

Reading comprehension

William Shakespeare and the Globe Theatre

In 1588 Queen Elizabeth I was on the throne of England and the country was under attack by the ships of the Spanish Armada. In the same year an actor, who also wrote plays, left his hometown of Stratford-upon-Avon and arrived in London looking for fame. England defeated the Armada and the actor, William Shakespeare, became the best-known playwright in the English language.

William Shakespeare wrote, or co-wrote, a total of thirty-eight plays. He was very good at turning older plays, Greek and Roman legends, and stories from history into new plays. He wrote historical plays, comedies and tragedies. Maybe you have not seen a performance or a film version of one of his plays but you will certainly have heard of some of his most famous characters: Hamlet the unhappy Danish prince who looks for his father's murderer, or Romeo and Juliet who died for love, or even the murderous Macbeth and his wife Lady Macbeth.

One of the most important spectators at Shakespeare's plays was Queen Elizabeth I herself. She watched some of his plays at court and enjoyed them greatly. Shakespeare's historical plays in particular showed how proud the country was of the Queen's successes – particularly the defeat of the old enemy Spain – and of England's rise to a great world power.

Shakespeare not only wrote plays but he was also involved in planning the building of the Globe Theatre in London. His plays were later often put on there. At that time playhouses needed a lot of plays because a play usually only ran for two days. The actors – all of whom were men, even in the female roles – hardly had time to learn their parts; one day it was *Julius Caesar* on the stage, the next



A performance at The New Globe Theatre

it was *Macbeth* or *Henry VI*. There was also very little scenery so the actors had to use the balconies and alcoves for love scenes or for making secret plans. The performances included a lot of music, dancing and processions. While the performance was going on the audience usually walked around, ate, drank and smoked. They also commented – usually very loudly – on the action on the stage! This was useful for Shakespeare because he then knew exactly what his audiences wanted to see.

The Globe burned down in 1613 and Shakespeare died three years later. Yet Shakespeare lives on in his works, which are performed hundreds of times a year. The Globe Theatre has not been forgotten either: it was brought back to life in the 1990s when the New Globe Theatre was rebuilt based on the original plans. Every year thousands of visitors to London go to the New Globe Theatre to experience performances as Shakespeare's audiences did many centuries ago. (459 words)

38 **alcove** small space formed when a wall is further back

TIPP

1. Lies die Überschrift des Textes und betrachte eventuell vorhandene Fotos oder Illustrationen.
2. Lies den Text durch und verschaffe dir einen Überblick über den Inhalt.
3. Lies die Aussagen zum Text genau.
4. Arbeite den Text ein zweites Mal durch und markiere die Textstellen, die für die Lösung der Aufgabe notwendig sind.
5. Markiere die Aussagen, für die du keine Textbelegstellen finden konntest, mit 'not in the text'.
6. Entscheide für die verbliebenen Aussagen, ob es einen Widerspruch zu der gefundenen Textbelegstelle gibt. Wenn ja, dann markiere diese Aussage 'false'. Wenn nein, dann markiere 'true'.

Mark the following statements true (T), false (F) or not in the text (N). Correct all false statements on a separate piece of paper.

1. William Shakespeare went to London to help fight the Spanish. ____
2. In the play *Hamlet*, Hamlet killed his father. ____
3. Shakespeare used ideas from Greek and Roman legends. ____
4. *Romeo and Juliet* was one of Shakespeare's best plays. ____
5. Queen Elizabeth liked Shakespeare's plays a lot because they were based on history. ____
6. Shakespeare financed the building of the Globe. ____
7. Plays usually ran in the playhouses for two weeks. ____
8. The actors all had loud voices. ____
9. Shakespeare knew what his audiences wanted. ____
10. Modern day audiences can experience Shakespeare's plays like the Elizabethans did. ____

Language components

I. *There are ten spelling mistakes in the sentences below. Find the mistakes and rewrite the words correctly.*

Shakespeare's symbols

- 1 William Shakespeare used the sun and moon in his plays as symbols of god and evil.

- 2 People living at the time of Queen Elizabeth the First understood these symbols.

- 3 They saw the sun as a source of both light and hope.

- 4 In Shakespeare's play *Henry the Fourth*, the sun represents good, and the moon evil.

- 5 In this play a prince makes a speech which includes these symbols.

- 6 The prince talks about the idea of being a wicked man.

- 7 This person changes and becomes a better person.

- 8 The change is like the sun coming out from behind dark clouds.

- 9 In the same play Shakespeare also used the moon as an image of fear.

- 10 For example, a robbery takes place in the moonlight.

II. *Rewrite the words in phonetic transcript in proper letters.*

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|------------------|-------|--------------------|-------|
| 1. [dɪ'fɪ:t] | _____ | 6. ['si:nəri] | _____ |
| 2. ['pleɪrɪt] | _____ | 7. [prə'seʃn] | _____ |
| 3. [pə'fɔ:mənts] | _____ | 8. ['ɔ:diənts] | _____ |
| 4. [sək'seɪz] | _____ | 9. [ɪk'spiəriənts] | _____ |
| 5. [θɪətə] | _____ | 10. [ə'gəʊ] | _____ |



Lösungen

Reading comprehension 1. False, he went to London because he wanted to become famous; 2. False, Hamlet looked for his father's murderer; 3. True; 4. Not in the text; 5. False, Queen Elizabeth liked the plays because they showed how proud the country was of her successes and England's rise to a global power; 6. False, Shakespeare was involved in planning the building of the Globe Theatre; 7. False, the plays usually ran for two days; 8. Not in the text; 9. True; 10. True

Language components I. *Die falsch geschriebenen Wörter sind kursiv gedruckt.* 1. 1. *god* good; 1. 2. *Fist* First; 1. 3. *lite* light; 1. 4. *Forth* Fourth; 1. 5. *speech* speech; 1. 6. *men* man; 1. 7. *becomes* becomes; 1. 8. *clouds* clouds; 1. 9. *feer* fear; 1. 10. *plays* place. II. 1. defeat, 2. playwright, 3. performance, 4. successes, 5. theatre, 6. scenery, 7. procession, 8. audience, 9. experience, 10. ago