



English Department

Y6 – Y7

Transition Work



Hello Year 6!

It's been wonderful to meet so many of you during your Transition Week. Rest assured we're working really hard to finalise your amazing English lessons for next year and beyond.

We've included a little taste of what awaits you at Higham Lane and a few tasks and challenges for you to have a go at and to develop your English skills ready for September. We're sure you'll be fantastic at them! We're all looking forward to seeing you soon!

Don't forget your Summer of Reading Challenge – we are looking to rewarding you!

English Department at HLS

Shakespeare and the Theatre research

Task One:

Research the following things on the internet. Create a persuasive leaflet based on your findings.

- Life in Elizabethan England
- The role of the Theatre in Elizabethan England
- The original Globe Theatre
- The differences between the rich and the poor
- What a trip to the theatre was like in Elizabethan times

Task Two:

On word, write a report from the viewpoint of someone who visited the Globe Theatre in the Elizabethan era.

Think about:

- Whether they were rich or poor
- Why they decided to go the theatre
- What the show was like
- How they felt about the theatre

Task Three:

Create a script showing a conversation between two Elizabethan people who have just watched the latest Shakespeare play '*Macbeth*'.

Think about:

- Did they sit in the seats or were they in the pit?
- Did they enjoy the play? What was their favourite part?
- What were the conditions like in the theatre?

Here are FIVE Fact Pages to get you started:

Fact Sheet 1: Shakespeare

William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare is world famous. We know quite a lot about him, but there is still much that remains a mystery. We don't know his date of birth. We don't know the date of his marriage. We even have very little idea of what he looked like. So what do we know about William Shakespeare, the man?

When and where was Shakespeare born?

William Shakespeare was born in 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon, a market town in a farming area of the Midlands. About 1000 people lived there. Shakespeare, England's greatest writer, may have been born on St. George's Day: he was baptised on 26th April, so it is possible, but we really don't know. It would be fitting, as he also died on the day of England's patron saint – St George's Day – 23rd April.

What was Shakespeare's family like?

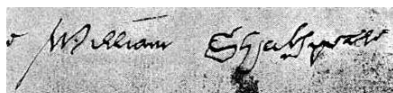
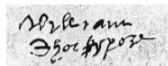
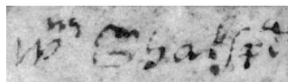
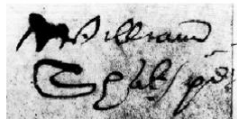
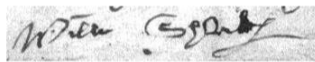
William was born to prosperous parents. His mother, Mary, was the daughter of a local farmer. His father, John, was a glove-maker and wool trader with a large family house. When William was four years old, his father was elected Bailiff of Stratford – effectively the mayor.

But his early life wasn't easy. Although William was the third of eight children, he grew up as the oldest. His two older sisters both died very young. And William was lucky to survive. When he was just a baby, in 1564, plague killed about 200 people in Stratford – 1 in 5 of the population. Fortunately, William survived.

Where did Shakespeare go to school?

From the age of seven, boys like William went to grammar school. There was one in Stratford and it is still there today. But schooling was different then. The boys learned to read, speak and write in Latin. They also had to memorise and perform stories from history - useful skills for an actor and writer. Shakespeare probably left school aged fifteen.

We have six surviving versions of Shakespeare's signature. They are all different. He wrote: Willm Shap; Wm Shakspe; Willm Shakspere; William Shaksper; Willm Shakspere; William Shakespere; and William Shakespeare. The last version, taken from his will in 1616 is the version we use today.



When did Shakespeare marry?

In late 1582, we don't know the exact date, Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway – a local farmer's daughter. William was only 18 years old. Most men at this time married in their mid- to late-20s. So why did William marry so young? The answer came six months later, when William's daughter, Susanna, was baptised.

What do we know of Shakespeare's family life?

The answer is... practically nothing. We know William and Anne had two more children, Hamnet and Judith, twins, born in 1585. Anne and the three children probably lived with William's parents at first. Later, they moved to New Place, a large house in Stratford. But it was a strange family life. Shakespeare spent most of his time 100 miles away, in London.

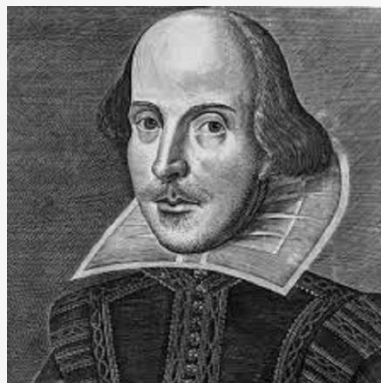
What did Shakespeare do in London?

