Programme

A Dramatic Introduction to Shakespeare

The Play's The Thing®

The year is 1603. The city is London, England. The setting is the Globe Theater, a rowdy and well-attended open-air playhouse with a nearly bare stage. And the players? You and your friends, all unemployed actors vying for choice parts in the latest Shakespeare play!

games with an aptitude®

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In THE PLAY'S THE THING, Shakespeare novices and experts alike can act and play their hearts out while learning the major characters, plots, and quotes from three popular plays: Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet, and Julius Caesar. (For information on ordering card sets of other plays, see the back page.) The game is an enjoyable way to brush up on a play you've already read or seen or to become familiar with one you're about to read or see, whether for school or for pleasure. Theater buffs will love the Actor's Choice rules in which they memorize and perform lines to win!

Ready for Opening Night? Actors, take the stage!

Object of the Game

As an unemployed actor in Elizabethan England, your greatest goal is to perform the most scenes from a Shakespeare play. To perform, collect sets of cards (a minimum of 3, including a Plot card and two Character or Quotation cards) from the same numbered scene and play them in front of you (as in the game "rummy"). Actors gain points for drawing the last card of the game and lose points for each card in their hand at the end of the game. By the way, watch out for stage mishaps, duels, and missed cues as you race around the Globe Theater board!

The Players

A troupe of 2 to 4 unemployed actors, age 12 to adult

The Props

Hamlet, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Julius Caesar* master card decks, 6 Actor Playing Pieces, Globe Theater Game Board, 1 Die, Booklet

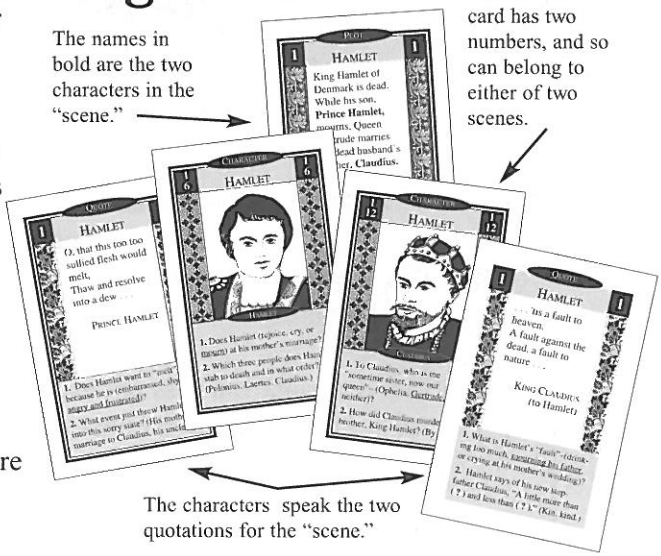
Backstage Preparations

Choose a play for your acting troupe to "perform," find the 64 color-coded cards for that play, and set aside all the other cards.

Making a Scene

There are six types of cards:

13 Plot cards
13 Character cards
26 Quotation cards
10 Script cards
1 Wild Shakespeare card
1 Cast list card



The Plot, Character, and Quotation cards are numbered 1 to 13, in order of events in the play. Cards with matching numbers form a "scene." The five cards at right make up scene 1 of *Hamlet.* To "perform" a scene in the game, you must have at least three of the five cards. One card *must* be a Plot card. You can substitute "Wild Shakespeare" for any card except the Plot card. Novices may use the Cast list for reference. The 10 Script cards are for use with the Actor's Choice level.

Setting the Stage

1. Shuffle together the Plot, Character, Quote, and Wild Shakespeare cards for one play. Deal 7 cards per actor. Put the deck face-down on **Draw**. Turn over a card to start the **Discard** pile.

2. Choose an Actor playing piece and put it on either corner labeled **The Play Begins**.

3. Each player chooses his or her level of play:

Novice: You have no knowledge of the play whatsoever, and want to play the game mainly for fun.

Apprentice: You're not familiar with the play, but would like to be by the end of the game.

Scholar: You know the play and want to learn more.

Actor's Choice: You love to act, but may or may not know the play well. Shuffle the 10 script cards and place this deck face-down near you.

The Play Begins

1. TO TAKE A TURN: The youngest actor goes first. Roll the die and advance your Actor clockwise around the board. The **Draw** space in front of **The Play Begins** counts as the first space. Follow the directions where your Actor lands.

2. FREE CARD: Every time you pass or land on one of the two **Free Card** spaces, draw the top card from either pile. If you forget to draw before the next turn, you're out of luck.

3. DRAW: Follow the directions. There's no limit to how many cards you can hold. When the **Draw** pile runs out, flip over the **Discard** pile to start a new **Draw** pile.

4. DUEL: Decide how many (1, 2, or 3) and which cards to risk and put them face-down. Choose a worthy adversary–any actor who holds at least as many cards as you put down. Your adversary puts the same number of cards face-down. Each actor rolls the die. The higher roller wins all the cards. In a tie, actors keep their cards.

If you're out of cards and you land on **Duel**, ask any actor to lay down two cards. Roll to win these cards. If you land on **Duel** and all opponents are out of cards, the duel is off.

5. CUE: For the first three levels, the actor on your left takes the top **Draw** card and reads the plot, quotation, or character's name. For Actor's Choice, decide whether to act out a scene card or a Script card, which is worth more but harder to perform. Here's what happens next:

Novice: Roll the die. An odd number means you win the "cue" card, plus a card from the top of either pile. An even number means you put the "cue" card on the bottom of the **Draw** pile, plus discard one.

Apprentice: The actor on your left reads question 1. If you answer correctly, take the "cue" card and draw a card from either pile. If not, put the "cue" card on the bottom of the **Draw** pile and discard a card.

Scholar: The same as Apprentice, except you answer question 2.

