

### William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616)

The most famous English writer is William Shakespeare and *Romeo and Juliet* is his most famous play. It was set in Italy, but Shakespeare never went there. In fact, he probably never left England.

Shakespeare came from Stratford-on-Avon, in the Midlands. You can still visit the house where Shakespeare was born. He lived in Stratford-on-Avon with his wife, Anne Hathaway, and his children, Susanna, Judith and Hamnet.

Shakespeare was an actor as well as a writer. He appeared in his own plays at the Globe and other London theatres. He also performed at the Royal Places, in front of Queen Elizabeth I. He wrote nearly forty plays as well as sonnets and other poems.

Going to the theatre was very popular in Shakespeare's time. It wasn't just for the rich. You could go to a play at The Globe for just one penny. You didn't have a seat but you stood very close to the stage so you had a very good view of the action.

The audience expected to hear music, too, as part of the play. At The Globe the musicians played in a gallery above the stage.

Women didn't appear on stage in Shakespeare's time. So boys played the women's parts. Theatres were lively places. The audience didn't keep quiet during the performance.

Unfortunately the old Globe Theatre burnt down a long time ago. But there is a new Globe Theatre on the south bank of the River Thames. It looks exactly like the old one. You can go and see Shakespeare's plays there now.

### COMPREHENSION

#### I- Read the text and write True or False. (3pts)

1. William Shakespeare visited Italy before writing *Romeo and Juliet*. .....
2. William Shakespeare was a poet. ....
3. Only rich people could go to see a play at the Globe Theatre. ....

#### II- Answer the following questions. (4pts)

1. When did Shakespeare live?  
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2. Who was Queen during Shakespeare's time?  
.....
3. Who played the women's parts in Shakespeare's plays?  
.....
4. What happened to the Globe Theatre?  
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