

YEAR 4: SUMMER 2 – TIME COP: LEARNING FROM THE PAST

HISTORY: THEATRE FROM THE GREEKS TO SHAKESPEARE

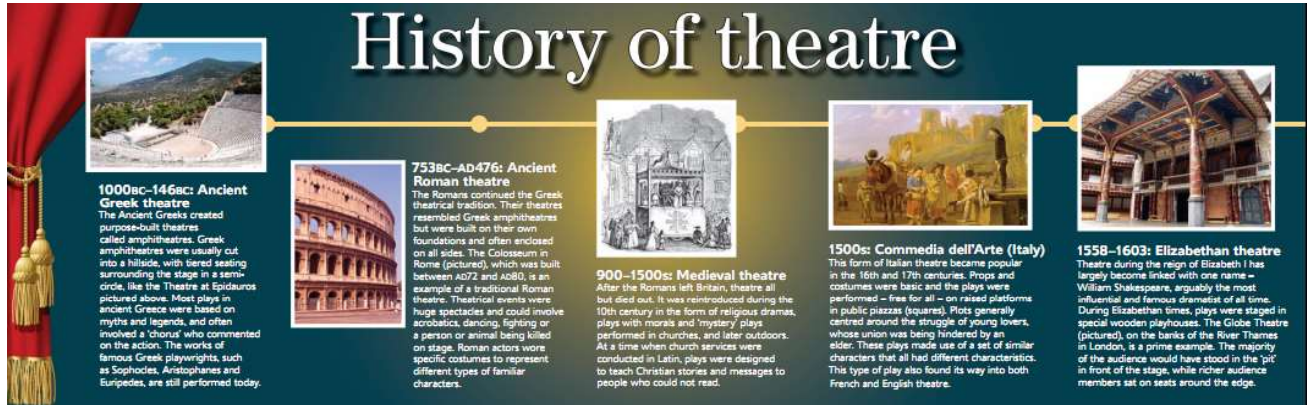
CHRONOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING: THE HISTORY OF THEATRE

A study of an aspect or theme in British history that extends pupils' chronological knowledge beyond 1066:	<i>Democracy</i>	<i>Olympics</i>	<i>Elizabethan Age</i>	<i>Ancient Greek Plays</i>	<i>Shakespeare's plays</i>
	<i>Ancient Greek theatres</i>	<i>Ancient Greek democracy</i>		<i>William Shakespeare</i>	<i>Elizabethan theatre</i>

Since humans have been able to communicate, performing and telling stories has always been a part of our history. From prehistoric times, people have used song, dance, costumes and performance to tell stories about their past and to worship their gods. As civilisations began to form, performances were always an important part, whether it be for rituals, to celebrate special events, for religious reasons or even just for entertainment. However, the formation of the Greek civilisation around 800BC marks the beginning of theatre as we know it. Over 2,000 years later, theatre performance had changed a huge amount in style by the time that William Shakespeare opened his famous Globe Theatre in 1599, but its core purpose had not changed: a group of performers, telling a story, for the enjoyment of an audience. Even today, with thousands of different types of stages, theatres and dramatic productions, the purpose of the theatre to 'entertain the masses' remains.

Learning links:
Science:
Year 3: Stone Age

History of theatre



1000bc–146bc: Ancient Greek theatre
The Ancient Greeks created purpose-built theatres called amphitheatres. Greek amphitheatres were usually cut into a hillside, with tiered seating surrounding the stage in a semi-circle, like the Theatre at Epidaurus pictured above. Most plays in ancient Greece were based on myths and legends, and often involved a 'chorus' who commented on the action. The works of famous Greek playwrights, such as Sophocles, Aristophanes and Euripides, are still performed today.

753BC–AD476: Ancient Roman theatre
The Romans continued the Greek theatrical tradition. Their theatres resembled Greek amphitheatres but were built on their own foundations and often enclosed on all sides. The Colosseum in Rome (pictured), which was built between AD72 and AD80, is an example of a traditional Roman theatre. Theatrical events were huge spectacles and could involve acrobatics, dancing, fighting or a person or animal being killed on stage. Roman actors wore specific costumes to represent different types of familiar characters.

900–1500s: Medieval theatre
After the Romans left Britain, theatre all but died out. It was reintroduced during the 10th century in the form of religious dramas, plays with morals and 'mystery' plays performed in churches, and later outdoors. At a time when church services were conducted in Latin, plays were designed to teach Christian stories and messages to people who could not read.