Actor's Choice: For a scene card (Plot, Character or Quotation), follow the performance rules (rule 7) and hope for applause. Because this is a "first reading," you may look at the card while you perform. If applauded, take the "cue" card, plus one from the top of either pile. If booed, put the "cue" card back in the **Draw** pile and discard a card.

To perform a Script card, the player on your left draws a Script card and reads the underlined text; you perform the rest by heart. Fellow actors applaud or boo. Even if you don't say each line exactly, your audience may choose to be lenient, so it pays to ad lib. If applauded, keep the Script card. If booed, put it back in the Script deck. You don't win or lose any other cards.

On any level, if you don't have any cards in your hand, you don't have to discard.

6. STAGE MISHAP/RAVE REVIEW: Follow the directions. If you're out of cards, you don't have to discard or pass cards, but you can accept a passed card. You must pass a card before you pick one up. If you are instructed to "Move to Any Space", do not collect a free card from the **Free Card** space you may pass.

7. PERFORM/ROLL AGAIN: There are 5 cards per scene.You need 3 or more to perform; one card *must* be a Plot. Substitute Wild Shakespeare for any card other than a Plot. (See "Making a Scene," page 3.) You may perform more than one scene, if you like. If you can't or don't want to perform, roll again. Actor's Choice players may perform a Script card *or* scene cards. Here are the rules for performing:

Novice: Just read the plot line, quotation(s), and character name(s) aloud and lay the cards face-up in front of you. You can't lose!

Apprentice/Scholar: Hand the set to the actor on your left, who asks you question 1 (apprentice) or 2 (scholar) on each card. If you answer *all* the questions correctly, play the set face-up. If you miss even one question, keep the set and try again at your next performance.

Actor's Choice: To perform a **Script** card, the actor on your left draws a **Script** card and reads the underlined text; perform the rest by heart. For a scene, hand the cards to your left and act out each card:

Plot Card: Describe the plot line for that scene, dramatically, like a narrator. (It doesn't have to be word for word–just who's doing what.)

Character Card: Announce the character and convey his or her state of mind using facial expressions, body language, actions, or any other actor's bag of tricks. For example, if the character is Hamlet, you could look anguished and tormented and bury your head in your hands.

Quote: Recite it from memory–with *feeling!* This is a performance!

The other actors are your critics. If the majority agrees (by applause) that you performed well, play the cards. If not, keep the cards and try again later. *Be kind to your fellow actors, and they will be kind to you!*

8. ADDING TO A SCENE: If you have a card for a scene that another actor "performed," play it on your turn by following the performance rules. You must land on **Perform** first. If your performance is a success, lay the card in front of you, not in front of the other actor.

9. CLOSING NIGHT: As soon as the last card is drawn, it's time for the final performance. (If a player lands on a CUE space and does not win the last card, the game continues until the last card is drawn.) The player whose turn it is has one last chance to perform every scene or script he or she can. Each player then gets one chance to perform in order of play. Any actor (on any level) may perform a **Script** card instead of a scene.

10. THE CRITICAL REVIEWS: Score 10 points for drawing the last card, 20 points per Script card played, and 10 points per every other card played (including the Wild Shakespeare card). Subtract 10 points per Plot card and 5 points per every other card left in your hand.

POINTS	ACHIEVEMENT	YOUR REWARD
50 or more	Star Performer	Top Billing
40 to 45	Master Player	Critical Acclaim
30 to 35	Character Actor	Lots of Laughs
20 to 25	Regular Performer	Mild Applause
10 to 15	Bit Player	The Thrill of Acting
Under 10	Unemployed Actor	First Turn Next Game

Game Variations

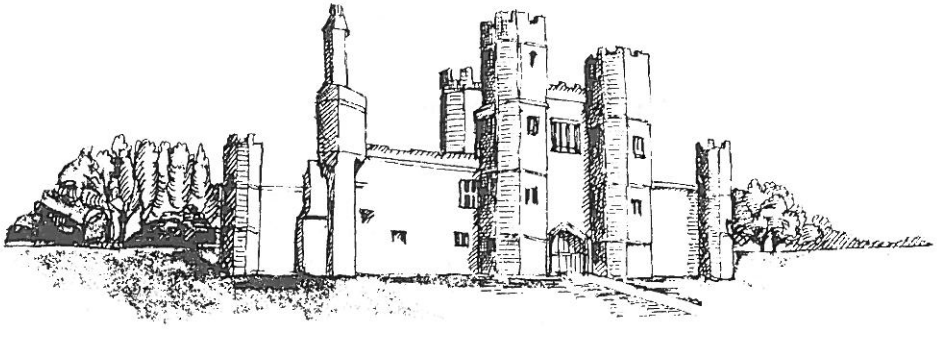
DOUBLE FEATURE: Use two or three decks, instead of one. Each deck is color-coded by play. To perform, your cards must, of course, all be from the same play, including the Wild Shakespeare card.

RANK THE CARDS: Instead of five points per card, score each card by the number of its scene (Quote 1 is worth 1 point, for example). The Character Card in each scene is worth the same as the other cards in the scene. (Example, Character 3/12 is worth 3 points if played with scene 3 and 12 points if played with scene 12.) This variation makes for a very competitive game that requires strategy at every move–especially which cards to risk in duels, whether to perform a low-scoring set or roll again in hopes of getting a better one, and so on.

TRADING ROLES: Allow players to trade cards at any time during their turn. Set a time limit on trades, such as one minute.

SUPER-ADVANCED: Shakespeare experts can make up their own rules for performing, including tougher questions, more challenging acting, or requiring four cards instead of three to complete a scene. For example, experts may be asked to listen to a quotation, and then recite the next line in the play, just as with the Script cards. For references and complete versions of the plays, see our "Suggested Resources" list in this booklet.

MATINEE: Play in the early afternoon. (Just teasing!)



