

Celebrating Shakespeare Teacher's Notes

You hardly need an excuse to familiarise your pupils with one of the most important figures in English-speaking culture: William Shakespeare. However, 2016 is the 400th anniversary of his death and there are events and celebrations all over the world. The Bard is everywhere, including classrooms!

This article is in two parts, the first A2 level and the second B1. We have proposed activities for each, but of course it is possible to use both.



Vocabulary and structures

- biography
- Elizabethan period
- theatre
- present simple
- past simple
- present perfect
- passive

A2 Celebrating Shakespeare

Interaction Anticipation Oral Expression

Have pupils anticipate about the article. First, have them comment on the title, then ask pupils to describe the different illustrations: the portrait of Shakespeare, the Globe Theatre, tourists in Stratford-upon-Avon, an actor playing Hamlet and holding a skull. Ask pupils to say all they know about The Bard.

Reading + Writing Reading Comprehension/Written Expression

Have pupils read the article and do the activity. Correct the answers collectively then ask pupils to highlight the key words. List them collectively on the board (make sure the list is really about key words and so is not too long) and ask pupils to use the words to write a summary of the article.

B1 Shakespeare's Plays

Reading + Writing: Memorisation

Ask pupils to read this article twice and memorise as many facts as possible about Shakespeare's plays in general and Macbeth in particular as they will then be asked to do a memorisation activity.

After 10 minutes, ask them to put the text away and write as much as possible about what they can remember in their notebooks. Then ask one pupil to read her/his list and have the rest of the class correct/complete it.

Reading + Writing: The Shakespeare Crossword

The crossword checks comprehension and vocabulary from both articles.

There are A2 and B1 versions, according to what pupils have read.

Solutions

Celebrating Shakespeare!

A.1. William **2.** Stratford-upon-Avon
3. England **4.** English/British **5.** 23 April 1564
6. 23 April 1616 **7.** Stratford-upon-Avon **8.** 52
9. He died on his birthday. **10.** Married: his wife was Anne Hathaway, when they got married he was only 18, she was 26. **11.** Yes, he had 3 children. One died at the age of 11.
12. actor and playwright
B.1. 37 **2.** Yes, "His 37 plays are regularly produced." **3.** Almost 1,000 **4.** *Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, Henry V* **5.** Yes **6.** Yes: they were lucrative./In 1596, Shakespeare could buy the biggest house in Stratford for his family. **7.** *The First Folio* (original texts of all his plays) **8.** the Globe Theatre (London)

Shakespeare Crossword A2

Across: 1. William 5. era 6. made 7. Globe
9. April 10. Avon 14. Hathaway
Down: 2. London 3. mayor 4. Anne 8. last



11. one 12. play 13. saw

Shakespeare's Plays

1. comedies, tragedies or history plays
2. They are mainly about the stories of the kings of England in the years before the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. **3.a.** the Tudor kings **b.** Elizabeth's ancestors **4.** Cleopatra, Julius Caesar, Macbeth, King of Scotland
5. The play is considered unlucky. Actors call it "That Scottish Play". **6.** He was a Polish pianist. He left his skull to the Royal Shakespeare Company when he died, so it could be used in the *Hamlet* cemetery soliloquy. **7.** *The First Folio* **8.** original texts of all his plays **9.** the Globe Theatre (London)

Shakespeare Crossword B1

Across: 1. actor 3. skull 5. win 6. years
9. tragedy 11. English 13. Macbeth 14. hero
15. Tudor 16. history
Down: 2. theatre 3. Scottish 4. died 5. William
7. soliloquy 8. Elizabeth 10. Globe 12. Folio