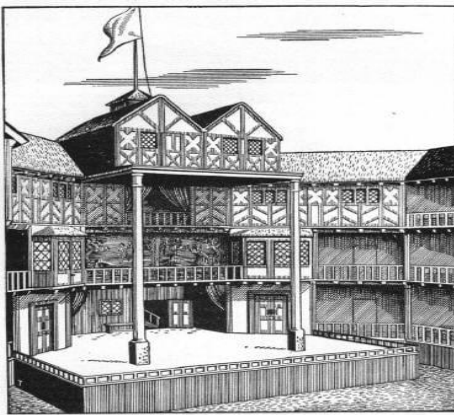


The Globe Theatre was built between 1597 and 1599 in Southwark on the south bank of London's River Thames. The Globe was built as a large, round, open-air theatre. There was a roof around the circumference which covered the seating area, leaving the theatre looking like a doughnut from above.



The Stage of the Globe (drawn from the model made by Dr. J. C. Adams)

During his lifetime, **William Shakespeare** wrote around **37 plays** for the theatre and **over 150 poems**. William was born in **Stratford-upon-Avon** in 1564, during England's **Tudor period**. He wrote Comedy, Tragedy and History plays.



Soliloquy-an act of speaking one's thoughts aloud when by oneself or regardless of any hearers, especially by a character in a play.

Comedy-a play characterized by its humorous or satirical tone and its depiction of amusing people or incidents, in which the characters ultimately triumph over adversity.

Tragedy-a play dealing with tragic events and having an unhappy ending, especially one concerning the downfall of the main character.

History-the study of past events, particularly in human affairs.

Iambic Pentameter- a line of verse with five metrical feet, each consisting of one short (or unstressed) syllable followed by one long (or stressed) syllable, for example *Two households, both alike in dignity*.

Only males could perform-meaning the males had to play the female roles.

No technology! This meant that the actors would have to project so that they could be heard.

3 Doors- The Globe had 3 doors. One either side and a door in the middle. Only important characters (royalty) would enter through the middle door.

**Tragedy** – including *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear* and *Romeo and Juliet*

**Comedy** – including *Twelfth Night* and the *The Taming of the Shrew*

**History** – including *Henry IV*, *Henry V* and *Richard III*

Plays at the Globe featured lots of **exciting special effects**, with trap doors, actors lifted on wires, smoke, fire and even cannons! Disaster struck in 1613 when a cannon shot set fire to the roof of the Globe and burned it down! It wasn't long after that Shakespeare retired from the theatre.

Very Brief Plot Summary:

Act 1: Set in Verona, we find two warring families – the Montagues and the Capulets. There is a ball and two young people meet and fall in love – Romeo Montague and Juliet Capulet. Their families will never allow this.

Act 2: Romeo and Juliet continue to see each other secretly. Romeo wishes he was not a Montague and they decide that they will secretly marry.

Act 3: Tybalt (Juliet's cousin) tries to argue with Romeo, who refuses. Mercutio (Romeo's friend) goads Tybalt into a fight and is killed by Tybalt when Romeo attempts to stop them. Romeo then murders Tybalt in his anger.

Act 4: Juliet asks for help from Friar Lawrence. He gives her a sleeping potion that will make her appear dead so that on her supposed wedding day to Paris she will be carried to the family vault, where Romeo will find her and whisk her away.

Act 5: Romeo doesn't receive the letter about the plan. He hears Juliet has died and obtains a poison for himself. Romeo sees Juliet (assuming she is dead) and poisons himself. Juliet awakes and realising what has happened kills herself. The two families reconcile in the wake of the tragedy.

Characters:

Romeo Montague – Son of the Montague family.

Juliet Capulet – Daughter of the Capulet family.

Mercutio – Friend to Romeo – neither Capulet nor Montague.

Tybalt – Juliet's Cousin, a prominent Capulet.

Benvolio – Romeo's cousin.

Friar Lawrence – A Franciscan monk and friend to both families.

Nurse – Juliet's confidante, very close to her, motherly.

Prince Escalus – Leader of Verona, trying to keep peace between the families

## **Language and Techniques**

prologue  
foreshadowing  
dramatic irony  
bawdy humour  
monologue  
soliloquy  
oxymoron  
metaphor  
simile  
imagery  
iambic pentameter  
juxtaposition  
tragedy  
antagonist  
blank verse  
sonnet  
sonnet form  
suspense

Gender: Men controlled society. Women were seen as the weaker sex and were expected to be obedient to their families and husbands.

## **Themes: Love:**

- Passionate, chaotic love is pitched against the 'order' of courtly love.
- Love often leads to violence.

## **Fate**

- No matter what they do, the characters cannot escape their fate. It is the determination of Romeo and Juliet in the face of fate that conveys how fiery the love between them is.

## **Individuals V Society**

- Forbidden love forces Romeo and Juliet to turn against the conformity of the society they live in.

## **Language and Word Play**

- Constant play on language, using pun, rhyme and double-entendre.
- Romeo and Juliet seem to use word play to escape from the world, their act of rebellion.

## **Violence and Conflict**

- Driving force in the play.
- Occurs between several characters.
- Opens the play and concludes it with the deaths of Romeo and Juliet.

## **Death**

- Society was much more comfortable with the idea of death than we are now.
- Death is mentioned and referenced throughout the play.

**Symbols/Motifs:** Poison; Night; light/dark imagery; thumb-biting; Dreams/Queen Mab; opposing points of view.

Courtly love: Courtly love was all about behaviour and was supposed to be polite, restrained and courteous. Often gifts were exchanged but there was little contact. The notion of 'courtly love' strongly opposes the passion and emotion we associated with 'real love'.

Family and children: Children were considered property of their parents. It was also common for children to have a 'nurse' and as a result, did not often have strong bonds with their parents.

Catholicism: Religion was very important at this time and set in Italy, the Catholic church had great influence. Marriage was sacred and could not be undone. There was a strong belief in 'damnation' for mortal sin. Suicide was considered a mortal sin.

## **Key Vocabulary**

patriarchy  
Elizabethan character  
society  
violence  
conflict  
resolution  
civil unrest  
marriage  
catholic  
Catholicism  
Shakespeare  
Verona  
conspire  
ambiguity  
predicament  
unease  
suicide  
brawl  
relationship  
adversity  
provoke  
mutiny  
adversary