Other Fun Games

Rummy Rehearsal

Players: 2 to 4

Materials: The plot, character, quote, and Wild Shakespeare cards from any deck (that's 53 cards total)

Setting Up: Deal 7 cards per player. Put the rest in a **Draw** pile. Turn over the top card to form a **Discard** pile. The player on the dealer's left goes first.

1. TO TAKE A TURN: Each turn consists of three steps.

Draw the top card of either pile.

Play a scene (or scenes) if you can and if you want to. Simply lay down 3, 4, or 5 cards with matching numbers in front of you. One card *must* be the Plot card for that scene. Unlike standard rummy, you can't play a "run" of cards, such as 1, 2, 3. (See "Making a Scene," page 3.)

Discard a card face-up.

2. ADD TO A SCENE: You can complete a scene that another player has played. For instance, if someone plays three cards from scene 5 and you have Quote 5, play it in front of you on your turn.

3. TO WIN: The game ends as soon as someone runs out of cards. That someone earns 10 points for going out. Each player earns 5 points for every card played and loses 5 points for every card still in his or her hand. The highest scorer wins.

GAME VARIATIONS: You can draw any card in the **Discard** pile under two conditions:

- You pick up all the cards above your chosen card, *and*
- You immediately play the bottom card that you picked up in a "scene." If you can't make a scene, you can't use this variation.

It helps to fan out the cards in the **Discard** pile as you play so that the numbers in the upper corners are always visible.

Don't Quote Me

Your opponent reads a quotation; you guess the speaker. Then you switch. Keep going until all quotations from a play have been read.

If you don't know the play at all, this game will be hard at first, but after just one round, you'll be surprised at how much you learn. If you know the play, this game will really make you think!

Players: 2
Materials: All 26 Quotation cards, plus the Cast card from any one deck
Setting Up: Place the Cast card so both players can see it. Deal all the cards so that each player has 13. Players put their cards in a pile face-down. The Dealer starts.

1. TO START: Draw the top card from your pile, read the quotation aloud, and ask the other player to "Name the speaker."

2. CORRECT SPEAKER: If the other player answers correctly, he or she wins the card and puts it face-up to start a pile of cards won.

3. INCORRECT SPEAKER: If the other player answers incorrectly, reveal the correct name of the speaker and put the card face-up in your pile.

4. SWITCH PLACES: Your opponent draws a card, reads the quotation, and asks you to name the speaker. Keep trading turns until you've run through all the cards once.

5. TO WIN: The player with the most cards wins.

VARIATIONS: Mix in all the Quotation cards from another deck or even two decks. Players must name both the play and the speaker.

After a few rounds of naming the speaker, see if you can name the "speakee"–the person being addressed (if anyone).

Plot Lines

This simple game is a fast and easy way for novices to become familiar with the plot line of a play. Even if you've never read or seen the play before, you can use logic and reasoning to place more Plot cards in order than your opponent.

Players: 2
Materials: 13 Plot cards from any one deck
Setting Up: Deal 6 cards face-down to each player. Don't look at your cards! Put them face-down in a pile in front of you. Put the 13th card face-up in the center and read the plot line aloud. The dealer starts.

1. TO START: Draw the top Plot card in your pile and read the plot line aloud to the other player.

2. GUESSING THE ORDER: The other player must guess the plot number. (The Plot Cards are numbered 1 to 13, roughly in order of events in the play.)

3. CORRECT GUESS: Place the Plot card face-up in the correct order in the center.

4. INCORRECT GUESS: Say, "You're out of line," and put the card on the bottom of your pile.

5. SWITCH TURNS: Players alternate turns guessing the plot number of the other person's cards until a player has one card left.

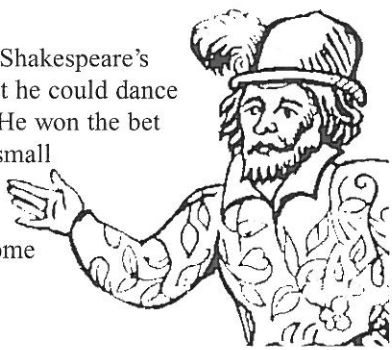
6. LAST CARD: To play the last card, the person guessing must name the plot number of the card *and* answer the Level 1 or 2 question.

7. TO WIN: The player who runs out of cards first **loses**.

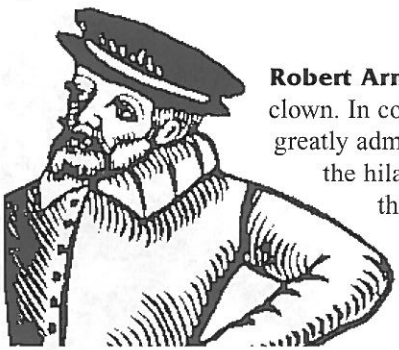
Elizabethan Theater

The four male actors in *THE PLAY'S THE THING* *are based on actual 17th century performers who worked in Shakespeare's company or with the competition. These stars were rarely unemployed. In fact, some actors would perform 10 new plays in a year and a leading actor might learn as many as 70 parts in just three years!*

Richard Burbage was the leading actor of his day. He and his brother Cuthbert owned half of the Globe Theater, which they inherited from the man who built it, their father. Like many playwrights then and now, Shakespeare wrote characters with actors in mind and Burbage probably inspired a few. He played King Lear, Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth, Brutus, and Romeo. If you envision Hamlet as a thin, frail young man, you would not have recognized Burbage in the role. In his Hamlet debut, the 37-year-old weighed 235 pounds.

