

# William Shakespeare

## William's Family

William Shakespeare is thought to have been born on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon, England. William was the eldest son of John and Mary Shakespeare. His father was a successful **merchant** and his mother came from a wealthy family.



## As a Young Man

On 28<sup>th</sup> November 1582, at the age of 18, William married Anne Hathaway. Anne was 26 years old when they got married.

They had a daughter called Susanna in 1583. Two years later, Anne gave birth to twins - a boy called Hamnet and a girl called Judith. Tragically, at the age of 11, Hamnet died.

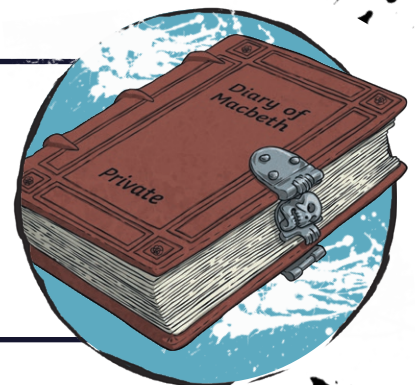
It is thought that William arrived in London in the mid-1580s. When he first arrived, it is believed that he worked as a horse attendant at some of London's theatres.

By 1592, he was earning money as an actor and a playwright.



## A Playwright and a Poet

William Shakespeare started to sell some of his written work and, by 1597, he was beginning to earn a lot of money so he bought one of the largest houses in his hometown of Stratford-upon-Avon.



## What Is a Playwright?

A playwright writes stories that can be acted out on a stage for people to watch.

William did not return home very often as it took three or four days to get from London to Stratford on horseback. It is believed that William did not make this journey very often.

## William's Plays

William Shakespeare wrote **tragedies**, **histories** and **comedies**. Some of his tragedies are 'Romeo and Juliet', 'Hamlet' and 'King Lear'. Some of his comedies are 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' and 'All's Well That Ends Well'.

He wrote about themes that people could relate to, such as: jealousy, anger, love, romance, religion and war.



## Lasting Legacy

Because of William Shakespeare, there are over three hundred words and well-known phrases in the English language that he invented. Some of them are:

all that glitters  
is not gold

bedazzled

watchdog

lacklustre

barefaced

fair-play

wild goose  
chase

hobnob



William Shakespeare died on April 23<sup>rd</sup> 1616, which was the same day as his presumed birthday, at the age of 52.

Each year around the 23<sup>rd</sup> April, the streets of Stratford-upon-Avon are filled with music, song and performances in celebration of the life of William Shakespeare.

## Did You Know... ?

William wrote his will a few months before he died and famously, and rather strangely, left his wife his 'second-best bed' and all his other possessions to his daughters.



## Glossary

**comedies:** A type of entertainment that is supposed to make people laugh.

**histories:** Plays that use historical events as inspiration but may not be factually correct.

**merchant:** A person who sells goods.

**playwright:** A person who writes plays. Plays are stories that can be acted out on a stage for people to watch.

**tragedies:** Very sad plays that usually have an unhappy ending.

**will:** A document containing instructions about what should be done with a person's money and property after they die.





# Questions

William Shakespeare

1. Who was Anne Hathaway? Tick one.

- ☐ William Shakespeare's daughter
- ☐ William Shakespeare's sister
- ☐ William Shakespeare's wife
- ☐ William Shakespeare's mother

2. Draw four lines and match each event from William Shakespeare's life to the correct date, year or period of time.

William married  
Anne Hathaway.

28<sup>th</sup> November 1582

William had started  
earning money as an  
actor and a playwright.

the mid-1580s

William Shakespeare  
is thought to have  
been born.

23<sup>rd</sup> April 1564

William is thought to  
have arrived in London.

1592

3. How long did it take to travel from London to Stratford on horseback?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Fill in the missing words.

Because of William, there are over three \_\_\_\_\_ words  
and well-known \_\_\_\_\_ in the English language that  
he invented.

