

# Shakespeare's England

The aim of this unit is to introduce you to what life was like in the Elizabethan age, at the time William Shakespeare was writing his plays.

Directions: Working with the other members of your group, research your topic using the internet, books, filmed documentaries etc. Answer the questions listed, but feel free to add any additional information on the topic that will help the class fully understand your topic. I have provided some suggested word or phrase searches that you might try, but they are by no means the only ones out there. After each group member has finished their research, the group will meet to assemble the information into one presentation. Each member of the group must participate in both the research and presentation portions of the assignment to receive full credit.

- **Clothing in Elizabethan times:**

Difference between rich and poor people's clothing

What fabrics were used?

What were some unusual garments?

What did the garments look like?

What were the usual garments that an everyday man wore?

What were the usual garments that an everyday woman wore?

**Suggested word/phrase search for internet sites:**

*Elizabethan Period Costumes*

*Costuming and Needlework Links*

*Fashions: Women and Men*

*Elizabethan Clothing*

*A Fashionable Vocabulary: Clothing and Fabrics*

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- **Weapons in Elizabethan times:**

What sort of weapons were used then?

What were they made of?

Who carried them?

What was the deadliest weapon?

How were honor and fighting related in Elizabethan times?

What were the basic rules of a gentleman's duel?

**Suggested word/phrase search for internet sites:**

*Elizabethan Fencing*

*Honor (or honour) and Duelling*

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- **Language in Elizabethan times:**

What did the language sound like?

What words do we no longer use?

What sort of swear words did they use? (Curses)

Were there class differences in the way people spoke?

What are some phrases from either Shakespeare or Elizabethan language that we still use today?

Why is it important for contemporary students to understand Elizabethan language?

**Suggested word/phrase search for internet sites:**

*Elizabethan Accents*

*Language: Idiomatic Idiosyncrasies*

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- **Events of the time:**

Who were explorers at that time?

What did the explorers do?

What was a famous battle in Elizabethan times?

Describe the conflict in the Church at the time.

Who were the enemies of Elizabeth I?

Who were some other historical figures of the time and why were they important?

**Suggested word/phrase search for internet sites:**

*The Life and Times of Queen Elizabeth I*

*Elizabethan England*

*Elizabethan English Historical Figures and Events*

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- **Beliefs:**

What did they believe?

What was the basis of their belief system?

What were some of the medical beliefs and practices from the Elizabethan age?

A person who had an influence on what the Elizabethans believed was a man named Dionysius. Find out about him and his ideas on how the world was ordered.

What were the four humours?

Work out which humours go with which main characters in your play and why.

**Suggested word/phrase search for internet sites:**

*Medical Beliefs and Practices*

*Elizabethan Compendium*

*The Holy Angels site*

*Renaissance Medicine*

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- **Theatre in Elizabethan times:**

What were the names of some of the playhouses and actors?

How did the playhouses differ from present day theatres?

What was unusual about the actors then?

How were Elizabethan theatre audiences different from theatre audiences today?

How were Elizabethan actors paid?

Why weren't women allowed to act in Elizabethan times?

**Suggested word/phrase search for internet sites:**

*Shakespeare's Globe*

*The Globe*

*The Swan*

*Shakespeare Resource Center - Shakespeare's Globe*

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- **Life of Shakespeare:**

How did Shakespeare live as a child?

What were his greatest influences?

When did he move to London?

How did he make a living?

What were his greatest successes?

What do you think might have been his greatest regret?

**Suggested word/phrase search for internet sites:**

*The Seven Ages of Shakespeare's Life*

*A Shakespeare Timeline*

*Shakespeare Resource Center - The Man*