

Survey of topics and methods

Main focus									Material
	language & vocabulary	reading comprehension	listening comprehension	audio-visual comprehension	writing	research and presentation	analysis/working with a text or video	discussion	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The life of William Shakespeare ■ Historical events of Shakespearean era ■ Shakespeare's plays ■ Relevance of an author's biography 		•						•	<p>Topic 1: Shakespeare – the age and the man</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sachtext: Shakespeare – the age and the man
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Review of the film "All Is True" ■ Content of the film "All Is True" 			•						<p>Topic 2: "All Is True" – podcast</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Podcast (p. 9)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The theatre in Shakespeare's time ■ Theoretical background of theatres ■ The original Globe theatre/360° of Shakespeare's Globe 	•	•	•		•				<p>Topic 3: Shakespeare's theatre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Internetzugang ■ Abbildung ■ App : Shakespeare's Globe 360

Shakespeare's plays – studying extracts and film scenes

William Shakespeare is by far the most important and influential poet and dramatist of English literature. His plays have been performed worldwide to great acclaim and theatregoers have been fascinated by the plots and the complex characters Shakespeare created for the stage. However, even English native speakers, adults and students alike, find studying the dramas of the world's greatest playwright a challenging exercise. It seems to go without saying that for learners of English as a foreign language, understanding Shakespeare presents almost unsurmountable difficulties. The unit 'Shakespeare's plays – studying extracts and film scenes' aims at facilitating the students' access to the Elizabethan theatre and the Bard's works.

Notes on the material

The material presented here is divided into six topics. **Topic 1** provides background information about Shakespeare's time, his life and career as an actor and playwright in Elizabethan London. It also includes a section about the controversy of Shakespeare's authorship. In **Topic 2**, a podcast review of the film "All Is True" further illustrates salient moments especially in Shakespeare's later life. **Topic 3** focuses on the theatre in Shakespeare's time generally and the conditions in The Globe in particular. The pupils are asked to research the Internet and/or use a free iPad app to explore the subject further. **Topic 4** deals with Shakespeare's language which for many readers and theatregoers today presents one of the main obstacles for an immediate or complete understanding. One of the main reasons for the difficulties in understanding Shakespeare's texts is rooted in different attitudes and capabilities of the audiences in Shakespeare's time and of today respectively. In addition, the section includes a number of phrases which were coined by Shakespeare and are still used today to illustrate the influence of the Bard from Avon on the development of the English language. **Topic 5** contains a sonnet and excerpts

but he appeared in the metropolis London in 1592 where he started his career in actors' companies: first with a group called "Lord Strange's Men", starting from 1594 with "Lord Chamberlain's Men" and eventually from 1603 onwards, after James I ascended the throne, with "The King's Men". Around 1611, Shakespeare returned to his hometown Stratford, where he had invested his considerable theatre earnings in houses and property. He died on 23 April 1616, presumably because of his generally bad health.

Who wrote Shakespeare's plays?

As there are no personal documents, such as private letters or diaries, Shakespeare was mythologised as the dramatist without a university education, a pure genius, who despite his rural origins was familiar with the classics, philosophy, medicine, law, astronomy and commanded an extraordinary verbal ability. It is not surprising that in the course of time, and in particular in the 19th century, people began to doubt that a simple young man from Stratford had acquired the necessary education from a brief stint at a grammar school. The question "How could a country bumpkin have written all these plays and sonnets?" gave rise to the "Shakespeare Authorship Controversy". Literary scholars began to dig deep into the Bard's biography to solve the mystery and fuelled speculations about several educated noble courtiers who might have hidden behind the name "Shakespeare". Candidates, among others, were Francis Bacon, Christopher Marlowe (the star of the Elizabethan theatre), William Stanley, 6th Earl of Derby, und Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford. In addition, the "dark lady" or the "handsome youth", the addressees of a number of sonnets, inspired curiosity and guesswork. However, today the question "Who wrote Shakespeare's plays" has been moved to the background, although now and again new theories are being presented. Most literary scholars agree that Shakespeare received a proper education at his grammar school in Stratford which enabled him to become the author of singular works of genius.

Worksheet: Shakespeare – the age and the man



Pre-reading

1. Do you know any famous quotations from Shakespeare's plays? If yes, name them.
2. Point out whether you have seen any Shakespeare plays or films about the "Bard"?

