

Shakespeare

The Bard and His Times

Biography

- Born in April 1564 at Stratford-on-Avon
- John Shakespeare (father)
- tanner, glover, dealer in grain
- town official (alderman, and later mayor)
- Mary (mother) was a daughter of Robert Arden, a prosperous gentleman-farmer.
- Seven brothers and sisters

Biography

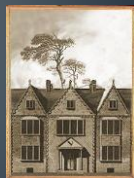
- Attended the Stratford Grammar School
- Did not go to Oxford or Cambridge
- Married Anne Hathaway in 1582 (He was 18; she was eight years older than him.)
- Three children born: Susanna, Judith, and Hamnet. Hamnet dies unexpectedly at age 11.

Biography

- Don't know when he started acting
 - Don't know when or why he moved to London
- By 1592, he was well enough known in London to be attacked in print by the playwright Robert Greene in his *Groats-Worth of Wit*:
- "...there is an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his Tiger's heart wrapped in a Player's hide, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you: and being an absolute Johannes factotum, is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country"

Biography

- By 1590, he was an actor and playwright
- Leader of the Lord Chamberlain's Men and the King's Men
- Became wealthy.
- Bought the second largest house in Stratford called New Place



Biography

- Died April 23, 1616
- He left his wife "the second best bed in the house"

His 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."



Shakespeare's Works

- Shakespeare wrote 37 plays (?)
 - Tragedies (*Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth, King Lear, Anthony and Cleopatra*)
 - Comedies (*Much Ado About Nothing, A Midsummer's Nights Dream, Twelfth Night*)
 - Histories (*Julius Caesar, Anthony and Cleopatra, Henry IV, Richard II, King John*)
 - Sonnets (154)
 - Long narrative poems

Shakespeare's Works

- Shakespeare writes most of his writing in iambic pentameter

Shall I / compare / thee to / a sum / mer's day?

- Normally this iambic pentameter is unrhymed (called blank verse)

Sonnets

- With the theaters closed, Shakespeare began writing poems, called Sonnets.
- He wrote 154 in all.
- 14 line poems
- 3 quatrains – groups of 4 lines
- 1 couplet – group of 2 lines

Sonnet 18

A Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
 B Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
 A Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
 B And summer's lease hath all too short a date:

C Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
 D And often is his gold complexion dimmed;
 C And every fair from fair sometimes declines,
 D By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimmed;

E But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
 F Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest,
 E Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
 F When in eternal lines to time thou growest;

G So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
 G So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Shakespeare's Times

- "The Theatre" was north of London.
- In 1596, its lease was lost so the actors took it apart and rebuilt it south, across the Thames.
- It was renamed "The Globe."
- Built outside of the city so that London officials couldn't interfere.

Shakespeare's Theater

- He wrote his plays to be performed in the Globe Theater.
- It was built in 1599 and burned down 14 years later in 1613.
- It was an 8 sided building with a central yard and a thatched roof.



Shakespeare's Theater

- **Spectators' price of admissions was**
 - one penny - to stand in yard around stage (these were called the groundlings)
 - two pennies - to sit in 2nd and 3rd floor galleries
 - three pennies - to sit in the first floor galleries

Shakespeare's Theater

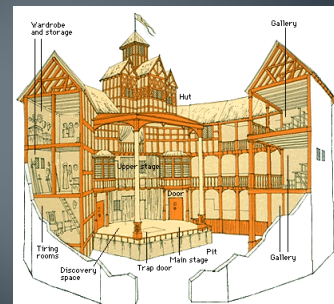
Stage

- 1/3 of yard was filled with 6ft high platform
- no curtain
- no artificial lighting
- back wall had at least two doors
- balcony was used for hilltops, walls of cities, or second story scenes.
- trapdoors were used to raise or lower actors and props.

Shakespeare's Theater

- All social classes attended
- No women on stage
- All parts played by men
Including Juliet!

Shakespeare's Theater



Shakespeare's Theater



Vocabulary

- **Shakespeare had a vocabulary of about 32,000 words.**
- **Most people at the time had about 500 words.**
- **Modern people have about 2,000**
- **College degree may double that figure.**

Shakespeare's Language

- The English Dictionary of his time only had 500 words.
- He's credited with creating 3,000 words in the English Oxford Dictionary
- He was by far the most important individual influence on the development of the modern English
- He invented lots of words that we use in our daily speech

Shakespeare's Language

- It was not Old English
- He often used anthimeria:
 - In the dark backward and abysm of time.
 - I shall unhair thy head
 - He chided as I fathered.
 - That may repeat and history his loss.
 - This day shall gentle his condition.
 - Grace me no grace, nor uncle me no uncle.
 - My death's sad tale may yet undeaf his ear.

Shakespeare's Times



Shakespeare's Times

- Printing Press (moveable type) 1440
- Reformation began 1516
- The Act of Supremacy of November 1534
- First settlement in America 1607
- King James Bible 1611

Shakespeare's Times

Queen Elizabeth reigned (1558-1603)

The world was emerging from the Middle Ages into the Renaissance

Age was extravagant and brutal

- elaborate, ornate clothing, language and manners
- language was growing fast
- middle class (stern, moral, and independent)
- The puritans had strong influence on society

Shakespeare's Times

- **Queen Elizabeth** **Glory of England**

- To people, she represented beauty and greatness
- one of the most powerful countries in the world
- After defeating the Spanish Armada, England became intensely interested in the past. (Patriotic) Historical plays thrived.

