1) John is speaking at the start of the scene. What does he say happened to the Globe Theatre?**

- a) It burnt down
- b) There was a flood
- c) It has been burgled

**2) What does Anne say that she wants to be?**

- a) A supermodel
- b) A caught jester
- c) An actress

**3) How does John react to Anne when she asks to audition to join the theatre?**

- a) He asks her to marry him?
- b) He sends her away
- c) He invites her to join the theatre company



## SESSION 3: EXPRESS YOURSELF!



### Activity 5: The end of the play and your impressions

Now get into partners or groups of three. Take turns asking each other the following questions and using the sentences and vocabulary in this section to help you.

- Did you like play?
- What was your favourite part?
- Who was your favourite character?
- Which character would you like to play?

I really enjoyed the play. It was really:  
- funny / exciting / dramatic / interesting.

I did not really like the play. It was too:  
- scary / boring / difficult to understand.

My favourite part of the play was when...

I did not give a favourite part. I enjoyed everything!

My favourite character was...

If I could be one of the characters I would play...





## SESSION 3: EXPRESS YOURSELF!



### Activity 6: A Review

Now that you have seen the play, who was your favourite character? Why?

**My favourite character was..... because he/she was.....**

- original
- entertaini  
ng
- interesting
- energetic
- sensitive
- creative
- realistic

**My favourite part was when he/she.....**

.....

.....

.....

**Do you like the idea of playing your favourite character?**

Yes/No, because.....

.....

.....

.....

## SESSION 3: EXPRESS YOURSELF!



### Activity 7: Role Play

Below is an extract from the first scene in Act one (Track 1). Try to act it out using the stage notes in ().

#### ACT I

(Shakespeare enters. He is desolate, his face and hands are dirty. We can see a glow of fire in the distance. There is a table to one side of the stage. On it there are scrolls, a pen and a paperweight shaped like a skull. There is a big trunk and some foils next to it.)

**SHAKESPEARE:** I could not save the theatre. The theatre is on fire... I am useless... They think I'm a hero but I'm really a nobody... (Picking up the pen.) To write or not to write? That is the question... (He approaches the trunk. He hesitates, and then puts the pen inside it. Then he locks the trunk and throws away the key.) (Richard enters, dressed as a woman.)

**RICHARD:** Shakespeare!? (In a woman's voice.)

**SHAKESPEARE:** Who's that you're calling?

**RICHARD:** We saved some manuscripts! (He shows him some burnt papers.)

**SHAKESPEARE:** What do we need the scripts for? Shakespeare is dead, and everything with him. And why do you keep talking in a woman's voice?

**RICHARD:** Sorry... (Hoarse.) The fire is not your fault.

**SHAKESPEARE:** You're right, my friend. The fire is the fault of that damned writer named William Shakespeare, the one who gave life to Romeo the Lover, the indecisive Hamlet, the usurer Shylock and the ambitious Macbeth! (Taking off his wig.)

**RICHARD:** But... what are you saying, my friend? You are Shakespeare! Why do I say Shakespeare? I mean the great William Shakespeare! You are our hero!

**SHAKESPEARE:** Richard! No...

**RICHARD:** But...

**SHAKESPEARE:** NO! The Globe Theatre is dead and... Shakespeare is dead with it. And now I ask you to please leave me alone.

**RICHARD:** Well... No!

**SHAKESPEARE:** Richard?

**RICHARD:** I won't move from here. (Richard stands still and Shakespeare becomes desperate) I'll tell you what we're going to do... I know a theatre company who are looking for actors very close to here. We can join them and start again, what do you think?

**SHAKESPEARE:** For me the theatre disappeared with that fire. (He glances at the burnt papers.) The Cardenio comedy?

**RICHARD:** It didn't survive. (Shakespeare throws the papers away.) No! Will! No! (Trying to stop him.)

**SHAKESPEARE:** (Crying.) To be or not to be... I don't want to be, Richard, I don't want to be.

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