

THE RENAISSANCE: HISTORY AFTER THE WAR OF THE TWO ROSES.

After the War of the Roses, Henry VII of the Tudor family, became king. His reign saw the end of the medieval system and the rise of the modern age.

New classes were coming into being:

- a) the gentry, or country gentlemen AMONGST
- b) the yeomen, or minor landowners WENT IMPORTANT
- c) the merchants who would play such an important role in the development of English commerce.

Henry VII's son, Henry VIII, was the ideal king of the Renaissance since he was also a good musician and scholar, a good hunter and archer. After his brother Arthur's death, with a special dispensation of the pope, he had married his brother's widow, Catherine of Aragon (the daughter of the King of Spain), who had given him a daughter, Mary. But he wanted a male heir; moreover he had fallen in love with Anne Boylen, a lady-in-waiting of the queen, so he asked the pope to declare his marriage void. Pope Clement VII refused but the king didn't accept the Pope's authority and decided to solve the question through the English parliament. In 1533 Henry married Anne Boylen and in 1534 the Act of Supremacy declared the king Only Supreme Head in Earth of the Church of England, thus provoking the schism from the Roman Catholic Church.

After Henry VIII's death, Edward VI, son of his third wife, ascended the throne at the age of nine, but he died a few years later and his half-sister, Mary (daughter of Catherine of Aragon) became queen. She reintroduced the Catholic religion and burned alive more than 300 protestants, thus receiving the name of Bloody Mary. She was succeeded by Elizabeth I, the daughter of Anne Boylen, who re-established the Anglican Church and was more tolerant.

In the field of foreign affairs Elizabeth made England one of the most powerful nations in Europe and in the world. Her greatest success was the victory of the English fleet over the Armada which Philip II of Spain had sent to invade England in 1588.

THE RENAISSANCE

From a literary point of view the most important event of the period was the revival of interest in classical culture which goes under the name of Humanism. The new movement first developed in Italy and then spread to the other countries. The ideals of Humanism focused attention on man rather than on God, taught that love of this world was preferable to longing for the next and emphasized individualism. Man now aware of himself and of the universe around him realized that he could mould his own life and destiny.

Intellectual and refined as they were in the Renaissance, prose and poetry never came to be really popular literature, as they were intended for an élite of readers. Drama instead became the truly national literary manifestation of the time.

GNUPRY FOR RICHER
PEOPLE WHO COULD AFFORD
A MORE EXPENSIVE TICKET

BALCONY
FOR THE MUSICIANS
OR PLAYS (LICKERED
AND JULIET)

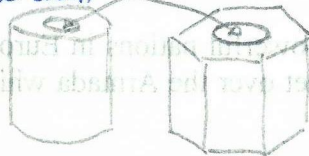
INNER STAGE

SUPPLY APPARITION
TRAP DOOR (BOTOIA)

FRONT OR APRON STAGE : THE ACTORS
WERE CLOSED TO THE AUDIENCE

RIT (PATES) : THE AUDIENCE STOOD
HERE (WITHOUT CHAIRS) THEY
COULD BRING CHAIRS FROM HOME THE
TICKET ONLY COST ONE PENNY

THERE WAS A HOLE IN THE ROOF TO
LET LIGHT PASS IN! THERE WASN'T
ELECTRIC LIGHT



PLAYS WERE PERFORMED
FROM 2:00 PM TO 6:00 PM.

Drama

At the beginning the actors moved from a city to another. In the Middle Ages they performed in front of a carriage in the streets or in the squares.