From about 1590 to 1613, Shakespeare lived mainly in London and by 1592 was a well-known actor there. He was also a playwright. His play, *Henry VI*, was performed at the Rose theatre in 1592. He went on to write, or cowrite, about 40 plays. Shakespeare was also a poet and in 1609 published a book of 154 sonnets.

And Shakespeare was a businessman too. He was a sharer (part-owner) of a theatre company called The Lord Chamberlain's Men. And from 1599, he was part-owner of the Globe Theatre. So, for about twenty years, he made money from acting, writing and running a theatre company.

When did Shakespeare die?

After 1613, Shakespeare spent more time at Stratford. Then, in January 1616, he made a will and died on 23rd April 1616. He is buried in Holy Trinity church in Stratford-upon-Avon.



This engraving of William Shakespeare was engraved by Martin Droeshout in 1623.

Fact Sheet 2: The First Globe

The First Globe

Many of Shakespeare's plays were first performed at the Globe, although his plays were performed at other theatres and many playwrights wrote for the Globe.

Who built the first Globe?

The first Globe was built by the company Shakespeare was in – the Lord Chamberlain's Men. Richard Burbage was the company's leading actor. They had played at the Theatre, built by the Burbage family on land leased from a Mr Allen. In 1597, Allen refused to renew the lease. However the Burbages owned the Theatre because the lease said they owned anything built on the land. They took it down while Allen was away over Christmas. Their builder stored it in his yard on the north bank of the Thames. The Burbages could not afford to lease a new theatre site. So they offered five of the company, including Shakespeare, the chance to become part-owners of the new theatre for £10 each. With this money they leased land on the south bank of the River Thames, near the Rose theatre.

When and where was the Globe built?

The builder who stored the timbers of the Theatre was Peter Streete. Once the weather was better Streete took the timber across the Thames, to Southwark, and used them to build the Globe theatre.

Southwark was a good place for the new theatre. It was outside the control of the city officials (who were hostile to theatres). People already went there to be entertained. It had two theatres (the Rose and the Swan), animal baiting arenas, taverns and brothels.

Streete and his workmen built a brick base for the theatre. The walls were made from big timber frames, filled with smaller slats of wood covered with plaster that had cow hair in it. Because the owners were struggling for money, they used the

cheapest options in the building process. For example, the roof of the theatre was thatched with reeds, not covered with more expensive tile. In 1599 the theatre opened and was a huge success.



This engraving of Bankside, made in 1644, shows the tiled roof and large tiring house and stage roof (like an upside-down W) of the second Globe. In this picture the labels were swapped around. The Globe is actually on the left and the baiting arena on the right.

What plays were performed at the Globe?

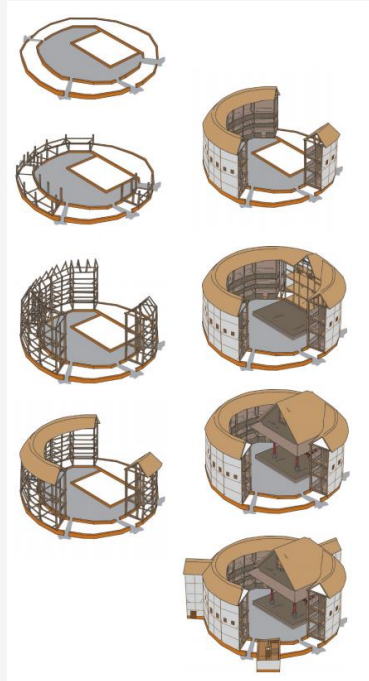
Probably the first Shakespeare play to be performed at the Globe was *Julius Caesar*, in 1599. Some other Shakespeare plays first performed there are: *As You Like It*, *Hamlet*, *Measure for Measure*; *Othello*; *King Lear*, *Macbeth* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. Other playwrights wrote for the Globe, including Ben Jonson, Thomas Dekker and John Fletcher.

What happened to the first Globe?

Disaster struck the Globe in 1613. On 29 June, at a performance of Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*, some small cannons were fired. They didn't use cannon balls, but they did use gunpowder held down by wadding. A piece of burning wadding set fire to the thatch. The theatre burned down in about an hour. It was big news. By the next day two different songs had been printed about it. The company built a second Globe on the brick foundations of the first. It was the same size and

shape, but was much more extravagantly decorated; the company could now afford it. It also had a tiled roof, not a thatched one.

Fortunately, no-one was harmed when the first Globe burned down. A man's breeches caught fire, but a bystander put the flames out with his bottle of beer!



