Webquest WORKSHEET

Warmer

What do you know about William Shakespeare? Discuss your ideas with a partner.

Activity 1: William Shakespeare: An introduction to his life

Read the biography of Shakespeare below, and try to complete the missing information.

Then, visit www.bbc.co.uk/timelines/z8k2p39 to find the correct information and complete the short biography.

Shakespeare is England's most famous playwright and _____. His plays are known throughout the world, and he introduced up to 300 _____ and dozens of _____ into the English language.

He was born in _____ -_____ -_____ in the year _____. He probably went to the local _____ school, King Edward VI's School, where he learnt Greek and _____ . He didn't go to _____ .

In 1582, he married _____ _____ , who was three months _____ . In total, they had _____ children.

He left Stratford to go and live in _____ , working as a playwright and actor. He performed many times for Queen _____ _____ .

Shakespeare's group built their own theatre called the _____ . By now, Shakespeare was very rich. He bought the _____ _____ house in Stratford and many other properties as investments. He had a good head for business.

He died in _____ , probably of _____ . In his will, he left his _____ _____ bed to his wife. Nobody knows for certain why he did this. He is buried in Stratford.

Activity 2: The plot of *Romeo and Juliet*

Read the statements about Shakespeare's classic tragedy, *Romeo and Juliet*. Some are true and others are false. With a partner, predict whether you think they are true or false, then visit en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romeo_and_Juliet to check your answers and correct the false statements.

Introduction

1. The plot of *Romeo and Juliet* is based on a French tale.
2. Shakespeare created the supporting characters Mercutio and Paris.
3. The play is believed to have been written between 1581 and 1585.

Synopsis

4. The play is set in Venice, Italy.
5. It begins with a street fight between Montague and Capulet servants.
6. Romeo first sees Juliet at a ball in the Montague house.
7. With the help of Benvolio, they are secretly married the next day.
8. Romeo kills Juliet's cousin, Tybalt, in revenge for his killing Romeo's close friend and ally, Mercutio.

9. For the execution, Romeo is exiled from Verona.

10. Before he leaves, he secretly spends the night with Juliet.

11. Juliet's mother offers her a drug that will put her into a coma for 'two and forty hours' on the night before her planned wedding to Paris.

12. When she is found, she is believed to be dead.

13. Romeo buys a gun to kill himself when he hears the news.

14. At the crypt where Juliet's body has been laid, Romeo is met by Paris.

15. He kills him before drinking the poison.

16. When Juliet awakens from her deep sleep, she realizes Romeo is dead and, panicking, she runs away.

Activity 3: Boy players

Visit en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boy_player, and find out about boy players by reading the 'Boys in adult companies' and 'Boys playing female roles' sections. Then answer the questions below.

1. When did it become permissible for women to perform in the theatre?

2. Why were pre-pubescent boys used to play female roles?

3. Did boys also play the complex lead female roles?

4. What kinds of roles did actor John Honyman play?

5. What did audiences think of the boy players?

Activity 4: Shakespearean language still used today

a. In pairs, you are going to find out the meanings of the phrases created or popularized by Shakespeare. Decide who is Student 1 and who is Student 2. Find out the meanings of the expressions, and teach the phrases to your partner.

Student 1: Find the following phrases from **Hamlet**.
www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/phrases-coined-by-shakespeare-in-hamlet.html
1. in my mind's eye
2. make your hair stand on end
3. woe is me

Student 2: Find the following from phrases from **Macbeth**.
www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/phrases-coined-by-shakespeare-in-macbeth.html
4. a charmed life
5. a sorry sight
6. be all and end all

b. Now, choose your favourite expression from the main list: www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/phrases-sayings-shakespeare.html.

Once you've chosen your favourite expression, perform and teach it to the whole class.

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