1500s: Commedia dell'Arte (Italy)
This form of Italian theatre became popular in the 16th and 17th centuries. Props and costumes were basic and the plays were performed – free for all – on raised platforms in public piazzas (squares). Plots generally centred around the struggle of young lovers, whose union was being hindered by an elder. These plays made use of a set of similar characters that all had different characteristics. This type of play also found its way into both French and English theatre.

1558–1603: Elizabethan theatre
Theatre during the reign of Elizabeth I has largely become linked with one name – William Shakespeare, arguably the most influential and famous dramatist of all time. During Elizabethan times, plays were staged in special wooden playhouses. The Globe Theatre (pictured), on the banks of the River Thames in London, is a prime example. The majority of the audience would have stood in the 'pit' in front of the stage, while richer audience members sat on seats around the edge.

1660–1714: Restoration theatre
After the English Civil War, puritans banned all stage performances. However, theatres were reopened in 1660 and bold and witty comedies were popular. Audiences were made up of rich people, as well as the middle classes and servants. Under the reign of King Charles II, some women were permitted on stage as actresses (female roles had previously been played by boys).

1600s–today: Kabuki theatre (Japan)
Japanese kabuki theatre is famous for its elaborate costumes and make-up, and unique style of music. It originally used female performers playing both male and female roles, but women were banned from performing kabuki in 1629 and male actors continue the tradition today. Performances usually centre on historical events or morality. Speech in one tone and Japanese instruments accompany the action. Features of the kabuki stage include trapdoors, a section that rotates and a footbridge into the audience.

1800s–1900s: American Vaudeville
Light-hearted variety entertainment, known as Vaudeville, was popular in America during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It was usually inexpensive and could involve dance, music, comedy, singing, magic, sketches, acrobatics or animal acts.

1837–1901: Victorian theatre
The technological breakthroughs of the industrial revolution had an impact on theatre in the form of electric lighting and the use of machinery to create visual and audio spectacles. The theatre became a popular pastime for the middle classes in the 19th century. Pantomime, Vaudeville, melodramas and light operas (such as those written by Gilbert and Sullivan) were popular. Social plays – known as 'top and tailer dramas' – set in the characters' living rooms, also became popular. The work of dramatists George Bernard Shaw and Oscar Wilde was widely respected. The famous Royal Albert Hall (pictured) opened in 1871.

21st century: Modern theatre
Theatre today ranges from big budget musicals and plays on New York's Broadway and in London's West End to local 'fringe' productions and amateur dramatics, such as The Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Drama is used to enlighten, amuse, shock, comment and educate. Some theatres, such as The Lowry (pictured), are examples of exciting modern design.

THINKING POINT:

Which styles of theatre performances would you like to see?
Can you see any similarities between theatre in the past and now?



TO UNDERSTAND AND DESCRIBE: ANCIENT GREECE

To understand and describe the Roman Empire and its impact on Britain:

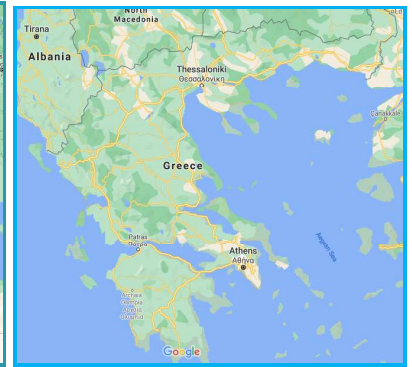
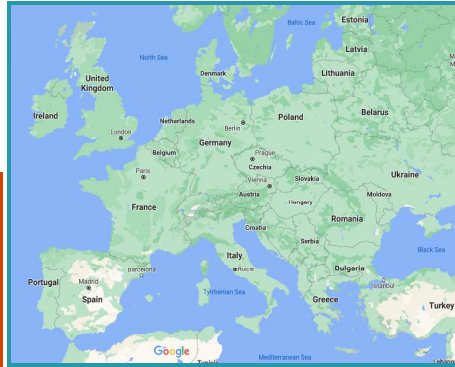
- Learning links:**
- Enquiry:**
- Y3-6 Science
- Y3-6 History
- British History:**
- Year 3: Stone Age to Iron Age Britain (3.4mBC – 43AD)**
- Invasion
 - Settlements
 - Technology
 - Leaders
 - Religion/beliefs
- Year 4: Roman Britain (43AD – 410AD)**
- Invasion
 - Settlements
 - Technology
 - Leaders
 - Religion/beliefs
- Year 5: Anglo-Saxon Britain and the invasion of the Vikings (410AD – 1066AD)**
- Invasion
 - Settlements
 - Technology
 - Leaders
 - Religion/beliefs
- Year 4: William Shakespeare and the end of the Tudors (1564AD – 1616AD)**
- Settlements
 - Technology
 - Leaders
 - Religion/beliefs
- Year 6: The English Civil War and the Stuarts (1603AD – 1714AD)**
- Settlements
 - Technology
 - Leaders
 - Religion/beliefs
- Year 6: World War 2 and modern Britain (1939AD – 1945AD)**
- Settlements
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<i>Democracy</i>	<i>Olympics</i>	<i>Elizabethan Age</i>	<i>Ancient Greek Plays</i>	<i>Shakespeare's plays</i>
<i>Ancient Greek theatres</i>	<i>Ancient Greek democracy</i>	<i>William Shakespeare</i>	<i>Elizabethan theatre</i>	