The stages of the Globe being built, from brick foundations and the wooden frame, to the roof being thatched and the walls plastered.

Fact Sheet 3: Audiences

Audiences

By 1600 London theatres, like the Globe, could take up to 3000 people for the most popular plays. With several theatres offering plays most afternoons, this meant between 10,000 and 20,000 people a week going to London theatres. That's a lot of people! So who were they?

Who came to the theatres?

The answer is 'just about everyone in London society' – generally more men than women, but all sorts of people. One visitor, in 1617, described the crowd around the stage as 'a gang of porters and carters'. Others talked of servants and apprentices spending all their spare time there. But wealthier people were in the audience too. In 1607, the Venetian ambassador bought all the most expensive seats for a performance of Shakespeare's *Pericles*. Even royalty loved watching a play. They didn't go to public theatres, but companies of actors were summoned to perform at the courts of Elizabeth I and James I.

Theatres had to compete for audiences against other London entertainment. These included cock-fighting and bear-baiting which were enjoyed by both the poor and the wealthy. In 1591, London theatres were banned from performing on Thursdays because 'the players do recite their plays to the hurt of bear-baiting, maintained for Her Majesty's pleasure'.

How much did it cost?

In open air theatres the cheapest price was only 1 penny which bought you a place amongst the 'groundlings' standing in the 'yard' around the stage. (There were 240 pennies in £1.) For another penny, you could have a bench seat in the lower galleries which surrounded the yard. Or for a penny or so more, you could sit more comfortably on a cushion. The most expensive seats would have been in the 'Lord's Rooms'. Admission to the indoor theatres started at 6 pence. One penny was only

the price of a loaf of bread. Compare that to today's prices. The low cost was one reason the theatre was so popular.

Today, the place where you buy your theatre tickets is called the Box Office. In Shakespeare's day, as people came into the theatre or climbed the steps to their seats, audiences had to put their money in a box. So the place where audiences pay became known as the box office.

What did they get for their money?

The groundlings were very close to the action on stage. They could buy food and drink during the performance – pippins (apples), oranges, nuts, gingerbread and ale. But there were no toilets and the floor they stood on was probably just sand, ash or covered in nutshells. Some visitors complained that the pit smelled of garlic and beer and no good citizen would show his face there. So paying more got the wealthy a seat under cover, and perhaps a cushioned seat.



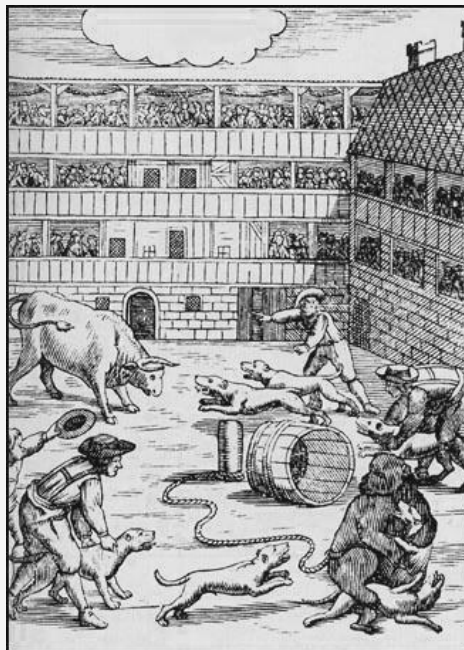
How did the audience behave?

Some of the audience went to the theatre to be seen and admired, dressed in their best clothes. But these people were not necessarily well behaved. Most didn't sit and watch in silence like today. They clapped the heroes and booed the villains, and cheered the special effects. Pickpockets sometimes joined the audience and in 1612, magistrates banned music at the end of plays at the Fortune, saying the crowd had caused 'tumults and outrages'

with their dances. We have very few accounts of how the audience behaved, and most of them are about 'bad' behaviour. This probably tells us more about what was 'news' than how audiences behaved all the time.

What effect did the audience have on the success of a play?

With such large audiences, plays only had short runs and then had to be replaced. Between 1560 and 1640 about 3,000 new plays were written. To attract the crowds, these plays often re-told famous stories from the past, and they used violence, music and humour to keep people's attention. This was vital because, if audiences didn't like a play, they made their feelings known. At the Swan in 1602, the audience damaged the chairs, stools, curtains and walls. And, in 1629, a visiting French company were hissed and 'pippin-pelted' from the stage. This was probably because the company used women actors, but could just have been because they were French. Since it was so involved in the performance of a play, the audience was vital to its success.



A woodcut of Bearbaiting, made around 1620.

