

AUDIO SCRIPT

[Female Student]

F1: Today, I'm going to talk about the famous playwright William Shakespeare. Shakespeare was born in 1564 in the town of Stratford-upon-Avon in Warwickshire, England. At the age of 18, he married Anne Hathaway and they had three children: Susanna, Hamnet, and Judith. A lot remains unknown about Shakespeare's life, but he probably moved to London around 1585 and commenced his career as an actor, writer, and part-owner of an acting company.

Shakespeare wrote most of his plays between 1589 and 1613. The plays fall into three categories: comedies, histories, and tragedies. The comedies include: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Tempest*, and *As You Like It*. The histories include *Henry V* and *Richard II*. The history plays are set in the historical context of several English kings. Finally, the tragedies include *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *Romeo and Juliet*. Some scholars believe that Shakespeare didn't write all the plays because his writing style overlaps with other writers of the period. However, most scholars believe that he wrote 37 plays.

It is important to understand the cultural context of Shakespeare's life. He lived in the Elizabethan era—that is, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. During her 45-year reign, London became an important cultural and commercial center. This period is known as the English Renaissance. It was a time of significant cultural developments in the sciences and arts. Scientists and artists were exposed to the classical works of the ancient Greeks and Romans, which had been mostly lost or forgotten during the thousand years of the Middle Ages. It is apparent that Shakespeare was exposed to this knowledge because he included many classical references in his works. He also wrote several plays based on classical characters, such as Antony and Cleopatra and Julius Caesar.

Shakespeare also wrote 154 sonnets, which are poems that consist of 14 lines. The structure of the sonnets is uniform. The first 12 lines consist of three quatrains, or groups of four lines with alternating rhymes. The last two lines are called a rhyming couplet. Each line is ten syllables long, and the accent falls on every second syllable, for example: "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?"

Shakespeare often used symbols in his sonnets. For example, the seasons show the passage of time—spring is the beginning of life, summer and fall are the middle section, and winter is the ending or death. The seasons and the weather also represent human emotions. For example, summer is a time of falling in love. Fall and winter are a time of sadness and regret. The change from a sunny day to a cloudy day reflects the poet's change of mood. Shakespeare often used images from nature as symbols of beauty. For example, flowers and weeds contrast beauty and ugliness. The stars are symbols of a person's fate and destiny. He often used the image of a rose to symbolize

beauty and love. These were all common themes during the Elizabethan era, so Shakespeare's readers would have easily understood them. Shakespeare, however, extended these familiar themes in clever and imaginative ways.

Shakespeare eventually returned to Stratford where he died in 1616 at the age of 52. No one is sure how he died, but it was possibly from a fever. He is considered to be the greatest writer in the English language and his plays are studied and performed all over the world today. He explored the psychological motivations of his characters in a way we can identify with today. The language of Shakespeare is Old English and it can be difficult to understand. But if you study his work carefully, you can see that many of the themes he wrote about, such as love and war, are still relevant in the modern world.