Reading comprehension

3. Decide whether these statements are true, false or cannot be found in the text. Tick the correct answers.

	true	false	not in text
William Shakespeare lived in the late Middle Ages.			
The reign of Queen Elizabeth I was a time of innovation and prosperity.			
Drake and Frobisher led England's navy to defeat the Spanish Armada.			
England and Scotland were united under Queen Mary Stuart.			
Shakespeare's parents were John Shakespeare and Mary Arden.			
Shakespeare's exact date of birth is not known.			
When Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, he was 18 and she was 26 years old.			
Shakespeare left Stratford because he mourned the death of his son.			
In London, Shakespeare founded the actors' company "Lord Strange's Men".			
In the 19th century, it was believed that not Shakespeare, but others had written his works.			

Key: Shakespeare – the age and the man

Pre-reading

1. – “All's Well that Ends Well” (title of a Shakespeare play)
 - “To be or not to be, that is the question” (“Hamlet”, III, 1)
 - “All the world's a stage / And all the men and women merely players” (“As You Like It”, II, 7)
 - “Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears; / I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.” (“Julius Caesar”, III,2)
 - “A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse!” (“Richard III”, 5, 4)
 - “Is this a dagger which I see before me, / The handle toward my hand?” (“Macbeth”, II, 1)
2. ad lib.

Reading comprehension

3.	true	false	not in text
William Shakespeare lived in the late Middle Ages.		✓	
The reign of Queen Elizabeth I was a time of innovation and prosperity.	✓		
Drake and Frobisher led England's navy to defeat the Spanish Armada.		✓	
England and Scotland were united under Queen Mary Stuart.		✓	
Shakespeare's parents were John Shakespeare and Mary Arden.			✓
Shakespeare's exact date of birth is not known.	✓		
When Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, he was 18 and she was 26 years old.	✓		
Shakespeare left Stratford because he mourned the death of his son.			✓

	true	false	not in text
In London, Shakespeare founded the actors' company "Lord Strange's Men".		✓	
In the 19th century it was believed that not Shakespeare, but others had written his works.	✓		

4.

year	event
1533	Queen Elizabeth I born
1564	26 April: Shakespeare baptised
1582	November: Shakespeare marries Anne Hathaway
1585	2 February: Shakespeare's twins Hamnet and Judith baptised
1588	English navy defeats the Spanish Armada
1592	Shakespeare starts his career in London (with "Lord Strange's Men")
1594	Shakespeare joins "Lord Chamberlain's Men"
1600	East India Company founded
1603	Queen Elizabeth I dies
1611	Shakespeare returns to his hometown Stratford
1616	23 April: Shakespeare dies

Discussion

5. ad lib.

Shakespeare and love – Romeo and Juliet (I)

ROMEO If I profane¹ with my unworthiest hand
This holy shrine, the gentle fine² is this:
My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand
To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.

5 JULIET Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much,
Which mannerly devotion³ shows in this;
For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch,
And palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss.

ROMEO Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too?

10 JULIET Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer.

ROMEO O, then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do;
They pray, grant thou, lest faith turn to despair.

JULIET Saints do not move, though grant for prayers' sake.

ROMEO Then move not, while my prayer's effect I take.

15 *He kisses her.*
 Thus from my lips, by yours, my sin is purged⁴.

JULIET Then have my lips the sin that they have took.

ROMEO Sin from thy lips? O trespass⁵ sweetly urged!
Give me my sin again.

20 *He kisses her.*

JULIET You kiss by the book.

NURSE Madam, your mother craves a word with you.

ROMEO What is her mother?

NURSE

Marry, bachelor,

25

Her mother is the lady of the house,

And a good lady, and a wise and virtuous

I nursed her daughter, that you talk'd withal;

I tell you, he that can lay hold of her

Shall have the chinks.

30 ROMEO

Is she a Capulet?

*Romeo and Juliet I, 5***Annotations**

- 1 to profane sth – etwas entweihen
- 2 fine – Strafe, Buße
- 3 devotion – Hingabe, Ergebenheit
- 4 purged – rein gewaschen, gesäubert
- 5 trespass – here: Vorwurf

VORSCHAU

Worksheet: Shakespeare and love – Romeo and Juliet (I)

Pre-reading

1. What do you associate with “Romeo and Juliet”? Collect your ideas in a mind map.

Working with the excerpt

2. Sum up the contents of this scene.
3. Compare the beginning and end of the scene.
4. Determine the form of the first 14 lines.
5. Watch the clip from the 1996 film version on *YouTube*,

