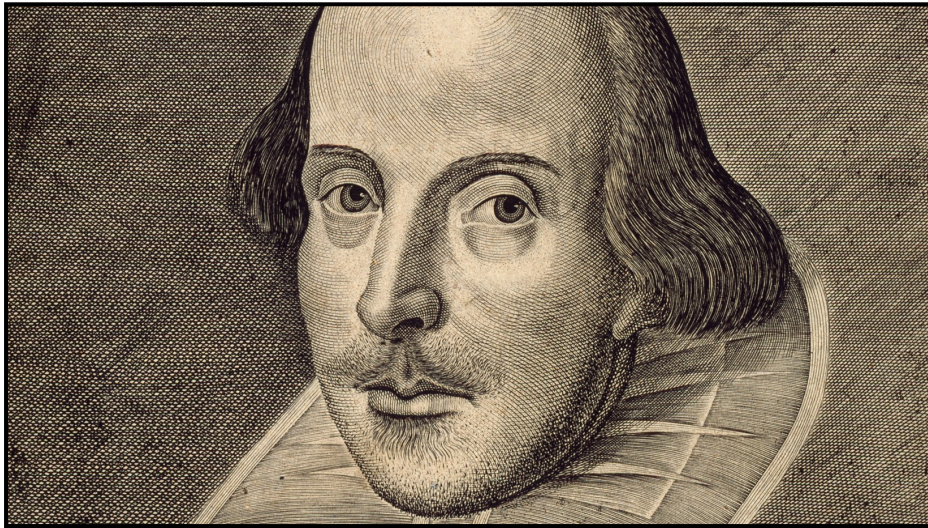


# *Why is Shakespeare still a significant figure today?*



## Who was William Shakespeare?

William Shakespeare was born in **1564** in **Stratford Upon Avon**.

He was baptised on **26th April 1564** but no-one knows his exact date of birth. Some people say he was born on 23rd April. His mother was called Mary and was the daughter of a farmer. His father, John, was a glove maker with a large family house. He was one of 8 children but sadly his 2 older sisters died. When he was 7 William went to school. School was very different. He learned to read, speak and write in Latin. He also had to memorise poems and plays. This was very useful for him when he became an actor and writer. He probably left school at 15.

In **1582** he married **Anne** and they had **3 children**: Susannah born in 1583 and Hamnet & Judith who were twins and were born in 1585.

Shakespeare spent most of his time away working in London.

Shakespeare died on **23rd April 1616**. This is St George's Day in England

## What was Shakespeare's world like?

When Shakespeare was born **Queen Elizabeth I** was on the throne in England. She died in **1603** and then **James I** became King.

He spent most of his time in **London** because it was the richest city in England and had lots of **playhouses—theatres** where his plays could be performed. It was also a very big city. Many people went to live there and as a result there were plagues there nearly every summer because there was so much overcrowding. At this time **London Bridge** was the only way to get across the **River Thames**. Rich people however could afford to pay for a ferry to 'taxi' them across the river.



These are pictures of The Globe theatre in London. It is a reconstruction of what people think the theatre was like in Shakespeare's time. **How is it different from a theatre you might visit?**

### Shakespeare's Plays

Shakespeare wrote about **40 plays**.

They are classed as:

**Comedies**—Had a happy ending

**Tragedies**—had a sad/ unhappy ending

**Histories**—about someone famous in history

He also wrote **poems** and **sonnets**.

Some of his most famous plays are:

**Macbeth, Romeo & Juliet, A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Tempest, and Hamlet.**

Most children still learn about Shakespeare in school.

### Shakespearean language

**Anon**—right away

**Hark**—listen

**Hither**—here    **Thither**—there

**Wherefore**—why

**Ere**—before

**Art**—are

**Doth**—does    **Dost**—do

**'Twas**— it was    **wast**—were

**Hence**— from here    **whence**—from where

**Aught**—anything

### Other Famous People and key events in Shakespeare's time

**Sir Francis Drake**—Explorer who **circumnavigated** the globe from **1577 to 1580**

**Sir Walter Raleigh**—Explorer who sailed to **America** in **1578**

**Guy Fawkes**—Plotted against parliament in **1606** **The Gunpowder Plot**

**Christopher Marlowe**—Another **playwright** who influenced Shakespeare

**Galileo**— An Italian **scientist** and **astronomer**

**Mary Queen of Scots**—Mother to **James I**

### Challenge

*Can you find the dates for these famous people and other information about them?*

*Can you add anyone else to the list?*