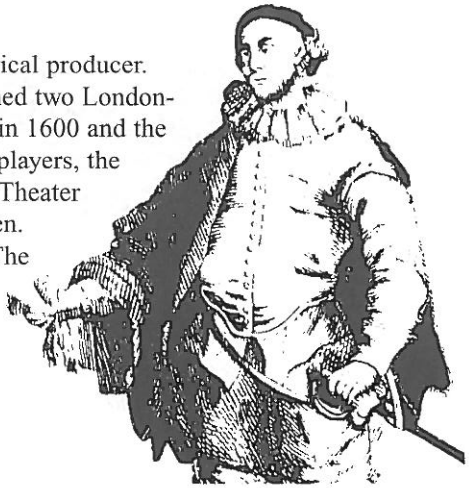


William Kempe was the leading clown in Shakespeare's troupe and a legendary dancer who once bet he could dance from London to Norwich, 114 miles away. He won the bet after a month-long jig! Shakespeare wrote small parts for Kempe, who may have improvised, just as today's best comic actors do. He left Shakespeare's company, possibly, some speculate, after a feud with the Bard.

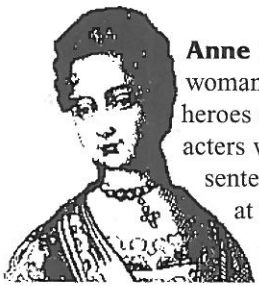


Robert Armin replaced Kempe as Shakespeare's clown. In contrast to Kempe, the Bard seemed to have greatly admired Armin. Though Kempe probably played the hilariously drunk porter in *Macbeth*, the part of the Fool in *King Lear* was almost certainly written for Armin. From that play onward, many of Shakespeare's works featured fools– played by Armin– who were wiser than their masters.

Edward Alleyn was both actor and theatrical producer. With his partner Philip Henslowe, he opened two London-area theaters, the Fortune Playhouse built in 1600 and the Hope Playhouse. These theaters and their players, the Admiral's Men, competed with the Globe Theater and Shakespeare's Lord Chamberlain's Men. Was it a fair competition? Consider this: The Globe premiered *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*. The Hope Theater doubled as a 'bear-baiting' arena in which Elizabethan spectators bet on fights between dogs and bears in chains.

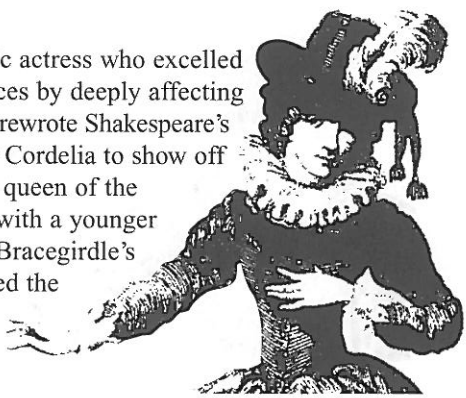


The two actresses lived after Shakespeare was dead. Unlike other European nations, England did not allow women to appear on public stages until the Restoration of Charles II in 1660. All of the professional female parts were played (and by all accounts, played well) by boys. Although the boys were not stars, fans remembered them. Reviews of Romeo and Juliet from the early 1700s complain that no woman could ever play Juliet like Shakespeare's boys did. The actresses in THE PLAY'S THE THING overcame society's resistance to women players to become leading lights of Restoration theater.



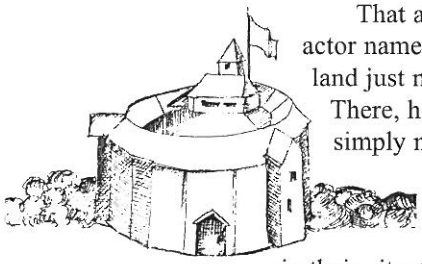
Anne Bracegirdle (1663?-1748) performed the role of a virtuous woman in play after play. She was the innocent girl pursued by heroes and villains with equal ardor, but never captured. Her characters were written with her high image in mind. They only consented to honest marriage proposals from honest men, and only at the end of the play. When she played against type in *Almyna*, critics hailed her performance as a woman driven mad by the rejections of a man. Her Shakespearean roles included Isabella *(Measure for Measure)*, Portia *(Merchant of Venice)*, Desdemona *(Othello)*, Ophelia *(Hamlet)*, and Cordelia *(King Lear)*.

Elizabeth Barry (1658-1713) was a tragic actress who excelled in the art of exciting pity, moving audiences by deeply affecting a range of strong emotions. One dramatist rewrote Shakespeare's *King Lear* with a much-enhanced role for Cordelia to show off Barry's talent at evoking tears. Called the queen of the "she-tragedy," Barry later took the stage with a younger Bracegirdle, often playing the mother of Bracegirdle's innocent girl character. She also performed the role of Queen Eleanor in *Henry II*.



About The Playhouses

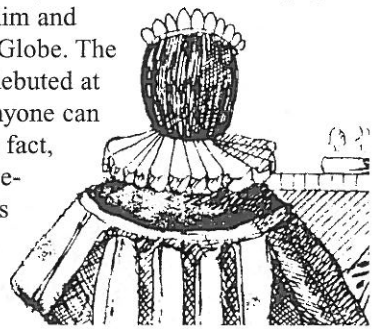
Before Shakespeare was born, England had many innyard theaters, but no large professional theater buildings. Instead, bands of roving actors, who were among the least respected people in the country, traveled in wagons, setting up in small towns and performing scenes from the Bible or from history with a clear moral. The touring companies were like the circus; when one was in town, you could see a show. When one wasn't, there was no show to see.



That all changed in 1576, when a carpenter and actor named James Burbage took out a 21-year lease on land just north of London in a town called Shoreditch. There, he built England's first permanent theater, simply named The Theater. It was outside London possibly because authorities in the capital didn't approve of actors rumored to be involved in immoral crimes taking up shop in their city. Or maybe, they were just trying to put a lid on the spreading of the plague; whenever the death toll climbed too high, authorities shut down the playhouses and some companies went back "on tour."

Burbage died in 1597. That same year his band of players became known as the Lord Chamberlain's Men and the lease ran out. The landowner kicked the players off his property. By coincidence, all the London playhouses closed because of a scandal connected with a now unknown play called *The Isle of Dogs*. Burbage's sons, Cuthbert and Richard, took advantage of the situation. They moved The Theater, piece by piece, across the Thames River to the suburb of Bankside. It reopened as the Globe, a new home to the works of William Shakespeare.

