FAST FACTS

Author's Works and Themes: Hamlet


Writings by William Shakespeare

Play Productions

- Henry VI, part 1, London, unknown theater (perhaps by a branch of the Queen's Men), circa 1589-1592.
- Richard III, London, unknown theater (perhaps by a branch of the Queen's Men), circa 1591-1592.
- Titus Andronicus, London, Rose or Newington Butts theater, 24 January 1594.
- The Taming of the Shrew, London, Newington Butts theater, 11 June 1594.
- The Two Gentlemen of Verona, London, Newington Butts theater or the Theatre, 1594.
- Love's Labor's Lost, perhaps at the country house of a great lord, such as the Earl of Southampton, circa 1594-1595; London, at Court, Christmas 1597.
- Sir Thomas More, probably by Anthony Munday, revised by Thomas Dekker, Henry Chettle, Shakespeare, and possibly Thomas Heywood, evidently never produced, circa 1594-1595.
- King John, London, the Theatre, circa 1594-1596.
- Richard II, London, the Theatre, circa 1595.
- Romeo and Juliet, London, the Theatre, circa 1595-1596.
- A Midsummer Night's Dream, London, the Theatre, circa 1595-1596.
- The Merchant of Venice, London, the Theatre, circa 1596-1597.
- Henry IV, part 1, London, the Theatre, circa 1596-1597.
- The Merry Wives of Windsor, Windsor, Windsor Castle, 23 April 1597.
• *Much Ado About Nothing*, London, the Theatre, circa 1598-1599.

• *Henry V*, London, Globe theater(?), between March and September 1599(?).

• *Julius Caesar*, London, Globe theater, 21 September 1599.

• *As You Like It*, London, Globe theater, circa 1599-1600.

• *Hamlet*, London, Globe theater, circa 1600-1601.


• *Troilus and Cressida*, London, Globe theater(?), circa 1601-1602(?).

• *All's Well That Ends Well*, London, Globe theater, circa 1602-1603.

• *Measure for Measure*, London, Globe theater(?), 1604(?); London, at Court, 26 December 1604.

• *Othello*, London, Globe theater(?), 1604(?); Westminster, Whitehall, 1 November 1604.

• *King Lear*, London, Globe theater(?), by late 1605 or early 1606; London, at Court, 26 December 1606.

• *Timon of Athens* (possibly unperformed during Shakespeare's lifetime); possibly London, Globe theater, circa 1605-1608.


• *Antony and Cleopatra*, London, Globe theater, circa 1606-1607.

• *Pericles*, possibly by Shakespeare and George Wilkins, London, at Court, between January 1606 and November 1608; London, Globe theater, probably circa 1607-1608.

• *Coriolanus*, London, Globe theater, circa 1607-1608.

• *Cymbeline*, London, Blackfriars theater or Globe theater, 1609.


• *The Tempest*, London, at Court, 1 November 1611.

• *Cardenio*, probably by Shakespeare and Fletcher, London, Globe theater(?), circa 1612-1613.

• *Henry VIII*, possibly by Shakespeare and John Fletcher, London, Globe theater, 29 June 1613.

• *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, by Shakespeare and Fletcher, London, probably Blackfriars theater (possibly Globe theater), 1613.

**Books**

• *Venus and Adonis* (London: Printed by Richard Field, sold by J. Harrison I, 1593).
The First Part of the Contention betwixt the two famous Houses of Yorke and Lancaster [abridged and corrupt text of Henry VI, part 2] (London: Printed by Thomas Creede for Thomas Millington, 1594).


A Pleasant Conceited Historie, Called The Taming of a Shrew [corrupt text] (London: Printed by Peter Short, sold by Cuthbert Burbie, 1594).


The Tragedy of King Richard the Third (London: Printed by Valentine Simmes & Peter Short for Andrew Wise, 1597).

The Tragedie of King Richard the second (London: Printed by Valentine Simmes for Andrew Wise, 1597).