PLAYHOUSE

inn's courtyards (cortile delle bande)
room in the house of a nobleman

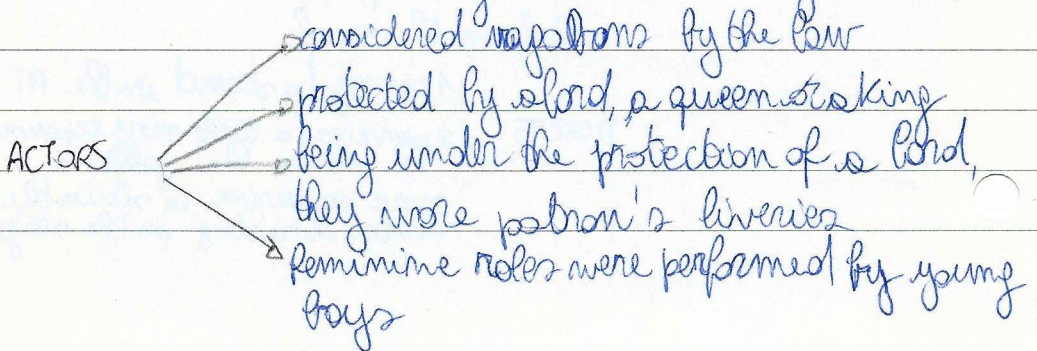
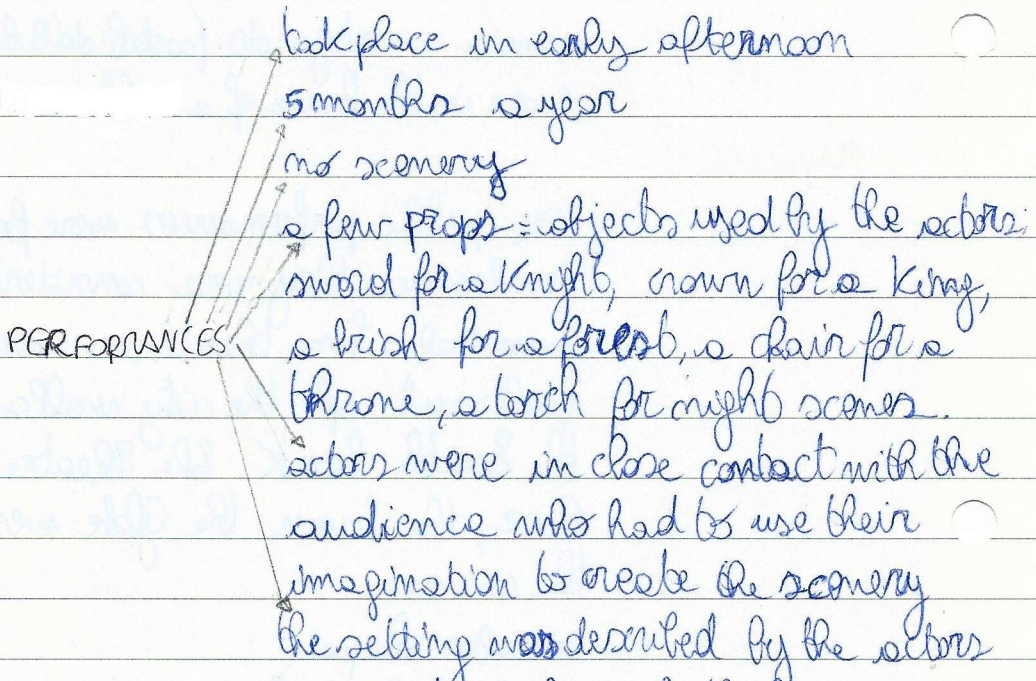
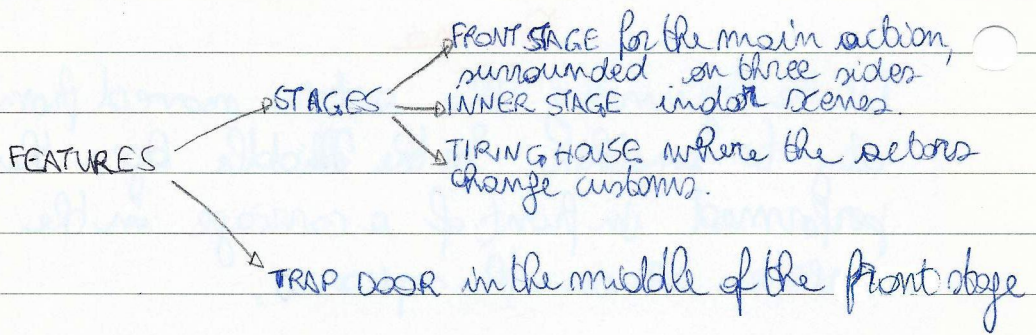
1574 public performances were forbidden because they were considered immoral. Some theatres were built out of the city walls on the South bank. The Swan, the Rose, the Swan, the Globe were the names.

FEATURES

circular shape
a hole in the roof

TICKETS

1 penny to stand in the PIT
2 pences (a little more expensive) to sit in the galleries
more expensive to sit in the seats directly on the stage



WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

He was born at Stratford-upon-Avon in April 1564, possibly on 23, St George's Day, which is also the date of his death. His father was a middle-class man, a glover, and his mother was of a good country family. He was educated at the Grammar school where he learnt some Latin and Greek. When he was 18 he married Anne Hathaway who was 8 years older than him and after 6 months his first child was born, followed by two twins. Some time after their birth, apparently to avoid being arrested for poaching on the estate of a noble man, he left his family and moved to London.

We don't know what he did during his first years in the capital. According to tradition he did many jobs. The first real reference to him is in 1592 when he was attacked in a pamphlet, showing that he had already become so important to attract attention.

He joined the Lord Chamberlain's Men, one of the main companies of actors. He made friends with very important people and in particular with the Earl of Southampton. He became a shareholder in the Globe Theatre and in 1597 he bought New Place, the finest house in Stratford where he retired and died in 1616.