Shakespeare had been a member of the Lord Chamberlain's Men since about 1591, but many of his earliest plays were performed at the Rose playhouse. By 1599, the Burbage brothers gave him and four of his fellow players a half-share in the Globe. The rest of Shakespeare's plays–more than half–debuted at the Globe and became huge hits. As far as anyone can tell, everyone got rich in the deal. So rich, in fact, that in 1609 the group purchased a second theater, this one in London, for performing plays indoors during the winter. They called this former monastery Blackfriars.



During a performance of Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* in 1613, a cannon fired during a battle scene caused the Globe to burn to the ground in minutes. The Globe's performers, now called the King's Men since they were sponsored by King James I, had become England's premier theater company. They quickly built a new and improved Globe Theater, finished in 1614, on the site of the original. It stood for 30 years, until England's Puritan leaders banned drama from their country and ordered the Globe to be torn down. (Theater returned to England in 1660.)

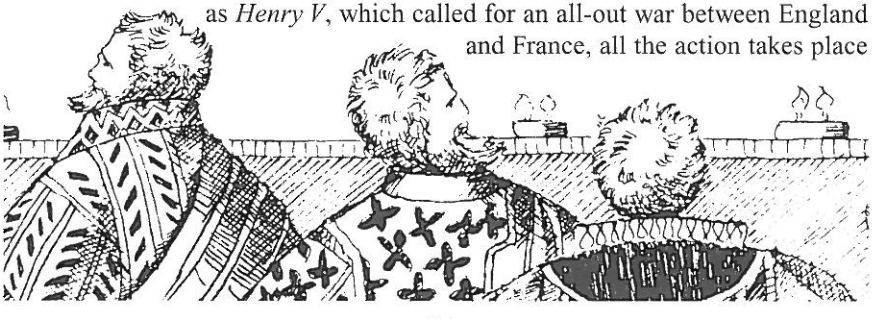
The building has been gone for more than 300 years, but we do have written descriptions of it, including carpenters' notes. Also, scholars have recently excavated the site of the Rose Theater, where Shakespeare opened many of his earliest plays. This project has answered many questions about how Elizabethan theater worked.

We know that the Globe Theater was a three-story structure with an open-air center. Many believe that the Globe had eight sides, but the builders were aiming for a truly round theater. They couldn't build one out of wood, so they created a many-sided structure to imitate a circle. At one end of the structure, was a raised stage that jutted out into the center of the building. At the back of the stage was a curtain. Polonius was killed by Hamlet as he hid behind this curtain. When the curtain was open, the space behind it served as a second stage. The action in the Capulet tomb in *Romeo and Juliet* took place on this auxiliary stage. Two columns on the stage held up a decorated canopy, which served as "the heavens." If a character needed to be on stage while another character addressed the audience, he stood behind one of these columns.

The Globe stage had at least one trap door, which came in handy during graveyard scenes such as the one in *Hamlet.* There were at least two doors at the side of the stage. Two balconies rose about the stage. The first was used for scenes like the classic window scene in *Romeo and Juliet.* The second held musicians.

Since the plays were performed in the open air, and electricity had not yet been invented, there were no stage lights. If a scene took place at night or in a storm, someone held a torch or other clue-giving prop or a character's lines indicated the time of day and weather conditions.

Few props were used, and the stage was almost bare. Even in plays such as *Henry V*, which called for an all-out war between England and France, all the action takes place



in the armies' camps. Offstage battles are left to the audience's imagination.

Actors did not wear historic costume. In fact, they often just added simple pieces, such as a crown for a king, to their regular dress clothes.

Audiences loved sound effects and special effects, especially of characters "ascending to the heavens." Drums created thunder; a type of fireworks produced "lightning." For scenes requiring blood, actors hid animal bladders and sponges in their costumes. Fog was created by smoky fires. Companies often used realistic-looking heads and skulls and other bits of anatomy, such as hands and fingers. Disheveled hair indicated that a character was insane.

Shakespeare's plays all took place on the same stage, using almost the same actors. And since the playwright rarely bothered his actors with complicated stage directions, the King's Men had almost no rehearsals. They had to learn their parts fast–in about a week–because the Globe changed plays quickly and often. A leading man often had to learn about 800 new lines per day.

Although Shakespeare's plays all have a strict five-act structure, there were no intermissions at the Globe. Fans and stagehands usually knew a scene was ending when a speech ended with a rhyme ("The play's the thing /Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.") or, better yet, when everyone on stage exited through a side door.

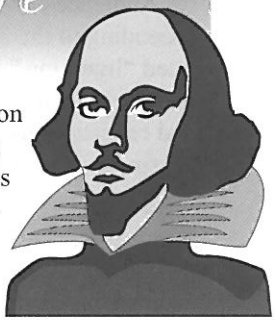
The Globe held performances at two o'clock in the afternoon every day except Sundays. Since theater advertising was banned, Globe management signaled that a show was about to begin by raising a flag over the structure: black for a tragedy, white for a comedy, and red for a history play. The theater held well over 2,000 spectators. Many factors–Elizabethans rarely bathed, the plays were performed in the sun, there were no restrooms at the Globe, vendors sold beer in the stands–led to what was very likely a foul smell in the theater.

Spectators sat remarkably close to the action. For a fee of about two pennies, people could find seats on each of the structure's three levels. Others simply stood around the front of the stage in the pit of the theater. The people in these legendarily rowdy crowds were known as "groundlings."

Knowing that the actors stood right next to the groundlings explains why so many scenes include characters speaking directly to the crowd–asking for advice, making a confession, or letting their friends in on a secret. It was important to win over fans, because they were often carrying fruit (sold by fruit vendors roaming the seats) and they knew how to use it.