The History of Henrie the Fourth [part 1] (London: Printed by Peter Short for Andrew Wise, 1598).


The most excellent Historie of the Merchant of Venice (London: Printed by James Roberts for Thomas Heyes, 1600).

The Second part of Henrie the fourth, continuing to his death, and coronation of Henrie the fift (London: Printed by Valentine Simmes for Andrew Wise & William Aspley, 1600).


The Phoenix and Turtle, appended to Loves Martyr: or, Rosalins Complaint, by Robert Chester (London: Printed by Richard Field for E. Blount, 1601).


The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet Prince of Denmark [abridged and corrupt text] (London: Printed by Valentine Simmes for Nicholas Ling & John Trundell, 1603); The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet, Prince of
Denmarke. Newly Imprinted and Enlarged to Almost as Much Againe as It Was, According to the True and Perfect Coppie (London: Printed by James Roberts for Nicholas Ling, 1604).

- The Late, and Much Admired Play, Called Pericles, Prince of Tyre (London: Printed by W. White for Henry Gosson, 1609).
- Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies. Published according to the True Originall Copies (London: Printed by Isaac Jaggard & Edward Blount, 1623)--comprises The Tempest; The Two Gentlemen of Verona; The Merry Wives of Windsor; Measure for Measure; The Comedy of Errors; Much Ado About Nothing; Love's Labor's Lost; A Midsummer Night's Dream; The Merchant of Venice; As You Like It; The Taming of the Shrew; All's Well That Ends Well; Twelfth Night; The Winter's Tale; King John; Richard II; Henry IV, parts 1 and 2; Henry V; Henry VI, parts 1-3; Richard III; Henry VIII; Troilus and Cressida; Coriolanus; Titus Andronicus; Romeo and Juliet; Timon of Athens; Julius Caesar; Macbeth; Hamlet; King Lear; Othello; Antony and Cleopatra; Cymbeline;

- The Two Noble Kinsmen, by Shakespeare and John Fletcher (London: Printed by Thomas Cotes for John Waterson, 1634).

Editions


- The Complete Works of Shakespeare, edited by George Lyman Kittredge (Boston: Ginn, 1936); revised by Irving Ribner (Waltham, Mass.: Ginn, 1971).


• *The Arden Shakespeare*, general editors Harold F. Brooks and Harold Jenkins, 38 volumes to date (London: Methuen, 1951-).

• *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, edited by Hardin Craig (Chicago: Scott Foresman, 1961); revised by Craig and David Bevington (Glenview, Ill.: Scott Foresman, 1973); revised again by Bevington (Glenview, Ill.: Scott Foresman, 1980).

• *The New Penguin Shakespeare*, general editor T. J. B. Spencer, 33 volumes to date (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967-).


**Major Themes**

Critics generally agree that Shakespeare's most compelling and sustained depiction of friendship appears in the drama *Hamlet*. Having returned from Wittenberg to find his father dead and mother remarried to his uncle Claudius, Hamlet relies on the devoted friendship of Horatio and survives the poor advice of his dubious university companions Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Critics have frequently contrasted the true and false friendships portrayed in the drama and have endeavored to come to some final conclusion regarding Shakespeare's musings on the subject of friendship in this tragic context. James I. Wimsatt (1970) centers on the speech of the Player King in Act III, scene ii of *Hamlet*, which mentions the mutability of friendship, and contends that Shakespeare portrayed the motifs of fortune and friendship in the play as fickle, unstable, and inscrutable forces. Keith Doubt (see Further Reading) notes that there are three types of friendship in the play: the loyal friendship that Horatio sustains with the Prince; the ultimately self-serving friendship extended by Rosencrantz and Guildenstern; and the friendship that the dying Laertes offers. In Doubt's view, Laertes's friendship is the most meaningful because it is the most charitable.
Paper Topics

- Examine the concept of friendship within *Hamlet* and provide examples of how it affects the tragic outcome of the play.