Fact Sheet 4: Special Effects

Special Effects

Playwrights in Shakespeare's time used language to describe 'special effects' much of the time; but acting companies could also produce very dramatic special effects. Thunder and lightning filled the theatre for storms. There were a variety of effects to suggest magic was at work. Many special effects needed special ingredients. Buying these made a performance more expensive, so special effects were not used all the time.

How were special effects produced?

The easiest way to make the noise of thunder was to beat drums offstage or roll a cannonball across the floor of the Heavens over the stage. Some companies used a thunder machine – a wooden box balanced like a seesaw. A cannon ball could be rolled from one end to the other to make a thundering noise.

Storms needed lightning, too. Lightning flashes were made by throwing a powder made from resin into a candle flame. It lit with a flash. The companies could make lightning bolts, too. The machinery for this was called a swevel. They fixed a wire from the roof to the floor of the stage. They fixed a firecracker to the wire and lit it when they wanted the effect. The firecracker shot from the top of the wire to the bottom, making sparks all the way.



Were the special effects dangerous?

Sometimes, special effects could go wrong. On 29 June 1613 there was a performance of Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* at the Globe. Some small cannon were fired. The company didn't use cannon balls, but they did use real gunpowder, held down by wadding. A piece of burning wadding caught in the thatch and set the theatre alight. It burned down in about an hour.

It is unlikely anything this spectacular happened very often. However, many of the ingredients used to create special effects smelt very, very bad. Sulphur has a rotten egg smell, while saltpetre (made from dung) smells bad when mixed up and even worse when set alight. Both were used to make gunpowder. When the witches in *Macbeth* are making their spells and one of them talks about 'the fog and filthy air' the air inside the theatre may have been horrible to breathe in, if not actually dangerous.

What about magic?

Magical spirits, devils and gods and goddesses often appear in plays from Shakespeare's time. Good spirits and gods and goddesses usually entered through a trapdoor in the Heavens. The actors were lowered on a rope or a wire. This was called 'flying in'. Evil spirits and devils came up from Hell, under the stage, through a trapdoor in the stage. Companies often set off firecrackers when devils appeared or magic was used. Firecrackers were made by filling rolls of thick paper with gunpowder, which produced sparks and then a bang. You could buy gunpowder from grocers or ironmongers. In one production of *Dr Faustus* the actors playing devils even put firecrackers in their mouths to suggest they were breathing fire!

Theatre companies used smoke mostly as a magic effect, although it was sometimes used to suggest a fire. They could make black, white, yellow and red smoke – depending on the chemicals they mixed together. They used real fire as little as possible, it was very dangerous in a wood and thatch building. If they needed flames they burned strong alcohol mixed with a variety of salts, depending on the colour they wanted the flames to be.

Fact Sheet 5: Costumes and Cosmetics

What costumes did actors wear?

In Shakespeare's time, clothes reflected a person's status in society – there were laws controlling what you could wear. As plays had kings, queens and wealthy people in them, the actors' costumes reflected their characters social status.

Costumes were mainly the modern dress of the time. So for less important roles, actors might wear their own clothes. However, for a play set in ancient Greece or Rome, the company might try for an 'ancient' look for the important characters by giving the main characters togas over their normal clothes. The company reused costumes if they could – changing a cloak, or putting on some expensive lace.

Sometimes they had to have a new costume made. A company probably spent about £300 a year on costumes, which in today's money would be over £35,000!

Some of the accounts for the Rose theatre have survived. These show that the owner, Henslowe, paid £20 10s 6d for just one black velvet cloak, embroidered with silver and gold. At about the same time he was paying, on average, £6 for a new play.

What about women's costumes?

In Shakespeare's time all actors were male. Men and boys played all the female parts. As with the men, women's costumes were usually ordinary clothes that reflected the social status of the character the actor was playing. They also wore wigs which, by their colour and styles, showed the age and status of their character.

Where did the costumes come from?

The company usually owned some costumes and reused them as often as possible. Actors left each other clothes in their wills, some sound as if they were costumes. Thomas Platter, a Swiss visitor to England in 1599, said that important people often left clothes to servants in their wills. The servants were not allowed to wear expensive clothes, so they sold them to actors. If the company had to have something made, they went to a tailor.



How was stage make-up used?

Stage make-up, like costumes, helped the audience to understand a character.

Actors playing Moors wore make-up that made them seem dark-skinned.

Paleskinned, fair women were said to be the most beautiful at the time. A white face, red cheeks and a blonde wig turned a boy actor into a beautiful young woman.

Crushed pearls or silver could be added to make-up to produce a shimmering effect.

