

**Dr. BRR GOVT DEGREE COLLEGE JADCHERLA**

**Department of English**



**A PROJECT REPORT**

**ON**

**“William Shakespeare”**

Submitted By

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## DECLARATION

We are hereby declare that the study project: “**William Shakespeare**” is a record of work done by under the supervision of **M JAGAN**, faculty of English, Government Degree College, Jadcherla, Mahabubnagar District and that the project has not been previously done by any others in this college and any other college/University.

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Date : 27/06/2022

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## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the Study project on **"William Shakespeare"** is a bonafide Project work done by students listed below

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**William Shakespeare** (26 April 1564 (baptised) – 23 April 1616)<sup>[1]</sup> was an English poet and playwright, widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English language and the world's pre-eminent dramatist.<sup>[2]</sup> He is often called England's national poet and the "Bard of Avon".<sup>[3][4]</sup> His extant works, including some collaborations, consist of about 38 plays,<sup>[5]</sup> 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems, and a few other verses, the authorship of some of which is uncertain. His plays have been translated into every major living language and are performed more often than those of any other playwright.<sup>[6]</sup>

Shakespeare was born and brought up in Stratford-upon-Avon. At the age of 18, he married Anne Hathaway, with whom he had three children: Susanna, and twins Hamnet and Judith. Between 1585 and 1592, he began a successful career in London as an actor, writer, and part-owner of a playing company called the Lord Chamberlain's Men, later known as the King's Men. He appears to have retired to Stratford around 1613 at age 49, where he died three years later. Few records of Shakespeare's private life survive, and there has been considerable speculation about such matters as his physical appearance, sexuality, religious beliefs, and whether the works attributed to him were written by others.

<b>William Shakespeare</b>	
	
<small>The Chandos portrait, artist and authenticity unconfirmed. National Portrait Gallery, London.</small>	
<b>Born</b>	Baptised 26 April 1564 (birth date unknown) Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, England
<b>Died</b>	23 April 1616 (aged 52) Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, England
<b>Occupation</b>	Playwright, poet, actor
<b>Nationality</b>	English
<b>Period</b>	English Renaissance
<b>Spouse(s)</b>	Anne Hathaway (m. 1582–1616)
<b>Children</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Susanna Hall</li> <li>• Hamnet Shakespeare</li> <li>• Judith Quiney</li> </ul>
<b>Relative(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• John Shakespeare (father)</li> <li>• Mary Shakespeare (mother)</li> </ul>
<b>Signature</b>	

## Life

### Early life

William Shakespeare was the son of John Shakespeare, an alderman and a successful glover originally from Snitterfield, and Mary Arden, the daughter of an affluent landowning farmer.<sup>[12]</sup> He was born in Stratford-upon-Avon and baptised there on 26 April 1564. His actual date of birth remains unknown, but is traditionally observed on 23 April, Saint George's Day.<sup>[13]</sup> This date, which can be traced back to an

18th-century scholar's mistake, has proved appealing to biographers, since Shakespeare died 23 April 1616.<sup>[14]</sup> He was the third child of eight and the eldest surviving son.<sup>[15]</sup>

Although no attendance records for the period survive, most biographers agree that Shakespeare was probably educated at the King's New School in Stratford,<sup>[16]</sup> a free school chartered in 1553,<sup>[17]</sup> about a quarter-mile from his home. Grammar schools varied in quality during the Elizabethan era, but grammar school curricula were largely similar, the basic Latin text was standardised by royal decree,<sup>[18]</sup> and the school would have provided an intensive education in grammar based upon Latin classical authors.<sup>[19]</sup>



At the age of 18, Shakespeare married the 26-year-old Anne Hathaway. The consistory court of the Diocese of Worcester issued a marriage licence on 27 November 1582. The next day two of Hathaway's neighbours posted bonds guaranteeing that no lawful claims impeded the marriage.<sup>[20]</sup> The ceremony may have been arranged in some haste, since the Worcester chancellor allowed the marriage banns to be read once instead of the usual three times,<sup>[21]</sup> and six months after the marriage Anne gave birth to a daughter, Susanna, baptised 26 May 1583.<sup>[22]</sup> Twins, son Hamnet and daughter Judith, followed almost two

years later and were baptised 2 February 1585.<sup>[23]</sup> Hamnet died of unknown causes at the age of 11 and was buried 11 August 1596.<sup>[24]</sup>

After the birth of the twins, Shakespeare left few historical traces until he is mentioned as part of the London theatre scene in 1592. The exception is the appearance of his name in the 'complaints bill' of a law case before the Queen's Bench court at Westminster dated Michaelmas Term 1588 and 9 October 1589.<sup>[25]</sup> Scholars refer to the yet between 1585 and 1592 as Shakespeare's "lost years".<sup>[26]</sup> Biographers attempting to account for this period have reported many apocryphal stories. Nicholas Rowe, Shakespeare's first biographer, recounted a Stratford legend that Shakespeare fled the town for London to escape prosecution for deer poaching in the estate of local squire Thomas Lucy. Shakespeare is also supposed to have taken his revenge on Lucy by writing a scurrilous ballad about him.<sup>[27]</sup> Another 18th-century story has Shakespeare starting his theatrical career minding the horses of theatre patrons in London.<sup>[28]</sup> John Aubrey reported that Shakespeare had been a country schoolmaster.<sup>[29]</sup> Some 20th-century scholars have suggested that Shakespeare may have been employed as a schoolmaster by Alexander Hoghton of Lancashire, a Catholic landowner who named a certain "William Shakeshafte" in his will.<sup>[30]</sup> Little evidence substantiates such stories other than hearsay collected after his death, and Shakeshafte was a common name in the Lancashire area.

