

William Shakespeare

(bapt. 26 April 1564 – 23 April 1616)

- Little is known about him
- Born and educated in Stratford-upon-Avon. Married Anne Hathaway. Left for London. Actor and dramatist.
- Acted and wrote for Burbage's company.
- *The Globe*



GOOD FREND FOR IESVS SAKE FORBEARE,
TO DIGG THE DVST ENCLOSED HEARE.
BLESE BE YE MAN Y SPARES THES STONES,
AND CVRST BE HE Y MOVES MY BONES.



Periods in Shakespeare's writing

1. Early, less mature, technically less polished.
 - **Historical Chronicles** – *his interpretation of historical events and figures* (**Richard II, Richard III, Henry VI, King John, etc**)
 - **Comedies** – *optimistic and light* (**The Comedy of Errors, A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Taming of the Shrew, The Merchant of Venice, etc**)
 - **Tragedy** – *the most optimistic and romantic of all his tragedies* - **Romeo and Juliet**

Periods in Shakespeare's writing

2. Mature, well-designed, rich poetic language

Tragedies – masterpieces – *King Lear, Antony and Cleopatra, Hamlet, Macbeth*

3. Romantic, times and places far removed from Elizabethan England. Allegories and fairy-tales.

Tragic comedies or 'romances' -

Cymbeline, The Tempest, The Winter's Tale.

Language in Shakespeare's plays

- contributed 1,700 words to the English language because he was the first author to write them down
- coined a lot of phrases - 'heart of gold' (*Henry V*), 'tower of strength' (*Richard III*) and 'Wild-geese chase' (*Romeo and Juliet*)

Language in Shakespeare's plays

- **iambic pentameter** blank verse

To be, or not to be: that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep;
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural
shocks

That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;

