Seven Ages of Man - Tutors’ Guide

Who was William Shakespeare?
William Shakespeare is one of the world's greatest writers. He wrote plays for the theatre. He wrote poetry also.

Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon, in England. Later he went to London, to be an actor. But he became famous for writing plays. His friends and contemporaries said he was the best writer of his time. Most people now say he was the best of all time.

Why is Shakespeare so famous?
Shakespeare lived more than 400 years ago. Yet people still go to see his plays.

Shakespeare plays are performed all over the world. Students study Shakespeare in school and at university. People write books about Shakespeare. There are Shakespeare theatres and Shakespeare festivals.

Plays in Shakespeare's time
Shakespeare was a member of a company of actors, called the Lord Chamberlain’s Men. In 1598, they built a new theatre. It was round. They called it the Globe.

The original Globe Theatre burned down in 1613 during a performance of Shakespeare’s play Henry VIII. In 1997, the new Globe was built in approximately the same place on the South bank of the River Thames in London.
The Globe was open to the sky because the actors needed natural light to perform as there was no gas or electricity. A flag was raised to show a play was about to begin. Plays began at 2 in the afternoon. Over the stage was a roof, to keep off the rain. Actors could be lowered from the roof on wires. There was a trap door in the stage too. So actors could pop up to surprise the audience.
As You Like It

“As You Like It” is a comedy believed to have been written in 1599 or early 1600 and first published in the First Folio, 1623. As You Like It follows its heroine Rosalind as she flees persecution in her uncle’s court, accompanied by her cousin Celia and Touchstone the court jester, to find safety and eventually love in the Forest of Arden.

The play features one of Shakespeare's most famous and oft-quoted speeches, “All the world's a stage”, and is the origin of the phrase “too much of a good thing”. The play remains a favourite among audiences and has been adapted for radio, film, and musical theatre.

Act II, Scene 7, features one of Shakespeare's most famous monologues, spoken by Jaques; a very melancholy and unhappy character. The arresting imagery and figures of speech in the monologue develop the central metaphor: a person’s lifespan is a play in seven acts. These acts, or "seven ages", begin with "the infant/Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms" and work through six further vivid verbal sketches, culminating in "second childishness and mere oblivion,/Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything".
The Seven Ages of Man by William Shakespeare

Lines 1-5 All Groups Lines 6-9 Group 1 Lines 10-15 Group 2 Lines 16-19 Group 3 Lines 20-25 Group 4 Lines 26-28 All Groups

1. All the world's a stage,
2. And all the men and women merely players,
3. They have their exits and entrances,
4. And one man in his time plays many parts,
5. His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,
6. Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.
7. Then, the whining schoolboy with his satchel
8. And shining morning face, creeping like snail
9. Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,
10. Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
11. Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,
12. Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,
13. Jealous in honour, sudden, and quick in quarrel,
14. Seeking the bubble reputation
15. Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice
16. In fair round belly, with good capon lin'd,
17. With eyes severe, and beard of formal cut,
18. Full of wise saws, and modern instances,
19. And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts
20. Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,
21. With spectacles on nose, and pouch on side,
22. His youthful hose well sav'd, a world too wide,
23. For his shrunk shank, and his big manly voice,
24. Turning again towards childish treble, pipes
25. And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,
26. That ends this strange eventful history,
27. Is second childishness and mere oblivion,
28. Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.
Glossary

bal·lad a popular song especially of a romantic or sentimental nature.

Beard the hair on a man's face.

bubble reputation brief, worthless glory

cap·pon a male chicken raised for food.

fur·nace An intensely hot place: the furnace of the sun; an attic room that is a furnace in the summer.

Hose hose or hos·es, stockings; socks.

in·stance an example to prove or invalidate a contention or illustrate a point.

lin’d - line form a bordering line along: small stalls lined the alley.

mewl (of a baby) to cry weakly; whimper.

mis·tress the object of a man's affection; his love.

oath a curse or a promise

oblivion the act or an instance of forgetting; total forgetfulness: sought the great oblivion of sleep.

Pan·ta·loon a character from pantomime; a foolish old man in tight trousers and slippers and the butt of a clown's jokes.

pard a leopard or other large cat

puke to vomit (slang)

quar·rel an angry dispute; an altercation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Word</strong></th>
<th><strong>Meaning</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sans</td>
<td>without</td>
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<tr>
<td>satch·el</td>
<td>a small bag, used for carrying books or clothing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>sav’d - save</td>
<td>to keep in a safe condition; safeguard.</td>
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<tr>
<td>saws - say·ing</td>
<td>something, such as an adage or maxim, that is said.</td>
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<td>second childishness</td>
<td>senility</td>
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<tr>
<td>shank</td>
<td>a leg or leg-like part.</td>
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<tr>
<td>slip·per</td>
<td>a low shoe that can be slipped on and off easily and usually worn indoors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>slippered</td>
<td>to be wearing slippers</td>
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<td>treb·le</td>
<td>a high, shrill sound or voice.</td>
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<tr>
<td>woe·ful</td>
<td>full of woe; sadness, mournful.</td>
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