Today's "Groundlings" are members of a famous Los Angeles improvisational comedy group, many of whose stars have gone on to "Saturday Night Live" and movie stardom. Shakespeare's working-class groundlings, who enjoyed nothing so much as a dirty joke, a slapstick pratfall, or a raucous drinking song, would approve.

About Shakespeare



William Shakespeare was born (we think) on April 23, 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon, England. He died in April 1616 and was buried in Stratford. The rest of his life is open to speculation. For a playwright and poet of such staggering talent, there are very few written records of Shakespeare's life: his will, notes on business at the Globe, receipts for work on his house, but that's about all.

This much we can guess: As a boy, Shakespeare very likely attended the excellent King's New School, a grammar school in Stratford where he would have received his first exposure to the Bible, British history books, and Latin texts, all sources of plots for his future plays. There is, however, no proof of Shakespeare's attendance at this school.

In 1582, at the age of 18, we know that Shakespeare married 26-year-old Anne Hathaway. Six months after the wedding, a daughter, Susanna, was born. Two years later came twins–Judith and Hamnet. Hamnet died young in 1596.

There is no written record of Shakespeare's life from 1585 to 1592, the year the budding actor and playwright was criticized in a book by the older playwright Robert Greene for having the gall to attempt to write drama without a university education. Soon after, there are more reliable records referring to Shakespeare's part ownership in the Globe and his frequent productions there.

From 1588 to 1613, Shakespeare wrote his 38 plays. He wrote the great tragedies (*Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Othello*, and *Macbeth*) from 1600 to 1609. We know that he performed in many of his plays, often playing the role of a king. He almost certainly played the role of the Ghost in *Hamlet*. By 1613, he bought a large estate in Stratford for his wife, daughters, and sons-in-law.

Shakespeare the person remains a mystery. Some say he was an illiterate actor who spent most of his time tending horses. Some say he was a sophisticated gentleman, frequently the guest of Queen Elizabeth and James I. Some believe him to have been a hard drinker and an unfaithful husband. Or perhaps he was a shrewd businessman and natural genius who once wrote an entire play (*The Merry Wives of Windsor*) in 14 days.

The Bard did not publish a single play during his life. In his day, the acting company owned the play. As theatrical historian Andrew Gurr has said, "The Globe's stage was the sole means of publication he expected." Ironically, Shakespeare would later become the world's most published author!

About The Plays

Romeo and Juliet

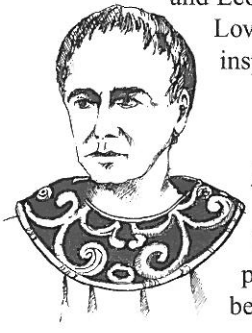
In this tragic tale of "star-crossed" lovers, a powerful young love mixes with an equally powerful old feud to bring grief to everyone. Many Shakespeare plays had their ups and downs in terms of popular appeal. Not so with *Romeo and Juliet*. Fans flocked to see the play from the day it opened. The reasons are obvious. The play is a timeless love story featuring some of the most romantic lines ever written, and a plot with which people from all levels of society can identify.

Shakespeare borrowed elements of the already well-known story from a few sources, the main one being Arthur Brooke's 1562 poem, *The Tragicall Historye of Romeus and Juliet,* which Brooke himself had borrowed from Italian writer Luigi da Parta's tale. Residents of Verona, Italy, will tell you that the story is based on fact. Love letters to Juliet still arrive in Verona and are answered, but no one is telling by whom.

Brooke's poem actually meant to warn young people of what could happen if they disobeyed their parents. Shakespeare brilliantly reversed this moral to create a play that gives voice to the passions of young lovers, and reminds parents of the deadly power that passion can have.

The popularity of the play in Shakespeare's day was partly due to Elizabethan England's unfounded stereotypes about hot-blooded Italians, always either at war or in love and never rational. In this century, when the play was remade into the musical *West Side Story,* composer Leonard Bernstein similarly tapped into American beliefs about New York City gangs.

Several films have been made from the story. The 1936 version starred Leslie Howard and Norma Shearer, both well beyond their teenage years. A more successful 1968 film starred Leonard Whiting, 17, and Olivia Hussey, 15. A post-modern, MTV-style version came out in 1996 with Clare Danes and Leonardo DiCaprio. The delightful 1998 film, "Shakespeare in Love," presents a speculative story about a love affair that inspired Shakespeare to write "Romeo and Juliet."



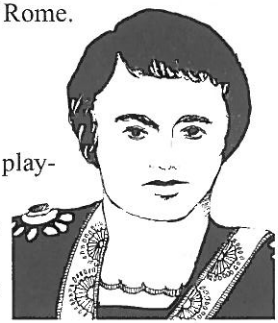
Julius Caesar

First performed in 1599, this play may have been the first of Shakespeare's works to be staged at The Theater, which later became The Globe Theater. Richard Burbage (see page 11) probably played Brutus in the premiere. The play was popular because audiences had a great interest in Roman history and

hotly debated whether the conspirators were justified in the assassination of Caesar in 44 B.C.

Were Brutus and Cassius traitors to Rome, deserving of an eternity in Hell, as the great 14th-century Italian poet Dante believed? Or was Shakespeare's contemporary, Sir Philip Sidney, correct in calling Caesar a rebel who had to be killed for the good of the state? This debate has gone on for centuries and continues today, but we know which side one historical figure took. Five months before he assassinated President Abraham Lincoln, John Wilkes Booth, his brother, and his father (Junius Brutus Booth), all performed in a New York City production of *Julius Caesar.* After Booth shot Lincoln at Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C., he leaped to the stage and screamed, "Sic semper tyrannus!": "Thus be it always to tyrants!"

