

A Shakespeare Timeline Summary Chart

The dates given for plays are approximate. Works listed in column four are usually by date of publication. The Spanish Tragedy, for instance, was probably composed around 1586, but not published until 1592.

Year	Life	Works	Events & Publications
1564	Shakespeare Born		Christopher Marlowe born John Hawkins second voyage to New World Galileo Galilei born John Calvin dies The Peace of Troyes
1565-1581	1567(?) Richard Burbage, the greatest tragedian of the age, who would eventually portray Hamlet, Lear, Othello and all Shakespeare's great parts born 1576 James Burbage (father of Richard) obtains a 21 year lease and permission to build The Theatre in Shoreditch 1577 The Curtain, a rival theater near The Theatre, opens in Finbury		1565 Golding's translation of Ovid's <i>Metamorphoses</i> 1566 Gascoigne's <i>The Supposes</i> 1567 Thomas Nashe born 1571 Tirso de Molina born 1572 Thomas Dekker born 1572 John Donne & Ben Jonson born 1577 Holinshed publishes <i>The Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland</i> , Shakespeare's primary source for the history plays 1579 John Fletcher born 1580 Thomas Middleton born 1580 Montaigne's <i>Essais</i> published
1582	Shakespeare married		Hakluyt's <i>Dievers Voyages Touching the Discovery of America</i>
1583	Birth of daughter, Susanna The Queen's Company is formed in London		
1585	Birth of twins, Judith and Hamnet		1586 Mary Queen of Scots tried for treason
1587(?)-1592	Departure from Stratford Establishment in London as an actor/playwright	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	1587 Mary Queen of Scots executed 1587 Marlowe's <i>Tamburlaine</i> 1588 Defeat of the Armada

		<i>Titus Andronicus</i> <i>The Taming of the Shrew</i> <i>Henry VI, 1,2,3</i> <i>Richard III</i>	1588 Greene's <i>Pandosto</i> 1588 Marlowe's <i>Dr. Faustus</i> 1590 Spenser's <i>Faerie Queen</i> 1590 Marlowe's <i>The Jew of Malta</i> 1591 Sidney's <i>Astrophil and Stella</i> 1592 Robert Greene dies 1592 Kyd's <i>The Spanish Tragedy</i>
1593	Preferment sought through aristocratic connections - dedicates Venus and Lucrece to Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton - possibly the youth of the <i>Sonnets</i>	1593 <i>Venus and Adonis</i> Begins writing the <i>Sonnets</i> , probably completed by c.1597 or earlier <i>Two Gentlemen of Verona</i> <i>Love's Labour's Lost</i>	1593-94 Theaters closed by plague 1593 Marlowe dies
1594	The Lyrical masterpieces Prosperity and recognition as the leading London playwright. 1596 John Shakespeare reapplies successfully for a coat of arms 1596 Hamnet Shakespeare dies at age 11	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> <i>Richard II</i> <i>Merchant of Venice</i>	1594 Greene's <i>Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay</i> 1594 Marlowe's <i>Edward II</i> 1595 Thomas Kyd dies 1595 Sidney's <i>An Apologia for Poetrie</i> 1595 Sir Walter Raleigh explores the Orinoco 1596 Spenser's <i>Faerie Queen</i> 1596 George Peele dies.
1597-1599	Artistic Maturity Purchases New Place, Stratford with other significant investments 1599 The Globe Theater built on Bankside from the timbers of The Theatre. Shakespeare is a shareholder and receives about 10% of the profits	<i>Henry IV, 1,2</i> <i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i> <i>As You Like It</i> <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> <i>Henry V</i> <i>Julius Caesar</i>	1597 Bacon's <i>Essays, Civil and Moral</i> 1598 Phillip II of Spain dies 1598 Francis Meres <i>Palladis Tamia</i> 1598 John Florio's <i>A World of Words</i> (English-Italian dictionary) 1598 Ben Jonson 's <i>Every Man in his Humour</i> 1599 Essex sent to Ireland and fails, is arrested on return 1599 Edmund Spenser dies
1600-1608	The Period of the Great Tragedies & Problem Plays 1600 The Fortune Theater opens	<i>Twelfth Night</i> <i>Hamlet</i> <i>Troilus &</i>	1600 Kemp's <i>Nine Daies Wonder</i> 1600 Dekker's <i>Shoemaker's Holiday</i> 1601 Essex rebels against Elizabeth, fails and is

	<p>1601 Shakespeare's father dies</p> <p>1603 The Lord Chamberlain's Men become The King's Men who perform at court more than any other company</p> <p>1607 Susanna Shakespeare married Dr. John Hall</p> <p>1608 The King's Men begin playing at the Blackfriars</p> <p>1608 Shakespeare's mother dies</p>	<p><i>Cressida</i></p> <p><i>Alls Well That Ends Well</i></p> <p><i>Measure for Measure</i></p> <p><i>Othello</i></p> <p><i>King Lear</i></p> <p><i>Macbeth</i></p> <p><i>Antony and Cleopatra</i></p> <p><i>Coriolanus</i></p> <p><i>Timon of Athens</i></p>	<p>executed</p> <p>1601 Thomas Nashe dies</p> <p>1603 Elizabeth dies, James VI of Scotland becomes James I of England</p> <p>1603 Sir Walter Raleigh arrested, tried and imprisoned</p> <p>1603 The plague once again ravages London</p> <p>1604 Marston's <i>The Malcontent</i></p> <p>1605 The Gunpowder Plot - Guy Fawkes and accomplices arrested</p> <p>1605 Bacon's <i>The Advancement of Learning</i></p> <p>1606 Ben Jonson's <i>Volpone</i></p> <p>1607 Tourneur (?) <i>The Revenger's Tragedy</i></p> <p>1607 The founding of Jamestown</p>
1609-1611	<p>Period of the Romances</p> <p>1609 Publication of the <i>Sonnets</i></p>	<p><i>Pericles Prince of Tyre</i></p> <p><i>Cymbeline</i></p> <p><i>The Winter's Tale</i></p> <p><i>The Tempest</i></p>	<p>1609 Beaumont & Fletcher <i>The Knight of the Burning Pestle</i></p> <p>1610 Prince Henry created Prince of Wales</p> <p>Ben Jonson <i>The Alchemist</i></p>
1612-1616	<p>Shakespeare probably retires from London life to Stratford Works on collaborations with John Fletcher</p> <p>1616 Judith Shakespeare married Thomas Quiney</p> <p>March 1616 Shakespeare apparently ill revises his will</p> <p>April 23, 1616 Shakespeare dies and is buried at Holy trinity Church, Stratford</p>	<p><i>Henry VIII</i></p> <p><i>The Two Noble Kinsmen</i></p> <p><i>Cardenio</i></p>	<p>1612 Henry Prince of Wales dies</p> <p>1612 Webster's <i>The White Devil</i></p> <p>1613 Francis Bacon becomes attorney general</p> <p>1614 Jonson's <i>Bartholomew Fayre</i></p> <p>1614 Webster's <i>Duchess of Malfi</i></p> <p>1614 Sir Walter Raleigh's <i>History of the World</i></p> <p>1616 Francis Beaumont dies</p> <p>1616 Ben Jonson's <i>Workes</i> published in folio</p> <p>1623 Publication of Shakespeare's First Folio</p>