Shakespeare
Who was William Shakespeare?

- An English playwright and poet
- Lived in the late 1500s and early 1600s
- His plays are now performed all over the world in hundreds of languages.
- He is known as one of the greatest writers of all time.
- April 23, 1564 – April 23, 1616
- Anne Hathaway – wife
- Children
  - Susanna
  - twins Hamnet and Judith
Shakespeare’s birthplace
Where did Shakespeare live?
In and around London, England. At the time of Shakespeare, London was having a *renaissance* (re-birth) of art and sciences under two monarchs who loved the theater.
Queen Elizabeth  
(reigned from 1558 – 1603)  
A liberal-minded monarch who enjoyed the theater and wrote plays for special performances. Shakespeare gave 32 performances at her court during her reign.

King James I  
(ruled from 1603 – 1625)  
He also wrote poems and plays. Saw many plays performed (at least ½ of them written by William).
Shakespeare’s fame grew as a brilliant **actor**.

...as a matter of fact, Shakespeare probably made most of his money as an actor and producer, not as a playwright.

**King’s Men**
(formerly Chamberlain’s’ Men)
--Including--
- Richard Burbage
- John Heminges
- Henry Condell
- John Underwood
- Thomas Pope
- Edward Alleyn
- Richard Cowley
- Auestive Phillips
- Robert Gough
- Will Sly
- Will Shakespeare

Note: During the plagues of London, this group traveled all over the country and continent.
The Works of Shakespeare

- Shakespeare wrote 154 sonnets and at least 37 plays in his lifetime.
- His plays are often divided into three categories: Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies.
Shakespeare’s Death

- Left most of his wealth to his daughter, Susanna and his request was that she pass it down to “the first son of her body”
- Left his wife the “second best bed”, a bequest that has led to much speculation
- Tombstone reads:
  
  Good friend for Jesus sake forbear
  To dig the dust enclosed here!
  Blest be the man that spares these stones,
  And curst be he that moves my bones.
Why is his work so popular?

• Shakespeare wrote about human nature and how people behave.
• Although his words can be hard to understand, his ideas are as relevant now as they were centuries ago.
What kind of plays?

• During Shakespeare’s career, fashions and tastes in drama changed.
  – He wrote mostly comedies and history plays during the Elizabethan period – 1558-1603
  – Tragedies and tragicomedies during the reign of King James – 1603-1625
What Kind of Plays?

Tragedy

– Ends in the death of one or more of the main characters.
– Most of his tragedies involve historical individuals and events
– Romeo and Juliet, Caesar, Hamlet
The Roman Tragedies

● *Julius Caesar*, *Antony* and *Cleopatra*, and *Coriolanus* deal with political power
  ● The hero is a state leader who has a responsibility to the people.
  ● Tragedy results when he fails to meet his responsibilities.

These plays are not just about politics. They are full of personal emotions, dramatic power struggles, and brilliant writing, including some of the most famous writing in Shakespeare’s plays.
The Roman Tragedies

• Two Themes
  – Politics and Power – shows how hard it is to be a political leader. The hero has power, but has a weakness which makes him vulnerable to being attacked or overthrown
  – Love and Duty – people often have to make difficult choices between their emotions and their responsibilities
Tragic Hero

- Often a man of high rank, such as a king or prince
- Creates, or is put into, a difficult situation which he must try to resolve.
  - A combination of bad luck and bad decisions lead to his death.

Often a relatively sympathetic figure. His soliloquies show his feelings and motives, and show the audience how easy it would be to make similar mistakes.
Tragic Endings

- Tragedies give a very bleak view of the world.
- At the end, the hero, and usually several other characters, are dead, and the survivors are left to start again without them.
- Although most tragic heroes are partly to blame for their own fates, death can be a very high price to pay for what may have seemed initially like a small failing.
- In most tragedies, there is also a feeling that some good may have come out of the terrible suffering.
  - At the end of Romeo and Juliet, because the families’ fighting has partly caused the tragedy, they finally resolve to end their feud.
What Kind of Plays?

