

Shakespeare | Lesson Plan

What makes William Shakespeare one of the most enduring authors in Western Civilization?

Students will explore the enduring success of William Shakespeare as an author, playwright, and poet. They will understand why it has been said of Shakespeare, "He was not of an age but for all time."

Learning Objectives:

- Analyze the literary tactics and strengths of William Shakespeare.
- Investigate reasons for the timeless popularity of his work.
- Identify several Shakespearean plays and their themes, which are still relevant today.
- Compose an original poem inspired by Shakespeare's contribution to the arts.

Key Vocabulary:

- **Playwright:** Someone who writes plays.
- **Relevant:** Appropriate or related to the matter at hand.
- **Theme:** The main idea of a story.
- **Ambition:** A strong desire to achieve.

Educational Standards: CCRA.L.1, CCRA.L.2, CCRA.L.4, CCRA.W.4, CCRA.R.7, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.2, CCRA.SL.4, CCRA.W.2

Academic Subject Areas: Biography, Western Civilization, Historical Figures

What You'll Need

- Video: *Shakespeare: The British Playwright & Poet* (Watch [Here](#))
- Worksheet: *Shakespeare: The British Playwright & Poet* (Click [Here](#))
- For Extension Activity: Art paper, crayons, markers, or colored pencils

Lesson Plan (45 minutes)

Warm-Up: (10 minutes)

1. Begin by explaining to the class that you will read several phrases aloud. Instruct students to raise their hands if they have ever heard them before:
 - The world is your oyster.
 - Vanish into thin air.
 - Fight fire with fire.
 - Love is blind.
 - Going on a wild goose chase.
 - All that glitters is not gold.
 - Break the ice.
2. Ask students if they know where the phrases originated.



3. Explain that all the above phrases, and many more, can be attributed to a famous poet and playwright named William Shakespeare. Shakespeare is often called the world's greatest playwright. His creative use of language made him an extremely popular and effective communicator. Even though Shakespeare lived 400 years ago, his poems and plays (and phrases within those plays) are still popular today. Reveal that students will watch a video about William Shakespeare.
4. Distribute the worksheets and encourage students to complete them as they watch the video.

Watch and Complete: (15 minutes)

1. Watch the video.
2. Pause throughout the video to allow students to answer questions on the worksheet.

Wrap-Up: (20 minutes)

1. Give students time to finish their worksheets. Help generate ideas for the poem (question 9), as necessary.
2. Collect the completed worksheets as a formative assessment or participation credit.
3. After worksheets are collected, review the lesson by posing the following questions:
 - Why do you think William Shakespeare's work remains so popular after so many years?
 - How were Shakespeare's themes and characters complex?
 - Shakespeare's plays generally fall into three categories: tragedies (sad), comedies (funny), and histories (historical). Which type most interests you? Why?
4. Summarize the lesson by restating the main idea: William Shakespeare is known as one of the most enduring authors of Western Civilization. The legendary poet and playwright is often described as "not of an age, but for all time," because his work remains relevant today, 400 years after his death.
5. Encourage students to reflect on reasons for studying the work of William Shakespeare. His plays are some of the most popular in history. Shakespeare's words have stood the test of time and some of his original phrases have even become basic elements of the English language. It is important for students to learn about Shakespeare because, in doing so, they will be introduced to foundational literature, enhance their understanding of language and storytelling, and inspire an appreciation for timeless themes and creativity in the arts.

Extension Activity: Have students choose one Shakespearean phrase from the Warm-Up to illustrate and label. Encourage students to share their work and consider displaying their creations on a bulletin board in the classroom.

Don't have time for the full lesson? Quick Activity (15-20 minutes)

Distribute the worksheet and allow students to complete it while they follow along with the video.