

Name _____

Date _____

Shakespeare

“The Bard’s Got Bars”

Learn more about this topic! Each section gives more detail on one of the lyrics from the song. Read each section, and then respond by answering the question or taking notes on key ideas.



b’

William Shakespeare in 1609

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Scholars have been able to piece together William Shakespeare’s likely biography from sources like official records, his will, his marriage certificate and his tombstone.

Shakespeare was likely born on April 23, 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon, England. He probably

attended a free school, where he studied Latin plays. At 18, Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, and they went on to have three children, one of whom died of black plague. For several years after the birth of his children, Shakespeare disappeared from all records. Scholars call these his “Lost Years.” Records then show that by 1594, Shakespeare was an established actor and writer in London with his popular company, The Lord Chamberlain’s Men. He’d hold these positions for 20 years. Shakespeare is thought to have died on April 23, 1616—his likely birthday—at age 52.

Notes

2.



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A 1936 production of Macbeth

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Shakespeare's plays can be divided into major categories. His tragedies center around heroes with tragic flaws.

A tragic flaw is a defect in a character that leads to his or her demise and, often, death at the end of the play. In Shakespeare's tragedy Hamlet, the main character Hamlet's indecision over whether to avenge his father's death leads to his downfall. In Macbeth, Scottish general Macbeth's ambition for the throne drives him to murder. He is then plagued by guilt and madness.

Notes

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A scene in Twelfth Night

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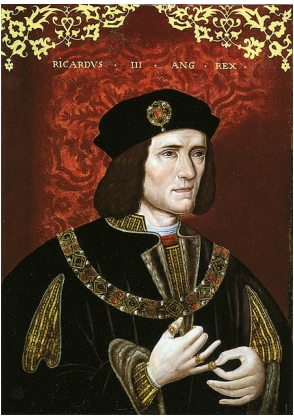
Shakespeare's comedies are more upbeat and usually concern love and end in marriage. They often contain multiple, intertwining plots, puns and

cases of mistaken identity. In the comedy Twelfth Night, the character Viola disguises herself as a man, "Cesario," to serve a duke who is in love with a rich countess. In a twist, the countess then falls in love with "Cesario."

Another category of Shakespeare's plays is tragicomedy. Also called his late romances, his tragicomedies contain elements of both tragedy and comedy and often contain supernatural elements, too.

Notes

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King Richard III

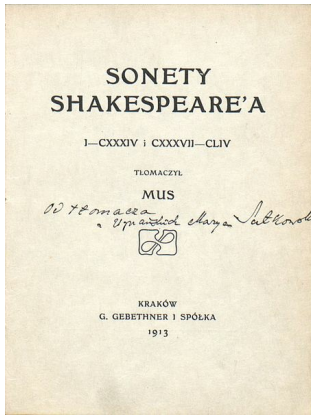
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Shakespeare's histories tell of events in the lives of English kings. But as a playwright, Shakespeare took creative liberties when writing them. In fact, he sometimes changed details to appeal to Queen Elizabeth I, the queen who reigned during much of his career.

In his play Richard III, Shakespeare portrays the title character as extremely evil, corrupt and murderous. Queen Elizabeth I was a descendent of the king who had overthrown the real Richard III. So, Richard was hated during Elizabeth I's time. To avoid contradicting the queen's opinion, Shakespeare exaggerated the character Richard's negative qualities in his play.

Notes

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Polish translation of Shakespeare's sonnets

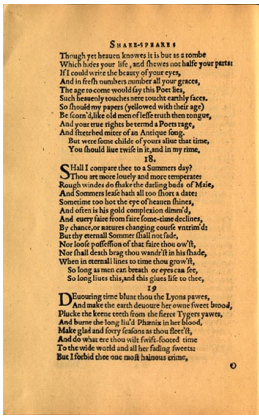
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Though Shakespeare was writing in 16th century England, his work still resonates with people today. He wrote about topics like love, fate, family, war and death that are relevant to people in many different cultures and time periods. Shakespeare's complex characters and

beautifully-crafted dialogue have also withstood the test of time. His works have been translated into more than 100 languages, and in 2015, he was the most-produced playwright in the US. All over the world, his plays have been adapted into modern tales, such as The Lion King from Hamlet and West Side Story and Gnomeo and Juliet from Romeo and Juliet. Shakespeare himself adapted earlier works to create the plots for some of his plays. For example, Romeo and Juliet was based on an Italian story.

Notes

6.



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Shakespeare's "Sonnet 18" includes iambic pentameter.

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The language in Shakespeare's plays takes a variety of forms, including iambic pentameter. Iambic pentameter is a line of verse with 10 syllables made up of five pairs of stressed and unstressed syllables. The rhythm of iambic pentameter sounds

like a heartbeat: "ba-BUM / ba-BUM / ba-BUM / ba-BUM / ba-BUM." Here's an example from Romeo and Juliet:

"But soft! What light through yonder window breaks? It is the east, and Juliet is the sun."

Lines of iambic pentameter can be rhymed or unrhymed, and Shakespeare often used iambic pentameter for the speech of higher-class characters or to elevate language. In contrast, Shakespeare often used prose, writing without a pattern of stressed or unstressed syllables or rhyme, for lower-class characters.

7.



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A scene from Romeo and Juliet

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Shakespeare's plays are filled with examples of figurative language, language that means something other than its literal meaning and expresses ideas in vivid and imaginative ways. In Romeo and Juliet, Romeo says:

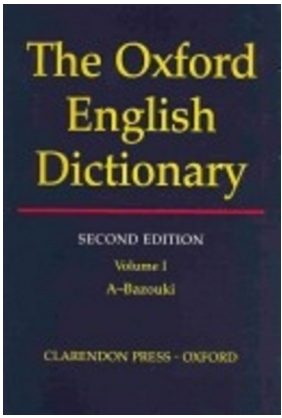
"But soft, what light through yonder window breaks? It is the east, and Juliet is the sun. Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon, Who is already sick and pale with grief That thou, her maid, art far more fair than she..."

Shakespeare shows Juliet's radiance by comparing her to the sun using figurative language: the metaphor "Juliet is the sun." He also uses personification, saying the moon is "envious" and "sick and pale with grief" that Juliet is more beautiful than it is.

Notes

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8.



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Oxford English Dictionary

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Shakespeare invented many new words and phrases and made others popular. Initially, Shakespeare was credited with inventing 1,700 words. When researchers first began compiling the Oxford English Dictionary in the late 19th century, they looked through many texts by hand

to find the first written use of words. They often found Shakespeare's plays to be the sources of words. But many years later, computers began to be used in this process of investigating the sources of words. These new technologies were able to uncover earlier sources of some of the words previously credited to Shakespeare. "Puke" is one of these words. For a long time, Shakespeare was credited with being the first to use "puke." He included it in his play *As You Like It*, which is believed to have been written in 1599. In later years, an earlier instance of the word "puke" was found in the 1596 book *Hawking, Hunting, Fouling and Fishing*.

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