

Who was William Shakespeare?

William Shakespeare was born in April 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon. This year we celebrate his 450th birthday.

He was baptized on April 26th; therefore we can assume that he was born three days before, on April 23rd.

His father, John Shakespeare, was a rich glovemaker. His mother was Mary Arden. She was from a rich, prominent family. William was their third child.

William went to grammar school in Stratford-upon-Avon.

He married Anne Hathaway. They had three children called Susanna, Hamnet and Judith. Hamnet and Judith were twins, but Hamnet already died at the age of 11.

After William had left school when he was 16 he became a very successful actor, writer, poet and later the owner of a playing-company called "The Lord Chamberlain's Men".

William lived many years in London. His family stayed in Stratford.

Shakespeare wrote 37 comedies, histories and tragedies. Among the most famous are "A Midsummer Night's Dream", "Richard III", "King Lear", "Romeo & Juliet", and "Hamlet".

His 154 sonnets (poems with 14 lines) are also very popular.

In 1599, Shakespeare built a theatre in London on the banks of the Thames: "The Globe". In that theatre many of his plays were performed. People loved going to the theatre. Unfortunately, "The Globe" burned down in 1613. Today, visitors can watch Shakespeare's plays at the restored Globe Theatre.

Queen Elizabeth I was a fan of his plays. She was Queen from 1558 to 1603. This time is called "Elizabethan era".

William returned to Stratford in 1610 as a rich and very famous man.

He died on 23rd April 1616 in Stratford, aged 52.

William Shakespeare is regarded as the world's most famous writer. He is often called "England's national poet" or "The Bard".