Justified or not, the conspirators did kill Caesar, and then were routed themselves by the forces of Octavius and Mark Antony. Brutus and the others staked their reputations and, eventually, their lives, on the belief that what they did was for the preservation of their republic. But in the end, that republic died as well. In 31 B.C., after sharing rule with Antony for 11 years, Octavius conquered Antony and became sole emperor of Rome.



Hamlet

Hamlet may be the greatest play written by the greatest playwright of all time. It has been performed more often than any other play, more books have been written about it than any other work of literature, and 45 films have been made from its story. Shakespeare made up 600 new words for the play, which has become the most-quoted work in the English language after the Bible. Hamlet's famous suicidal phrase, "To be or not to be," may be the most-quoted phrase in English.

An impressive array of actors has risen to the fearsome challenge of playing Hamlet (the character has 1,530 lines!) since Richard Burbage premiered the role. Sir John Gielgud in the 1930s and 40s may have played the role in more major productions than anyone in this century. Sir Laurence Olivier, Sir Alec Guiness, John Barrymore, Buster Keaton, Kevin Kline, William Hurt, Peter O'Toole, Ira Aldridge, and Mel Gibson are a few who took a shot at it on stage or on the silver screen.

Shakespeare's most immediate source for the story was a play (lost to us today) that was popular in London in the 1580s. That play and Shakespeare's were based on the ninth-century tale of a heroic Danish prince named Amleth (which means "dim-witted") because of his pretend madness. Amleth had even better reason to act mad than Hamlet since his people believed that killing a madman caused the mad soul to fly into the murderer's own, a safeguard against his uncle killing him.

Visitors to Denmark today can drop in on Amleth's grave on a fittingly bleak plain known as Ammelhelde.

Recommended Resources

We would like to extend a very big thank you to Sharon Hamilton for compiling this annotated bibliography of Shakespeare materials.

Story Versions of the Plays

Shakespeare for Everyone, edited by Jennifer Mulherin; Peter Bedrick Books, 1989. Retellings of individual plays, more simply and briefly told than in Garfield (below), with bright full-color illustrations.

Shakespeare Stories I and II, by Leon Garfield; Houghton Mifflin, 1991, 1995. Not as poetic as Lamb's retellings (below), but more thorough and more colloquial. Garfield uses quotations from the plays and maintains a brisk narrative pace.

Stories from Shakespeare, by Geraldine McCaughrean; Margaret K. McElderry Books, 1995. Ten plays are presented along with colorful illustrations and a cast of characters. The dramas are somewhat condensed and excerpts from the best-known speeches are provided as sidebars on many pages.

Tales from Shakespeare, by Charles and Mary Lamb; Puffin, first published 1807. The classic 19th century collection by the poet and his sister. The language is a bit archaic and some of the plots are sanitized, but the Lambs quote liberally from the plays and give the stories the rhythm of fairy tales.

Series Editions of the Plays

(listed from simplest to hardest)

The Animated Tales from Shakespeare, edited by Leon Garfield; Knopf, 1992. Abridged, original language editions, based on the videotape series made in England and broadcast on HBO. The books, illustrated with lively cartoon stills, are aimed at the elementary school reader. Companion videotapes are available separately.

Shakespeare for Young People, edited by Diane Davidson; Swan Books, 1986. Shortened and excerpted acting versions of the plays, with two "announcers" added to the cast to introduce, summarize, or explain. Ample stage directions and clear introductory notes make this series ideal for the grade school and junior high reader.

Cambridge School Shakespeare, edited by Rex Gibson; Cambridge University Press, 1992. An imaginative new series aimed at high school readers. Across from each page of the text are summaries of the action, glossaries of difficult words, photographs from classic film and stage productions, and brief acting and writing exercises.

The Pelican Shakespeare, edited by Alfred Harbage; Penguin, various dates. Reliable editing, concise notes, and clear, readable introductions on Shakespeare's theater, texts, and the interpretation of each play. Equally useful for the high school or college reader and the scholar—those who want the play itself and essential but brief supporting material.

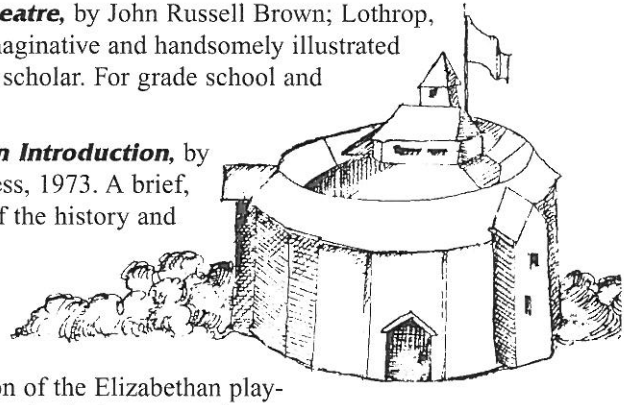
Oxford School Shakespeare Series, by Roma Gill; Oxford University Press, 1994. This series includes page-facing notes that help explain the text plus a chronology of Shakespeare's life and times. Each volume also includes essays relating the story to today's topics of interest.

The Arden Shakespeare, edited by Richard Proudfoot; Methuen, various dates. This scholarly edition features a long introduction to the history and criticism of each play, extensive footnotes, and appendices on sources and parallels. It is portable and designed to last, in both format and content.

Shakespeare's Theater

Globe Theater Model; Sundance (Littleton, MA; 800/343-8204). Kit for assembling a cardboard scale model of Shakespeare's theater, complete with descriptions and theories about the look of the original Globe.

Shakespeare and His Theatre, by John Russell Brown; Lothrop, Lee, and Shepard, 1982. Imaginative and handsomely illustrated introduction by an eminent scholar. For grade school and junior high readers.



Shakespeare's Globe: An Introduction, by David Toor; Kenilworth Press, 1973. A brief, straightforward summary of the history and main features of the Globe.