## London and theatrical career

"All the world's a stage,  
and all the men and women merely players:  
they have their exits and their entrances;  
and one man in his time plays many parts..."

—*As You Like It*, Act II, Scene 7, 139–42<sup>[32]</sup>

It is not known exactly when Shakespeare began writing, but contemporary allusions and records of performances show that several of his plays were on the London stage by 1592.<sup>[33]</sup> By then, he was sufficiently well known in London to be attacked in print by the playwright Robert Greene in his *Groats-Worth of Wit*:

...there is an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tiger's heart wrapped in a Player's hide*, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you: and being an absolute *Johannes factotum*, is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country.<sup>[34]</sup>

Scholars differ on the exact meaning of these words,<sup>[35]</sup> but most agree that Greene is accusing Shakespeare of reaching above his rank in trying to match university-educated writers such as Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Nashe and Greene himself (the "university wits").<sup>[36]</sup> The italicised phrase parodying the line "Oh, tiger's heart wrapped in a woman's hide" from Shakespeare's *Henry VI, Part 3*, along with the pun "Shake-scene", identifies Shakespeare as Greene's target. Here *Johannes Factotum*—"Jack of all trades"—means a second-rate tinkerer with the work of others, rather than the more common "universal genius".<sup>[35][37]</sup>

Greene's attack is the earliest surviving mention of Shakespeare's career in the theatre. Biographers suggest that his career may have begun any time from the mid-1580s to just before Greene's remarks.<sup>[38]</sup> From 1594, Shakespeare's plays were performed by only the Lord Chamberlain's Men, a company owned by a group of players, including Shakespeare, that soon became the leading playing company in London.<sup>[39]</sup> After the death of Queen Elizabeth in

1603, the company was awarded a royal patent by the new king, James I, and changed its name to the King's Men.<sup>[40]</sup>

In 1599, a partnership of company members built their own theatre on the south bank of the River Thames, which they called the Globe. In 1608, the partnership also took over the Blackfriars indoor theatre. Records of Shakespeare's property purchases and investments indicate that the company made him a wealthy man.<sup>[41]</sup> In 1597, he bought the second-largest house in Stratford, New Place, and in 1605, he invested in a share of the parish tithes in Stratford.<sup>[42]</sup>

Some of Shakespeare's plays were published in quarto editions from 1594. By 1598, his name had become a selling point and began to appear on the title pages.<sup>[43]</sup> Shakespeare continued to act in his own and other plays after his success as a playwright. The 1616 edition of Ben Jonson's *Works* names him on the cast lists for *Every Man in His Humour* (1598) and *Sejanus His Fall* (1603).<sup>[44]</sup> The absence of his name from the 1605 cast list for Jonson's *Volpone* is taken by some scholars as a sign that his acting career was nearing its end.<sup>[45]</sup> The First Folio of 1623, however, lists Shakespeare as one of "the Principal Actors in all these Plays", some of which were first staged after



*Volpone*, although we cannot know for certain which roles he played.<sup>[46]</sup> In 1610, John Davies of Hereford wrote that "good Will" played "kingly" roles.<sup>[47]</sup> In 1709, Rowe passed down a tradition that Shakespeare played the ghost of Hamlet's father.<sup>[48]</sup> Later traditions maintain that he also played Adam in *As You Like It* and the Chorus in *Henry V*,<sup>[49]</sup> though scholars doubt the sources of the information.<sup>[50]</sup>

Shakespeare divided his time between London and Stratford during his career. In 1596, the year before he bought New Place as his family home in Stratford, Shakespeare was living in the parish of St. Helen's, Bishopsgate, north of the River Thames.<sup>[51]</sup> He moved across the river to Southwark by 1599, the year his company constructed the Globe Theatre there.<sup>[52]</sup> By 1604, he had moved north of the river again, to an area north of St Paul's Cathedral with many fine houses. There he rented rooms from a French Huguenot named Christopher Mountjoy, a maker of ladies' wigs and other headgear.<sup>[53]</sup>

### Later years and death

Rowe was the first biographer to pass down the tradition that Shakespeare retired to Stratford some years before his death.<sup>[54]</sup> It is perhaps relevant that the London public playhouses were repeatedly closed for months at a time during the extended outbreaks of the Plague (a total of over 60 months closure between May 1603 and February 1610),<sup>[55]</sup> which meant there was often no acting work. Retirement from all work was uncommon at that time,<sup>[56]</sup> and Shakespeare continued to visit London.