5. Give the names of two of William Shakespeare's plays.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

6. When he first arrived, it is believed that he worked as a horse attendant at some of London's theatres.

Explain what you think the job of horse attendant involved.

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7. Summarise what you have learnt about William Shakespeare in 30 words or fewer.

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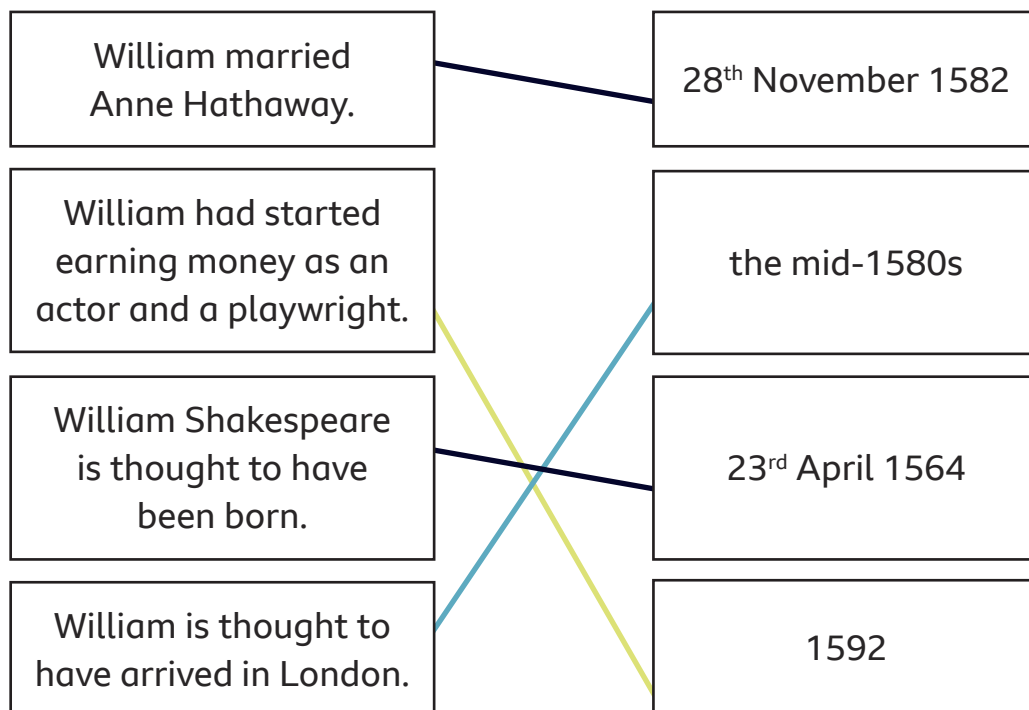
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- ☐ William Shakespeare's daughter
- ☐ William Shakespeare's sister
- ☒ **William Shakespeare's wife**
- ☐ William Shakespeare's mother

2. Draw four lines and match each event from William Shakespeare's life to the correct date, year or period of time.



3. How long did it take to travel from London to Stratford on horseback?

**It took three or four days to get from London to Stratford on horseback.**

4. Fill in the missing words.

Because of William, there are over three **hundred** words and well-known **phrases** in the English language that he invented.

5. Give the names of two of William Shakespeare's plays.

**Accept any two correct answers, including: 'Romeo and Juliet'; 'Hamlet'; 'King Lear'; 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'; 'All's Well That Ends Well'.**

6. When he first arrived, it is believed that he worked as a horse attendant at some of London's theatres.

Explain what you think the job of horse attendant involved.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think the job of horse attendant involved looking after people's horses while they were visiting the theatre.**

7. Summarise what you have learnt about William Shakespeare in 30 words or fewer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: William Shakespeare was a famous playwright who was born in Stratford-Upon-Avon but worked in London. He wrote tragedy, history and comedy plays and invented many common words.**