Comedies

– Usually has a happy ending
– Can also include jokes, farce and innuendo
– His are usually love stories
– Settings are far away from England
– Examples: A Midsummer Night’s Dream, A Comedy of Errors, As You Like It
What Kind of Plays?

Histories

– Usually tell the stories of great leaders and kings
– He sometimes altered what he found in the history books to suit his own dramatic purposes and make the plays more exciting
– Henry V, King John
Elizabethan Theatre

• Until the mid-16\textsuperscript{th} century, most plays were performed outside London.
  – Craftsmen or tradespeople put on traditional plays and on village greens
  – As it grew in size and importance, London became the center of English theatre.
  – While hugely popular, it was not, at first, considered a very respectable pastime; most of the theatres were in the rougher parts of town.
Elizabethan Theatre

• The first London theatre was called The Theatre, built in 1576.
• The Rose – 1587
• The Swan – 1595
  – All were deliberately built outside the City limits, so they were free from the restrictions of City regulations.
  – Queen Elizabeth I loved the theatre and often held performances of plays at her court.
Elizabethan Theatre

- In London, plays were put on by theatre companies
  - By law, a company had to have a patron – to support it financially. The company was named after its patron.
  - Shakespeare spent much of his career with a company called Chamberlain’s Men.
Elizabethan Theatre

- The audience
  - It was an entertainment for everyone, like movies today.
  - The cheapest tickets cost a penny, which most ordinary people could afford.
  - Because of the crowds, theatres were popular with thieves and pickpockets.
  - People jeered at the actors and shouted out rude remarks.
  - Some even climbed onto the stage and joined in with swordfights.
  - People also brought food with them to eat during the performance or to throw at bad actors.
Elizabethan Theatre

• Plague and Players
  – Theatre were closed during severe outbreaks of plague – they thought it spread more quickly in crowds
  – Many companies left London for tours of the countryside.
  – Players often had to sell their costumes and scripts in order to survive.
  – Some Puritans believed that plague was sent by God as a punishment for the wickedness of theatre-going.
Elizabethan Theatre

• Shakespeare’s Players
  – He is thought to have joined the theatre as an actor and become a writer later.
    • It was normal for actors to help write plays or change them a lot during rehearsal.
    • Actors often specialized in one type of part – tragic hero, clown, etc.
    • There were no actresses. Women’s roles were played by boys. Women did not act on stage until the Restoration. (1660s)
The Globe Theatre

- From 1599 onwards, Shakespeare’s plays were usually performed at the Globe, a circular, open-air theatre.
- It could hold 3000 people, and there were two performances a day.
- Along with other members of his theatre company, Chamberlain’s Men, Shakespeare owned a share in the Globe and made a lot of money from it.
The Globe Theater

• The primary theater for performances by Shakespeare’s company.
• The theater was built in 1599 and destroyed by fire in 1614. A second globe theatre was built in 1619.
• It was a three-story open-air theater that could hold about 3,000 spectators.
• A flag would fly above the theater to indicate the type of play being performed
  – white for comedies, red for histories, and black for tragedies
Conventions of Shakespeare’s Theater

• Plays consist of five acts. Each act is divided into scenes. (Changes in time or location lead to changes in scenes.)

• Plays were written in blank verse—unrhymed iambic pentameter. (The rhythm of the lines made them easier for actors to memorize.)

• Time of day, weather, and other special effects had to be indicated in LANGUAGE.
An Elizabethan Actor had to be an expert in:

- **Fencing**
  - audiences loved duels and battles
- **Tumbling**
  - as gods or ghosts they had to disappear through holes in the stage
- **Dancing**
  - most plays ended with the whole company dancing
- **Elocution**
  - words were often more important than actions
- **Acting**
  - each actor had to double in many different roles
- **Music**
  - actors had to learn to play an instrument well.
Conventions of Shakespeare’s Theater

