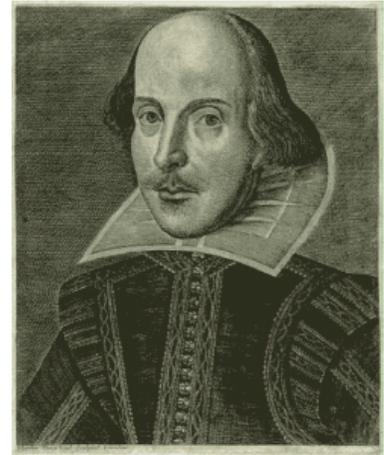


Interesting facts about Shakespeare

Below is a list of interesting facts about Shakespeare. We often get stuck on the plays and know nothing about the man behind the plays...

Nobody knows when exactly Shakespeare was born. It is assumed that it was 23rd April 1564. He was baptized on 26 April 1564 and died on 23 April 1616.

Shakespeare had seven siblings: Joan (1558); Margaret (1562); Gilbert (1566); Joan II (1569); Anne (1571); Richard (1574) and Edmund (1580).



- 1) Shakespeare was 17 years old when he married the 26 year old Anne Hathaway. She was pregnant when they got married and the baby, Hamnet, was born 6 months after the wedding. This boy died in 1596.
- 2) Shakespeare had another two daughters, Susanna and Judith. He had only one grandchild Elizabeth. This child died in 1670, without having any children. Shakespeare therefore has no descendants.
- 3) Shakespeare was a good businessman and owned a lot of property in Stratford-upon-Avon, where his wife and children lived.
- 4) When Shakespeare died he left his possessions to various people and his daughter. All his wife got was his "second best bed with the furniture". "Furniture" refers to the bedding.
- 5) In Shakespeare's day it was common practice to remove the remains from previous graves to make room for new ones. For this reason Shakespeare put a curse on anyone who dared to move his remains. His epitaph 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.*

Needless to say, Shakespeare's remains have never been moved...

- 6) Shakespeare is said to have written 37 plays and 154 sonnets, which means he wrote about 1.5 plays a year since 1589, when he first started writing. Some scholars believe that he did not write all these plays and others believe some of the plays were collaborations with other writers of the time.
- 7) Shakespeare also acted on his own and other plays. He is believed to have played the ghost in *Hamlet* and Adam in *As You Like It*.

- 8) In Shakespeare's time women were prohibited from acting in plays – all roles in the plays were therefore played by men. They used younger men to play the roles of women.
- 9) Shakespeare is the second most quoted writer in the English language, after the writers of the Bible.
- 10) Shakespeare is referred to as an Elizabethan writer, but he actually wrote most of his plays after Queen Elizabeth I's death, which means he is actually a Jacobean writer. Many of his later plays also contain characteristics of Jacobean writing.
- 11) Shakespeare's Globe Theatre burnt down in 1613, during a performance of Henry VIII.
- 12) It is uncanny that 13 of Shakespeare's characters commit suicide.
- 13) Shakespeare's signature has been preserved on some documents. However, in none of them is his name spelled the way we do today. It was spelled Shakespe; Shakspe; Shakspere or Shakespear.
- 14) Interestingly, William Shakespeare is an anagram for "I am a weakfish speller".
- 15) President Abraham Lincoln loved Shakespeare's work. It is ironic that he was shot by a Shakespearean actor, John Wikes.
- 16) Although Catholicism was prohibited in Shakespeare's time, it is believed that he was a catholic.
- 17) Shakespeare's shortest play was *The Comedy of Errors*.
- 18) Shakespeare's longest play is *Hamlet*.