Ancient Greece

Where was Ancient Greece?

The Ancient Greek Empire covered a much larger area than Greece does today!
At its height under the rule of Alexander the Great, Ancient Greece stretched across the Mediterranean Sea to Egypt and all across Persia, which we now call the Middle-East (Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Iran), right up to the border with India.



The Greeks dressed and lived in similar ways to the Ancient Romans as they both inhabited similar parts of the world (the Greek civilisation began first). Just like the Romans, the Ancient Greek civilisation has had a huge impact on the way our world works today. While the Romans left us with mainly physical inventions, such as roads, baths and housing systems, the Greeks invented many important societal systems which are still in place today.

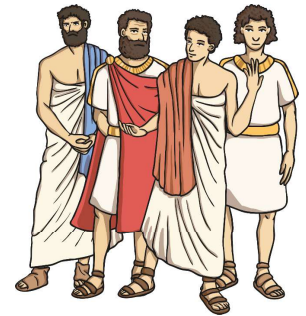
Ancient Greek Democracy

Democracy is a fair political system where all adults vote for an elected government. This government then makes decisions on how to run the country. Nowadays, adults in the UK vote in elections to choose a political party, MPs and the Prime Minister.

Democracy began in Ancient Greece. In fact, the Ancient Greek system is very famous and has helped to shape many systems of democracy around the world today.

There were three main systems of democracy in Ancient Greece:

The Ekklesia	The Boule	The Dikasteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main assembly of citizens who met 40 times a year to make laws and decisions. • Any male Athenian citizen could attend. • Out of 40,000 men, about 5,000 attended regularly. • They made decisions by a simple majority vote. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A group of 500 men who served for one year. • They met daily and made lots of decisions. • They decided what issues to take to the ekklesia. • They were chosen randomly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These were the popular courts; a group of 500 jurors who dealt with crimes. • There were no rules or police so the dikasteria decided what would be tried and what the sentences would be. • The jurors were chosen daily at random from a group of male citizens over 30 years old.



No women were allowed to take part in Ancient Greek democracy. Similarly, anyone not an Athenian citizen (known as a 'metic'), slaves and children were also not able to take part.

THINKING POINT:

What is similar and different about ancient and modern democracy?

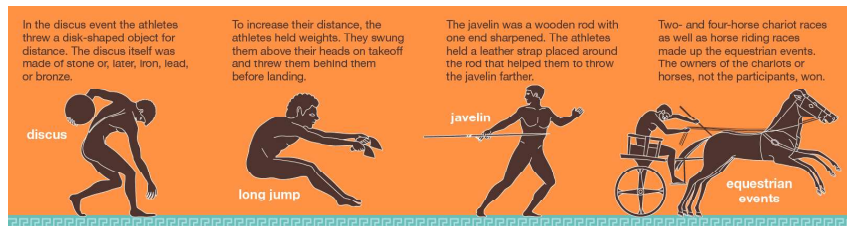


Ancient Greek Olympics

The Olympics began in Ancient Greece. The different city states which made up Greece often fought but during the Olympics, peace was declared and everyone came together to enjoy the games. The games began in 776BC in Olympia. It is believed that the games were a religious event to honour Zeus (the king of the Gods).