• Extensive and elaborate music was a part of the performances, as were sound effects such as cannon shots, screams, etc.
• Because of the lack of special effects, costumes and props were very elaborate.
Pictures of The Globe Theater:
Raising a flag atop the theater would let people know that a play would be shown that day.
Fun Facts

- Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway in November 1582 when she was three months pregnant with the couple's first child; she gave birth six months later.
- Hathaway was 26/27 years of age at the time of their marriage; Shakespeare was only 18.
- First play written at age 25
- Shakespeare lived through The Black Death
- In 1609 his sonnets were published without his permission
- William never published any of his plays...they were posthumously published
- Frequently wrote lewd comments about women
Julius Caesar
Things to Know About Rome

• Began as a **monarchy**—one person holds all the power.

• In 500 BC Lucius Junius Brutus overthrows King Tarquin the Proud.

• Rome becomes a **republic**—citizens allowed to elect representatives.
Branches of Rome’s Republic

• Power in Rome was shared by the **Assembly** and the **Senate**.

• **The Senate**
  – power to elect a Consul – commander-in-chief during war
  – Also, most laws are passed in the senate.

• **The Assembly**
  – made up of all Roman citizens
  – elects Tribunes to represent them
    • Citizenship is granted to any male child born in a legal marriage of a Roman citizen
Gaius Julius Caesar’s Early Life

- Born in approximately 100 B.C.E
- Dad died when he was 15 or 16.
- Worked hard to establish a military career.
- Suffered from seizures (possibly epilepsy)—called the falling sickness
- Once held for ransom by pirates
- Extremely charismatic
- Charmed and impressed almost everyone: commoners, soldiers, and women
- Gained popularity by hosting feasts, festivals, and gladiator fights
- His uncle was the most powerful leader in Rome at the time
Julius Caesar played the game of Roman politics for years

- He charmed the crowds in the Forum with speeches
- Threw lavish parties for influential politicians
- Began taking steps towards ultimate power
This is where Julius Caesar hung out – The Forum
Here’s what it looks like now...
Conquered much of what we now know as Central Europe.
The First Triumvirate

A government ruled by three people equally

- In 60 B.C.E. Julius Caesar joined with two other powerful men and ruled Rome for 10 years. (Age 40-50)
  - Crassus brings the money.
  - Pompey brings the armies.
  - Caesar brings the people.
- They dominated politics and often bullied or bribed the Senate to attain their goals.
The First Triumvirate

1. Crassus dies in battle seven years later.
2. Caesar and Pompey start to fight for power.
3. Pompey becomes the dictator of Rome.
4. Caesar enters Rome and forces Pompey to flee.
5. Caesar defeated Pompey’s armies in Greece and is declared dictator.
6. Pompey is later killed in Egypt by some of Caesar’s supporters.
7. Legend says that Pompey’s head was brought to Caesar on a silver platter.
The Play Begins…

- Rome - February 15, 44 B.C. - the day of the **Lupercalia** - a festival that celebrates fertility.
- The day is declared a holiday for all working people.
- The people of Rome are also celebrating Caesar’s final victory over the now dead Pompey.
Changes that Caesar made as absolute ruler

- Granted citizenship to people in provinces outside Italy
- Expanded Senate to 900, making it more representative of the Empire
- Landowners must use free men rather than slaves for at least 1/3 of the workforce
- Set up public works program for jobs
- Established colonies in Spain, France and Switzerland to provide land for poor Roman citizens
- Set up new Julian Calendar

But he didn’t rule for long………
Supporters of Julius Caesar

- Among Caesar’s supporters are his trusted friend **Marc Antony (Antonius)**.
- Another of his supporters is his grand-nephew and adopted son **Octavius Caesar**.
But not everyone in Rome is glad Caesar returns triumphantly…

• **Marcus Brutus** wants to protect the republic. He does not believe that any one man should have too much power.

• Brutus is descended from Lucius Junius Brutus—the man who helped to overthrow the last king of Rome.

• **Caius Cassius**, the brother-in-law of Brutus, also wishes to deny Caesar the crown. Unlike Brutus, Cassius is jealous of Caesar’s power.