

Shakespeare's Fact File

Full name: William Shakespeare.

Born: Exact date unknown, but baptised 26 April 1564.

Hometown: Stratford-upon-Avon, England.

Occupation: Playwright, actor and poet.

Died: 23 April 1616.

Best known for: Writing hugely successful theatre plays! He wrote around 37 plays for the theatre and over 150 poems.

Also known as: The Bard of Avon.

London Theatres

There were professional companies of actors working in London from the middle of the 16th century.

They usually performed in inns, and the city council often tried to ban them. The solution was to have their own purpose-build theatre, just outside the area the council controlled. The first of these was simply classed 'The Theatre' and was opened in 1576.

The Globe, which Shakespeare was a stakeholder in, was built in 1599.

Shakespeare the Play Write

Shakespeare started to sell some of his written work and by 1597, he was beginning to earn a lot of money, so he bought the second largest house in his hometown of Stratford.

He did not return home very often as it took about four days to get from London to Stratford on horseback. He only ever went home during the forty days of Lent when the theatres were closed!



Macbeth's Main Characters

Banquo	Macbeth's friend, brave and loyal soldier, the witches tell him that his son will be king
Macbeth	Brave, tempter by ambition and changes personality through the play
Duncan	King at the start of the play, kind gentle, respected and generous
Macduff	A brave Lord, loyal to Duncan and kills Macbeth
Lady Macbeth	Ambitious, cunning and powerful, wife to Macbeth
The Witches	Introduce the play, they can see into the future, the 'weird sisters'

Shakespeare's Lasting Legacy

It is estimated that he had a vocabulary of over 17,000 words (four times that of an average person) and 10% of these were new words to the English language. There are over three hundred words and well-known phrases in the English language that he invented. Here are some examples:

- all that glitters is not gold
- barefaced
- wild goose chase
- bedazzled
- lacklustre