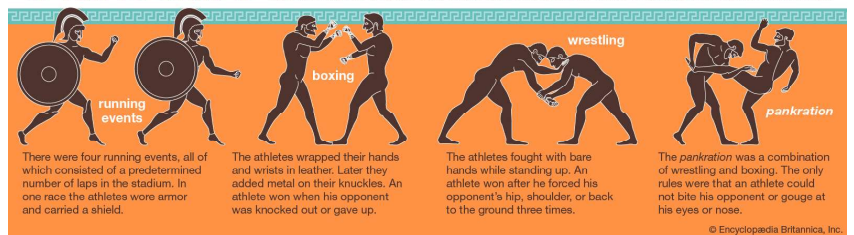
Only men were allowed to take part in the games, and they all competed naked! There were no gold, silver and bronze medals. Winners were given a wreath of leaves and a hero's welcome back home. Athletes competed for the glory of their city and winners were seen as being blessed by the gods.

Only men, boys and unmarried girls were allowed to watch the Olympic Games. Married women were banned. If they were caught sneaking in, they could be thrown off the side of a mountain as punishment! However, women could still own horses in the chariot races at the Olympics and unmarried women had their own festival at Olympia every four years.



ANCIENT OLYMPIC GAMES

The Olympic Games began in Olympia, Greece, in 776 BC and took place every four years until AD 393. They were held in honor of Zeus. At the first Games, athletes competed in only one running event held on a single day. However, over the years other events were added, and the Games eventually were expanded to five days.



THINKING POINT:

Which sports do we still have in modern Olympics?

Which ancient sport would you like to see?



TO UNDERSTAND AND DESCRIBE: THE ELIZABETHAN AGE

To understand and describe the Roman Empire and its impact on Britain:	Democracy	Olympics	Elizabethan Age	Ancient Greek Plays	Shakespeare's plays
	Ancient Greek theatres		Ancient Greek democracy	William Shakespeare	Elizabethan theatre

- Learning links:**
- Enquiry:**
- Y3-6 Science
- Y3-6 History
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 - Technology
 - Leaders
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- Year 5: Anglo-Saxon Britain and the invasion of the Vikings (410AD – 1066AD)**
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The Elizabethan Age

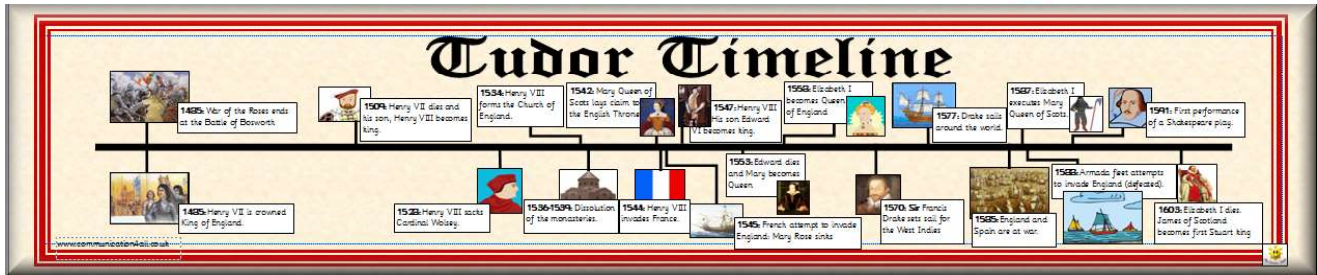
After the death of Henry VIII, (swiftly followed by the death of his son, King Edward and older daughter, Queen Mary) Queen Elizabeth I took the throne. She ruled England for a remarkable 45 years, from 1558-1603. At this time, the ruling monarch held all of the power as there was no elected government. The Queen was advised by the nobles around her, but most people lived very poor lives. Most people still lived in small, one-roomed houses, although richer folk built larger houses and manors in growing city centres such as London. There was no electricity or running water (however rich you were!) and people usually only ate what was grown and farmed in Britain.



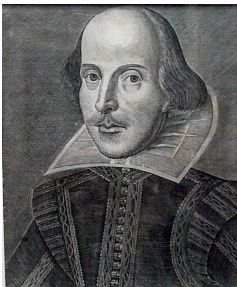
The Tudors

THINKING POINT:

Would you have liked to live during the Elizabethan age?



William Shakespeare



William Shakespeare is thought to have been born on April 23rd 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon, England. Although there are no official records of where William was educated, it is thought he went to school at King's New School in Stratford. On November 28th 1582, at the age of 18, William married Anne Hathaway.

