

Grange Park Primary School Year 6 Summer 1 and 2 History

The History of Theatre

Timeline

1000 BC - 146 BC	Ancient Greek Theatre
753 BC - 476 AD	Ancient Roman Theatre
900 - 1500's AD	Medieval Theatre
1510 - 1650 AD	Commedia Dell'arte
1558 - 1603 AD	Elizabethan Theatre
1837 - 1901 AD	Victorian Theatre
21st Century AD	Modern Theatre



Key People/Places

William Shakespeare	William Shakespeare was a famous English playwright, poet and actor who lived in the Elizabethan/Jacobean period.
The Globe Theatre	A famous London theatre where, after 1599, the plays of William Shakespeare were performed.

How have theatre buildings has changed over time?

Theatres have changed vastly since the first amphitheatres built in Greece. Historically, theatres were circular and open-air which meant they did not have roofs covering the audience. There was no heating and actors got wet when it rained. In the Globe theatre, the stage was higher and there was an open pit in front of it where most of the people could stand, rather than the comfortable seating found in modern theatres today. Richer people and noblemen sat in the gallery. There was almost no scenery as the dialogue was the most important part of the play.

William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare is often credited with having a profound influence on language, literature, theatre, and other elements of culture. His works consist of approximately 38 plays which have been translated into every major living language and are performed more often than those of any other playwright. To date, countless theatre festivals around the world honour his works and his plays have been a major influence on subsequent theatre.

Theatre has never been the same since his plays' first performances, and Shakespeare's influence can be seen in everything from contemporary dialogue to expectations of audience behaviour. The theatre in Shakespeare's time was very different from that of today. Authors wrote plays for the masses, especially those who could not read or write.

Key Vocabulary

auditorium	The part of a theatre or concert hall where the audience sits.
gallery	A balcony or elevated part of the theatre that has seats for the audience.
backstage	The area behind the stage in a theatre.
flies	A system of ropes used to lower and raise curtains and scenery.
proscenium arch	The frame that surrounds a stage space, separating the audience from the stage.
production	The art or skill of producing or staging plays.
heckle	To bother a public speaker or performer by saying rude things or asking annoying questions.
groundlings	The poorer members of the audience that stood in the pit.
stinkard	A smelly or despicable person. In the Globe Theatre, groundlings were sometimes called Penny Stinkards as they paid a penny for admission and were poor.