Shakespeare's Stage, by A.M. Nagler; Yale University Press, 1958. A concise, readable description of the Elizabethan playhouse and of acting practices in Shakespeare's day. It speculates on how Shakespeare staged some of his most famous scenes and includes ample references to documents of his day.

Shakespeare's Theatre, second edition, by Peter Thomson; Routledge Chapman and Hall Inc. N.Y., 1992. A description of the Globe during "its ten best years"—the acting practices, financial conditions, and personnel that made

up Shakespeare's company. The book also includes accounts of *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *Twelfth Night* as they might have been performed at the Globe. The author's style is lively, and the content shows intimate knowledge of both theater history and performance.

Shakespeare's Theatre (Inside Story), by Jacqueline Morley; Peter Bedreck Books, 1994. A detailed volume covering European theatre and Shakespeare's theatre with many illustrations and cutaways of the main structures.

Shakespeare's Life

Bard of Avon, the Story of William Shakespeare, by Diane Stanley and Peter Vennema; Morrow Junior Books, 1992. Historically correct, simply told account of Shakespeare's life and theater. The attractive gouache illustrations and sections on such issues as familiar phrases that Shakespeare contributed to our language make this book appealing for grade school readers.

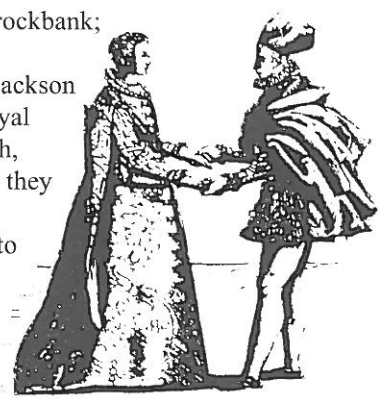
William Shakespeare: A Compact Documentary Life, by Samuel Schoenbaum; Oxford University Press, 1987. The definitive biography, reduced in format from the venerable but unwieldy ***A Documentary Life***. Schoenbaum explains in graceful, witty terms why so little is known about the life of the world's most famous writer. He uses the documents that have survived— from baptismal records to deeds to contemporary allusions—to fill in gaps and separate fact from rumor.

Acting Shakespeare and Shakespeare's Actors

Clamorous Voices: Shakespeare's Women Today, by Carol Rutter; Routledge Theatre Arts Book, 1989. Interviews with five Royal Shakespeare Company actresses about their experiences playing such heroines as Lady Macbeth, Rosalind, and Kate the Shrew. Frank, witty, and deeply committed, the women describe the challenges, the frustrations, and the satisfactions of acting a repertoire dominated by male roles and male casts.

Players of Shakespeare, ***1***, edited by Philip Brockbank; Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Players of Shakespeare, ***2***, edited by Russell Jackson and Robert Smallwood, 1988. Essays by such Royal Shakespeare Company actors as Kenneth Branagh, Fiona Shaw, and Patrick Stewart on famous roles they have played. The writers are articulate and their ample production photos give valuable insight into the challenges and pleasures of acting Shakespeare.



Teaching Shakespeare

Shakespeare Persona: A Creative Approach to Writing, by Rebecca E. Burnett and Elizabeth Foster; Sundance, 1991. Writing assignments on Shakespeare's biography and stagecraft as well as on eleven of the most frequently taught plays. The exercises are arranged from simplest, such as an obituary of Othello for the local paper, to the most demanding, such as a comparison between Juliet and Anne Frank as young women in love.

Shakespeare: A Teaching Guide, by Sharon Hamilton; Weston Walch, 1993. New approaches to performing and writing about Shakespeare in the English classroom, from junior high through college. The techniques, which include mime used to bring out subtext (applied to *Hamlet*), parody (used with *King Lear)*, and critique of videotape (Kenneth Branagh's *Henry V*), are supported with classroom descriptions and excerpts from student papers.

Insight Literary Analysis Activities Program; Sundance, 1982-89. Worksheets direct the prereading and close reading of individual scenes through questions on plot, motive, and atmosphere. Each packet includes a brief introduction to Shakespeare's life and theater, answer keys, and suggestions for further exploration. Available for *Hamlet*, *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*, and *Romeo and Juliet.*

Shakespeare Set Free: Teaching Romeo & Juliet, Macbeth, and A Midsummer Night's Dream, edited by Peggy O'Brien; Washington Square Press, 1993. This book is the first of three volumes written by scholars, actors, and teachers from the Folger Shakespeare Institute. It includes essays on recent scholarship, a step-by-step description of how to help students approach the text actively, and daily curriculum plans for the three plays.

Performances

The BBC Complete Plays. Intended as the definitive series, the productions are uneven in reliability of interpretation and polish of performance, but they are available at most public libraries and can be effective introductions to Shakespeare acted. Especially recommended are the productions of *The Comedy of Errors, Henry IV, and The Taming of the Shrew.*

Caedmon Records. Audiotapes of major plays. Hearing actors can bring the text to life and yet leave the listener free to imagine the look of the set and the casting of the characters. These performances, like the BBC ones, vary in quality, both of sound production and dramatic delivery.

Bibliography

Note: The text of the plays differs from edition to edition, depending on which original source the editors used and how they interpreted the language. For example, in a key scene in *Othello*, the title character has an epileptic fit, just passes out or goes into a trance, depending on the edition. One of Juliet's famous lines may be "A rose by any other *word* would smell as sweet" or "A rose by any other *name* would smell as sweet", also depending on the edition. You will likely find similar differences between our text and yours.

Some of our sources: *The Complete Works,* by William Shakespeare (Viking Press; 1979); *The Horizon Book of the Elizabethan World,* by Lacey Smith (American Heritage Publishing; 1967); *An Oxford Anthology of Shakespeare* (Clarenden Press; 1987); *The Shakespeare Handbook,* by Levi Fox, (G.K. Hill; 1987); *Stories from Shakespeare,* by Marchette Chute (World Publishing; 1956).

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