

Shakespeare

Teacher's notes

Level:	Lower Intermediate (and above)
Topic:	Shakespeare
Subject(s):	Literature and History
Time (approx):	Activity 1: 15-20 minutes Activity 2: 10 minutes Activity 3: 15 minutes
Preparation:	Activity 1: Photocopy one set of A and B worksheets per pair of students. Activity 2: Photocopy the activity for each student. Activity 3: Photocopy the activity for each student.

Note: These activities are suitable for students who don't know a lot (possibly nothing at all) about Shakespeare's writing.

Procedure:

Activity 1

- 1 On the board write 'William Shakespeare' and ask your students to brainstorm everything they know about him - write this information on the board.
- 2 Now divide the class into two groups, A and B.
- 3 Give group A worksheet A and group B worksheet B.
- 4 Tell them to read through their worksheet and then complete the eight questions they can ask to find the missing information.
- 5 Monitor and check their questions.
- 6 Now pair up a student from group A with one from group B.
- 7 Tell the pairs to take it in turns to ask and answer the questions using their worksheets (encourage them not to show the information).
- 8 Check and discuss.

Key

William Shakespeare was born on (1) 23 April, 1564 in (2) Stratford-upon-Avon. When he was (3) seven he went to the local grammar school for boys. He left school when he was about (4) 14. He was only (5) 18 when he met (6) Ann Hathaway and they got married in (7) November, 1582. Their first daughter, (8) Susanna, was born (9) eight months later.

In (10) 1592 Shakespeare was living in (11) London and had become famous. At this time he was writing and acting for the Lord Chamberlain's Men at the Globe Theatre. Shakespeare became very successful and in (12) 1599 he bought the (13) Globe Theatre. During his life he wrote at least (14) 37 plays including *Romeo and Juliet*,

Hamlet and *Twelfth Night*. He died on his birthday in (15) 1616 at the age of (16) 52.

Activity 2

- 1 Ask students to read the short text.
- 2 Then ask them to look at the questions.
- 3 Put the students in pairs and get them to discuss the answers to the questions.
- 4 Check answers as a class.

Key

- 1 37
- 2 Comedies, tragedies and histories
- 3 A comedy has a happy ending while a tragedy has a sad ending.
- 4 A comedy
- 5 *Romeo and Juliet*
- 6 Because the facts are not always correct.

Activity 3

- 1 Ask students to read the three summaries.
- 2 Tell them to decide which is a comedy, which is a tragedy and which is a history.
- 3 Put students in small groups and ask them to compare and discuss their answers. Next, ask them if they can name each play (from the summaries). You could give them a clue by telling them they have already read the titles in the worksheet.5 Check and discuss.

Key

- [A] Tragedy, *Romeo and Juliet*
[B] Comedy, *Twelfth Night*
[C] History, *Julius Caesar*

Useful websites

<http://library.thinkquest.org/5175/>
<http://library.thinkquest.org/10502/>
<http://www.shakespeare.org.uk/http://www.shakespeare-online.com/index.html>

Worksheets

Activity 1

Worksheet A

William Shakespeare was born on (1) _____, _____ in (2) Stratford-upon-Avon. When he was (3) _____ he went to the local grammar school for boys. He left school when he was about (4) 14. He was only (5) _____ when he met (6) Ann Hathaway and they got married in (7) _____, _____. Their first daughter, (8) Susanna, was born (9) _____ months later.

In (10) 1592 Shakespeare was living in (11) _____ and had become famous. At this time he was writing and acting for the Lord Chamberlain's Men at the Globe Theatre. Shakespeare became very successful and in (12) 1599 he bought the (13) _____. During his life he wrote at least (14) 37 plays including *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet* and *Twelfth Night*. He died on his birthday in (15) _____ at the age of (16) 52.

Questions

(1) When

_____?

(3) How old

_____?

(5) How old

_____?

(7) When

_____?

(9) How many

_____?

(11) Where

_____?

(13) What

_____?

(15) When

_____?

Worksheet B

William Shakespeare was born on (1) 23 April, 1564 in (2) _____. When he was

(3) seven he went to the local grammar school for boys. He left school when he was about (4) _____. He was only (5) 18 when he met (6) _____ and they got married in (7) November 1582. Their first daughter, (8) _____, was born (9) eight months later.

In (10) _____ Shakespeare was living in (11) London and had become famous. At this time he was writing and acting for the Lord Chamberlain's Men at the Globe Theatre. Shakespeare became very successful and in (12) _____ he bought the (13) Globe Theatre. During his life he wrote at least (14) _____ plays including *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet* and *Twelfth Night*. He died on his birthday in (15) 1616 at the age of (16) _____.

Questions

(2) Where

_____?

(4) How

old _____?

(6)

Who _____?

(8) What

_____?

(10)

When _____?

(12) When

_____?

(14) How

many _____?

(16) How

old _____?

Activity 2

Read the short text about Shakespeare's plays. Then answer the questions.

Shakespeare wrote 37 plays. These are usually divided into three types - comedies, tragedies and histories. The Comedies aren't always funny, but they do have good endings that are happy. His most famous comedies include *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Twelfth Night*. Tragedies, on the other hand, always have sad endings which can make people cry. Shakespeare seemed to like writing tragedies. Probably his most famous one is *Romeo and Juliet*. Finally, the histories are plays that are about people or events in history. In Shakespeare's history plays the facts were not always correct! For example, in *Julius Caesar* all the events happen on the same day. So in Shakespeare's play, Caesar is murdered and buried on the same day!

- 1 How many plays did Shakespeare write?
- 2 What are the three types of play called?
- 3 What is the difference between a comedy and a tragedy?
- 4 What kind of play was *Twelfth Night*?
- 5 What was Shakespeare's most famous tragedy?
- 6 Why are Shakespeare's history plays strange?

Activity 3

Read the short summaries of three of Shakespeare's most famous plays. Which is a comedy, which is a history and which is a tragedy?

[A]

This play takes place in Venice where a young man of 18 falls in love with a girl of 14. But, there is a problem - their families are enemies. The man is not allowed to meet the girl, but he does in secret. Then he sees the girl on the ground and he thinks she is dead. He is so upset that he kills himself. When the girl wakes up and sees him dead, she kills herself.

[B]

A brother (Sebastian) and sister (Viola) are shipwrecked, but they both think the other one has died. Viola arrives at the palace of Count Orsino dressed as a boy. The Count is in love with Olivia, the daughter of a local lord, but she doesn't love him. He asks Viola to take a letter to Olivia telling her how much he loves her. When Viola arrives Olivia falls in love with her because she looks like a man (she is still dressed in boy's clothes). Then Sebastian is found alive and in the end Olivia marries Viola's brother, Sebastian, and the Count marries Viola!

[C]

This play takes place in ancient Rome. A group of men decide to kill the Emperor. They kill him on March 15th. Then the Emperor's nephew comes to Rome to try and find the men who killed his uncle and kill them. One of these men – Brutus – is so unhappy about what he has done that he wants to kill himself.

Do you know the name of each of these plays?