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yCIVlc_niac

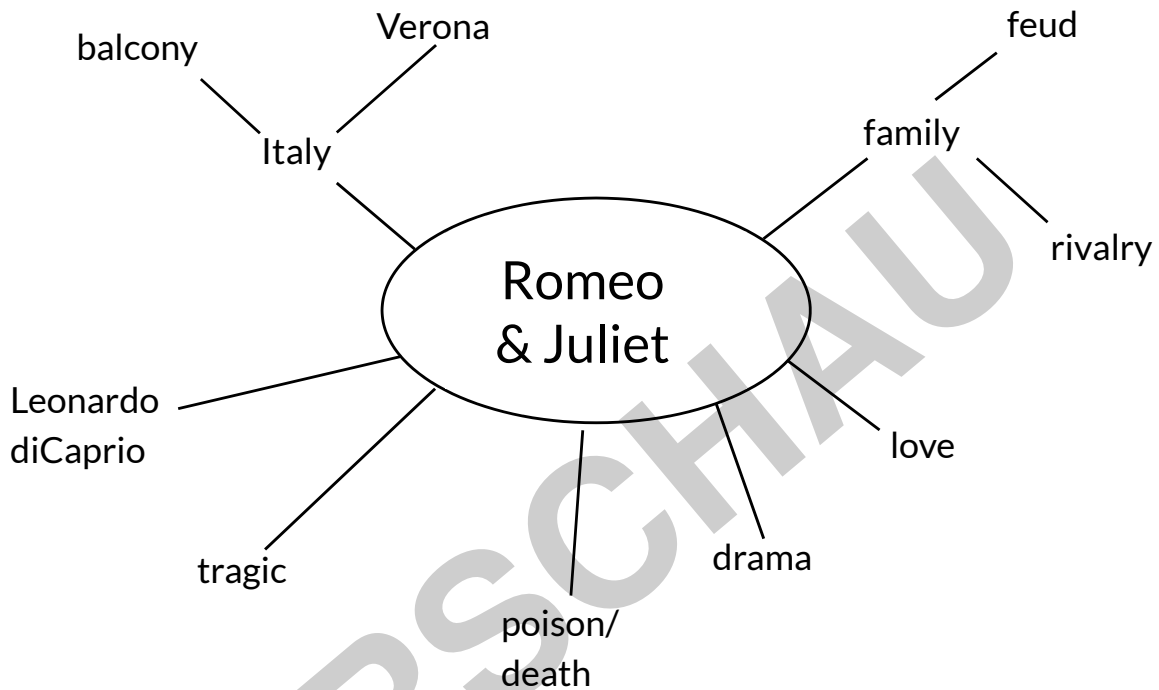
Shakespeare intended his work to be shown on stage. Imagine how this scene could be staged in theatre. Contrast your ideas of a theatre production with the realisation of this scene on film.



Key: Shakespeare and love – Romeo and Juliet (I)

Pre-reading

I.



Working with the excerpt

2. At a ball, Romeo and Juliet fall in love at first sight.
3. Beginning: two lovers without a care in the world, forgetful of surroundings
End: foreboding, both astounded, surprised, shocked (?)
4. Sonnet
5. Film: close-up, camera circling the lovers; effect: intimacy; music
Stage: greater distance between actors and audience; can be equally intimate; etc.

Key: Shakespeare and love – Romeo and Juliet (II)

Working with video clips

I. Group A: setting

- *Zeffirelli*: garden – bushes, period costumes
- *RSC*: bare stage, dark colours, modern clothes, R wears a hoodie

Group B: characters

- *Zeffirelli*: very young teenagers, Romeo almost whispering in the first part of the scene
- *RSC*: actors older, Juliet more daring, superior in attitude

Group C: atmosphere

- *Zeffirelli*: more intimate, sentimental, music softly playing in the background, moving, viewer identifies with young lovers
- *RSC*: more detached, more matter of fact

Working with the text

2.

paraphrase	original
Two of the brightest stars in the whole sky had to go away on business, and they're asking her eyes to twinkle in their places until they return.	Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven, Having some business, do entreat her eyes To twinkle in their spheres till they return. ll. 16–18
Give up your heritage and stop being a Montague	Deny thy father and refuse thy name – l. 37
If you won't do that, make me a promise of your love and I will stop being a Capulet.	O, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love, And I'll no longer be a Capulet. – l. 38 f.
What's so important about a name? Even if we called a rose a different name it would still smell beautiful.	What's in a name? That which we call a rose/ By any other word would smell as sweet, – l. 46 f.
Why do you hide in the darkness and listen to my private thoughts?	What man art thou that thus bescreen'd in night/ So stumblest on my counsel? – l. 56 f.