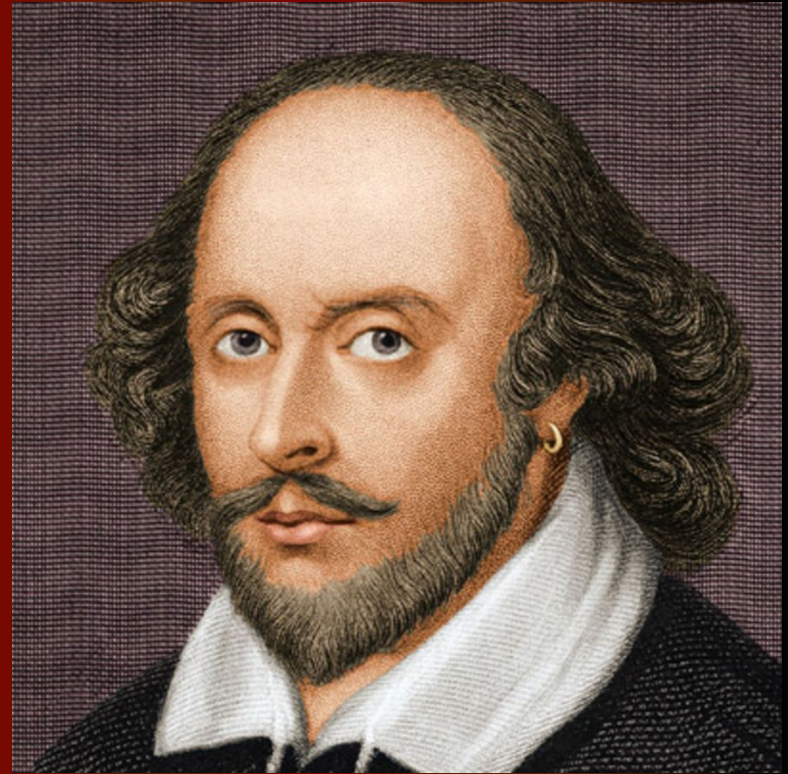


William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare (1564 - 1616)

Shakespeare's reputation as dramatist, poet and actor is unique and he is considered by many to be the greatest playwright of all time, although many of the facts of his life remain mysterious.



Biography

William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon in Warwickshire on 26 April 1564. His father was a glovemaker and wool merchant and his mother, Mary Arden, was the daughter of a well-to-do local landowner. Shakespeare was probably educated in Stratford's grammar school.



Marriage

The next documented event in Shakespeare's life is his marriage in 1582 to Anne Hathaway, daughter of a farmer. The couple had a daughter the following year and twins in 1585.



Career.

Shakespeare's acting career was spent with the Lord Chamberlain's Company, which was renamed the King's Company in 1603. The partnership acquired interests in two theatres in the Southwark area of London, near the banks of the Thames - the Globe and the Blackfriars.



Shakespeare's Creations

- Shakespeare's poetry was published before his plays. Two poems appeared in 1593 and 1594 were dedicated to his patron Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton.
- Most of Shakespeare's sonnets were probably written at this time.
- Records of Shakespeare's plays begin to appear in 1594, and he produced roughly two a year until around 1611.

Plays

- His earliest plays include 'Henry VI' and 'Titus Andronicus'. 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', 'The Merchant of Venice' and 'Richard II' all date from the mid to late 1590s.
- Some of his most famous tragedies were written in the early 1600s including 'Hamlet', 'Othello', 'King Lear' and 'Macbeth'.
- His late plays, often known as the Romances, date from 1608 onwards and include 'The Tempest'.

The Last Years

Shakespeare spent the last five years of his life in Stratford, by now a wealthy man. He died on 23 April 1616 and was buried in Holy Trinity Church in Stratford.



The First Edition

The first collected edition of his works was published after his death in 1623 and is known as 'the First Folio'.

