



William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare, the greatest English dramatist and poet, was born in 1564 in Stratford, a small country town on the river Avon not far from London. He was the son of John, a glover, and Mary Arden.

Shakespeare probably went to Stratford Grammar School but he had no university education. He married Anne Hathaway when he was only eighteen years old, and in 1585 he left his native town for London. A traditional story tells that he had to run away to avoid arrest for deer-stealing.

We do not know much about his life in London. All we know for certain is that by 1592 he had become a well-known actor and one of the most famous dramatists in Elizabethan London. He acted at court and won the admiration of Queen Elizabeth I.

He made a great fortune, which enabled him to buy a large house in Stratford, where he spent the last years of his life and where he died in 1616.

Shakespeare left us 37 plays and a collection of sonnets. His masterpieces are acted all over the world, and there is hardly anybody who has not heard of such famous characters as Romeo and Juliet, Othello and Desdemona, Hamlet and Ophelia, Macbeth, King Lear, and Falstaff.

Comprehension questions.

1. Who was William Shakespeare?
2. When and where was he born?
3. Whose son was he?
4. Where was he probably educated?
5. Who did he marry?
6. When did he leave Stratford?
7. What did he do in London?
8. Did he make a lot of money?
9. Where did he spend the last years of his life?
10. When did he die?
11. What did he write?



12. What are his most famous characters?

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Answer Key

1. Shakespeare was the greatest English dramatist and poet.
2. He was born in Stratford in 1564.
3. He was the son of John Shakespeare, a glover, and Mary Arden.
4. He was probably educated at Stratford Grammar School.
5. He married Anne Hathaway.
6. He left Stratford in 1565.
7. He became a well-known actor and dramatist.
8. Yes, he did.
9. He spent the last years of his life in Stratford.
10. He died in 1616.
11. He wrote thirty-seven plays and a collection of sonnets.
12. His most famous characters are Romeo and Juliet, Othello and Desdemona, Hamlet and Ophelia, Macbeth, King Lear, and Falstaff.