Shakespeare's Times

- During Shakespeare's time, 200,000 people were living in London
- Between Dec. 1592 and Dec. 1593, 11,000 died of plague
- All public areas, including restaurants and playhouses were closed



Costume worn by plague doctor to protect against 'miasmas' of poisonous air

Shakespeare's Times

- Queen Elizabeth dies in 1603
- King James I takes the throne
 - Shakespeare's Theatre company becomes the King's Company

Blank Verse

- *unrhymed verse*
- *iambic (unstressed, stressed)*
- *pentameter (5 "feet" to a line)*
- *ends up to be 10 syllable lines*

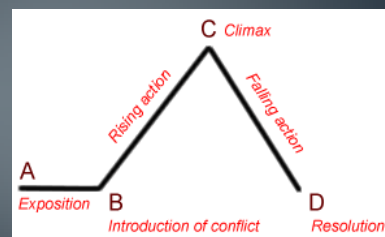
Prose

- Ordinary writing that is not poetry, drama, or song
- Only characters in the lower social classes speak this way in Shakespeare's plays
- Why do you suppose that is?

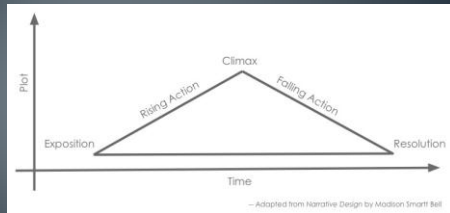
Plot

- *The sequence of events in a literary work*

Plot Diagram



Plot Diagram



Exposition

- *The plot usually begins with this:*
 - introduces
 - setting
 - characters
 - basic situation

Inciting Moment

- *Often called “initial incident”*
 - *the first bit of action that occurs which begins the plot*
 - *Romeo and Juliet “lock eyes” at the party*

Conflict

The struggle that develops

- *man vs. man*
- *man vs. himself*
- *man vs. society*
- *man vs. nature*
- *man vs. God or fate*
- *man vs. situation or idea*

Rising Action

- *The progress of the plot as it builds to greater levels of intensity.*

Crisis

- *The point where the protagonist's situation will either get better or worse*
 - *Protagonist- good guy*
 - *Antagonist- bad guy*

Climax

- *The turning point of the story: everything begins to unravel from here*
- *Thus begins the falling action*

Falling Action

- *The events after the point of greatest tension in the story*
- *Explains the plot or leads into the final state of things*

Resolution

- *The end of the central conflict*

Tragedy (Shakespearean)

- *Drama where the central character/s suffer disaster/great misfortune*
 - *In many tragedies, downfall results from*
 1. *Fate*
 2. *Character flaw/Fatal flaw (sin)*
 3. *Combination of the two*

Theme

- *Central idea (or)*
- *Insight about life which explain the downfall*

Metaphorical Language

- *Comparison of unlike things >*
 - *Paris standing over the "lifeless body" of Juliet, "Sweet flower, with flowers thy bridal bed I strew..."*
 - *"Thou detestable maw..."Gorged with the dearest morsel of the earth..."*
Romeo

Dramatic Foil

- *A character whose purpose is to show off another character*
- *Benvolio for Tybalt*
 - *look for others in R & J*

Round characters

- *Characters who have many personality traits, like real people.*

Flat Characters

- *One-dimensional, embodying only a single trait*
- *Shakespeare often uses them to provide comic relief even in a tragedy*

Static Characters

- *Characters within a story who remain the same. They do not change. They do not change their minds, opinions or character.*

Dynamic Character

- *Characters that change somehow during the course of the plot. They generally change for the better.*

Monologue

- *One person speaking on stage may be other character on stage too*
 - *ex the Prince of Verona commanding the Capulets and Montagues to cease feuding*

Soliloquy

- Long speech expressing the thoughts of a character alone on stage. In *R & J*, Romeo gives a soliloquy after the servant has fled and Paris has died.

Aside

- Words spoken, usually in an undertone not intended to be heard by all characters

Pun

- Shakespeare loved to use them!!!
- Humorous use of a word with two meanings - sometimes missed by the reader because of Elizabethan language and sexual innuendo

Direct Address

- Words that tell the reader who is being addressed:
- "A right fair mark, fair coz, is soonest hit."
- "Ah, my mistresses, which of you all/ Will now deny to dance?"

Situational Irony

- An event occurs that directly contradicts the expectations of the characters, the reader, or the audience

Dramatic Irony

- A contradiction between what a character thinks and what the reader/audience knows to be true

Verbal Irony

- Words used to suggest the opposite of what is meant

Comic Relief

- Use of comedy to provide “relief” from seriousness or sadness.
- In R & J, look for moments of comic relief that help “relieve” the tragedy of the situation

