

# SHAKEPEARE BIOGRAPHICAL OUTLINE

Author Unknown

William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

- I. Born in Stratford upon Avon in England
  - A. Attended grammar school (much harder than today, similar to high school)
- II. Married Anne Hathaway
  - A. She was 26, he was 18
  - B. She was pregnant
  - C. Had a girl -- Suzanna. Two years later, had twins -- Judith and Hamnet
  - D. Much of Shakespeare's early life is unknown
    1. Name on legal documents
    2. Gap of 10 years called the Lost Years
- III. Left wife and kids and traveled to London -- joined up with troupe of actors
  - A. Worked as writer and actor
  - B. While in London, lived the life of an actor -- free, liberal, unfaithful to wife
  - C. Criticized by several writers of period for not being university educated -- called "upstart crow"
- IV. 1594 -- Shakespeare and other actors formed new acting company -- Lord Chamberlain's Men
  - A. Became most famous -- when Queen dies, became King's Men
  - B. Was shareholder in company
- V. Also wrote poetry -- Sonnets
  - A. 14 line poems with specific rhyme scheme
- VI. Wrote histories, comedies, tragedies, and romances -- 37 plays in all
  - A. Plays not considered great literature during his day -- like TV scripts
- VII. 1610 -- retired and bought New Place -- big house
  - A. Was famous and rich
  - B. Died in 1616
- VIII. Shakespeare's plays were published after his death by two fellow actors -- Hemming and Condell in 1623
  - A. First Folio -- big sheets of paper folded once
  - B. Earlier -- copies of some plays were published during Shakespeare's lifetime, often without consent -- "pirated copies"
    1. Often these were full of mistakes -- actors wrote down what they remembered or "scribes" went to plays and wrote down quickly what they heard
    2. Published in small, cheap editions called Quartos
      - a. Sheets of paper folded in fourths
- IX. Shakespeare wrote about the human condition
  - A. characters from all walks of life
  - B. Universal -- emotions still felt today
- X. Used language during time when it was new and changing
  - A. Invented new words and phrases still used today
    1. "Knock, knock, who's there?"
    2. "Into thin air..."
  - B. Used imagery and figurative language
- XI. His later plays were complex and darker in tone
  - A. OTHELLO is one of these