This was especially effective in make-up for actors performing indoors by candlelight or for fairies (as in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*). When two characters wore the same make-up and wigs (and often costumes too) you knew they were twins – even if they did not really look alike.

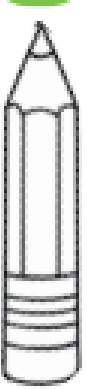
In Shakespeare's time, some natural ingredients used in make-up were harmless.

Powdered hogs bones mixed with poppy oil gave boy actors playing women a pale skin. But this could also be produced by mixing poisonous white lead and vinegar in a concoction called 'ceruse'.

Who put the make-up on?

We know from the accounts of the Rose theatre that people were hired to 'paint the players' faces'. However, this is not recorded often, and actors probably did their own make-up.

Non-Chronological Reports



Does your non-chronological report include...

a title?	
an introduction?	
paragraphs to organise the text?	
sub-headings?	
information in fact boxes and/or bullet-marked lists?	
topic language?	
a glossary that explains some of the topic language?	
present tense verbs (unless it is a historical report)?	
writing in the third person?	
a summary?	

Word Bank

accurate	example	photograph
background	explain	research
caption	factual	section
clarify	glossary	statistics
conclusion	informative	subject
description	introduce	summarise
diagram	outline	



Third Person

Writing in the third person uses these pronouns:

he	she	they	themselves	it	itself
him	his	her	hers	its	their

Sentence Starters

- An important thing...
- Have you ever wondered...?
- Despite the fact that...
- Many people think that...
- Did you know that...?
- Would it surprise you to hear...?

Fronted Adverbials

- Amazingly,...
- As a result,...
- Consequently,...
- Finally,...
- Fortunately,...
- Frequently,...
- Furthermore,...
- Generally,...
- In addition,...
- In summary,...
- Incredibly,...
- Normally,...
- Often,...
- Sometimes,...
- Strangely enough,...
- Surprisingly,...
- Unfortunately,...
- Unusually,...
- Usually,...

Present Tense Verbs

Writing in the present tense means that you are writing about something that is currently going on or generally always exists.

A tiger **has** sharp claws and **uses** them when hunting.

Play Scripts



Does your play script include....

a cast list?	
a short description of the setting?	
the speakers names on the left with colons?	
written detailed dialogue without speech marks?	
a structure that uses scenes?	
brackets for stage directions?	
a variety of punctuation used for effect?	
extended stage directions using adverbs, adjectives and prepositional phrases?	

Examples of Extended Stage Directions

(slouches down roughly into his high-backed chair)

(walks cautiously towards the

mysterious knocking sound)

(crouches down on the ground,

lifts the puppy's ear and whispers softly)

(looks suspiciously into the full-length

mirror in front of him)

Prepositional Phrases

... a bright crystal chandelier hung **over the table**...

... she sneaks the book gently **into her coat pocket**...

... the lights **above the stage** dim and flicker...

Word Bank

across	answer	arrive	appear
bewildered	breath	breath	cheerful
consider	continue	defiant	disappear
down	glamorous	heard	mention
minute	notice	position	promise
question	relieved	spotless	stomp
strange	surprise	tiptoed	through

Expanded Noun Phrases

... those ballet shoes...

... his worn school jumper...

... the tiny, marble statue...

... a loud, booming noise...



Adverbs

accidentally

angrily

anxiously

cautiously

completely

enthusiastically

frantically

gracefully

hungrily

joyously

loudly

madly

merrily

nervously

occasionally

quickly

repeatedly

sadly

shyly

solemnly

Persuasive Leaflets



Does your persuasive leaflet include...	
a title that tells the reader the topic?	
an introduction that shows your point of view?	
strong arguments?	
short sentences in the present tense?	
facts?	
images to support your arguments?	
exaggeration?	
emotive language?	
persuasive devices?	
rhetorical questions?	
a conclusion to sum up your main arguments?	

Word Bank

as a result of surely resulting in furthermore
 despite because thanks to since
 moreover for instance considering therefore

Sentence Starters

- It can also be said that... For these reasons...
- It is imperative that... Firstly/Secondly/Thirdly...
- Without a doubt... I strongly believe that...
- It is important to remember... Now is the time to...
- Anyone can see that... Research suggests...

Rhetorical Questions

- Can you imagine...? Have you ever considered...? Did you know...? Why should...?
- Is it right that...? Is it really worth...?

Rule of Three:

Using three of something can help give your writing more power and impact. Try using three adjectives to describe something or listing three arguments in your persuasive leaflet.

Remember!

- Think about your audience.
- Make your opinions clear.
- Use a strong written voice.
- Give reasons.
- Use persuasive devices.