

Literary Lives: William Shakespeare

Comprehension Questions

1. What did John Shakespeare do for a living?

2. What evidence is there that Shakespeare was a bit of a tearaway?

3. Who was Anne Hathaway?

4. What happened in London in 1593?

5. How are Shakespeare's plays usually categorised?

6. Why was the location of The Globe theatre important?

7. What started the fire which made The Globe burn down?

8. What evidence is there about the cause of Shakespeare's death?

Literary Lives: William Shakespeare Comprehension Questions - Answers

1. What did John Shakespeare do for a living?

He was a glove-maker and merchant. He also held many other positions of responsibility in the town, including the equivalent of mayor.

2. What evidence is there that Shakespeare was a bit of a tearaway?

There are stories that he stole a deer from the grounds of a local manor house and he probably got Anne Hathaway pregnant before they married.

3. Who was Anne Hathaway?

A 26-year-old woman whom Shakespeare married when he was just 18. Six months later, their first child was born.

4. What happened in London in 1593?

The bubonic plague broke out and theatres were closed until the following year.

5. What are the categories that Shakespeare's plays are divided into?

Comedies, tragedies and histories.

6. Why was the location of The Globe theatre important?

It was outside the boundaries of the City of London and could not be controlled by officials who disapproved of theatres.

7. What started the fire which made The Globe burn down.

A cannon fired during the play 'Henry VIII' set light to a thatched roof.

8. What evidence is there about the cause of Shakespeare's death?

The local vicar recorded in his diary that Shakespeare had a 'fever' after drinking with playwrights Michael Drayton and Ben Jonson.