

William Shakespeare

1. William Shakespeare was born in April 1564 in Stratford-Upon-Avon, in the centre of England. He went to school in Stratford and he probably became a teacher. In 1582, when he was 18, he married Anne Hathaway and they soon had three children.

2. In the late 1580s, he decided to leave Stratford and try to find work in London by this time, there were several theatres in the city—the first public theatre opened in London in 1567. Shakespeare joined an acting company, and soon he was also writing plays. He quickly became a well-known actor and playwright.

3. Between 1589 and 1600, Shakespeare wrote about 20 plays, including *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Romeo and Juliet*. His plays were extremely popular and there were even special performance for Queen Elizabeth I! Shakespeare soon became the most important playwright in the country. He was now a rich man, and was a part-owner of the Globe Theatre, which opened in 1599. He lived and worked in London for many years, but he often went home to see his wife and children in Stratford.

4. Shakespeare's success continued into the next century when he wrote some of his most famous tragedies, including *Hamlet* and *Othello*. In all, he wrote 37 plays, and he also wrote many beautiful poems. Finally he returned to Stratford in 1611, and he lived there until he died, aged exactly 52, on 23 April 1616. After his death, two actor friends collected all his plays and published them in 1623. Today, 400 years later he is one of the most famous writers in the world, and there are many films of his plays.

• COMPREHENSION

I. Answer these questions about Shakespeare:

(5 points)

1. When and where was he born?

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2. When did he get married?

Who did he marry?

3. How many plays did he write?

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4. When did he die?

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5. Why is he important today?

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