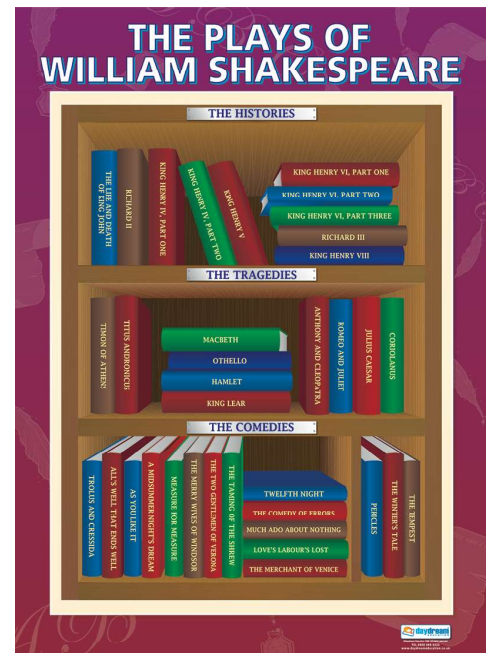
In the mid-1580s, it is thought William arrived in London. When he first arrived in the capital city, some historians believe that he worked as a horse attendant at some of London's theatres. By 1592, he was earning money as an actor and a playwright. The Lord Chamberlain's Men was an acting company that William became a managing partner of. William and his business partners decided to build their own theatre. They built The Globe by the River Thames in London.

Shakespeare wrote heartrending plays, called tragedies, and comedy plays. He acted in several of his plays in front of Queen Elizabeth I. He often included the themes of religion, love and the monarchy in his plays, as well as magic, murder and mystery.

William Shakespeare died on April 23rd 1616, which was the same day as his birthday, at the age of 52.

THINKING POINT:

Why do you think Shakespeare's plays are still enjoyed today?



TO UNDERSTAND AND DESCRIBE: Theatre Then and Now

Theatre: Then and Now

To understand and describe the Roman Empire and its impact on Britain:

Learning links:

Enquiry:

Y3-6 Science

Y3-6 History

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Ancient Greek Theatre

In Ancient Greece, the theatre was a very important aspect of society. Crowds of 15,000 people would gather to see a play. Women could attend the plays, but all the actors were men (even playing the parts of women!).

Part of the reason plays were so important is that originally, plays were performed to honour the god Dionysus. However, over time, many different gods 'got in on the act' especially the 12 Olympians - the major gods of ancient Greece. The Greeks were always weaving the gods into their theatre stories.

Every town had at least one theatre. Large outdoor theatres were built on hillsides to accommodate the large number of people that attended. Theatres were built on hillsides because it allowed the audience to see what was going on in the orchestra pit - the stage area. The entire seating section was called the Theatron, which is the origin of our word *theatre*. Very important visitors would sit in the front seats. The centre was circular with an altar dedicated to the god Dionysus. The stage was raised within the circle - this shape made sure all the audience could see and helped amplify the sound.

Sophocles was the most famous ancient Greek playwright. He wrote 120 plays. However, there were many Greek playwrights because plays were so popular. The audience would throw food and stones if they thought the acting wasn't good enough!

There were three types of plays:

Tragedies: The first type they invented was the tragedy. In tragedies, one or more major characters always suffered a disastrous end.

Comedies: Comedies were invented next. In comedies, plays always had a happy end.

Satires: Satires were plays that made fun of mortal legends and of real people. In ancient Greece, you did not poke fun at the gods - not in a play, not in real life, not ever. But you could poke fun at your leaders - and that was uniquely Greek! Satires in ancient Greece were often political in nature, and could indeed affect people's opinions about current events.

In all the plays, the actors wore masks: bright colours for comedies and dark colours for tragedies. You could see if someone was happy or sad by the shape of their mask.

Shakespearean Theatre

The main features of an Elizabethan theatre

- The theatre was **open** and plays had to be performed in daylight.
- A flag would be flown from the top of the theatre to show a play was going to be performed.
- People sat around the stage in **galleries**.
- The cheapest place was in front of the stage where ordinary people stood. They were known as '**groundlings**'.
- There was very **little scenery** - a character would tell the audience where the scene was set.
- Women's parts were played by **boys**.
- Long speeches gave actors a chance to **change their clothes**.
- There was generally **plenty of violence** in the plays - Tudor audiences loved it.

At the beginning of the 16th century, during the reign of Henry VIII, many plays were based upon religious themes. The main exception to this were the plays put on by wandering groups of actors, known as 'strolling players'. The plays put on by these groups were often far from religious and the authorities tried to ban them.

The themes of plays changed during Elizabeth's reign and English playwrights began to write comedies and tragedies. By the end of her reign, playwrights such as Marlowe, Johnson and Shakespeare were writing the plays for which they are now famous.

As the watching of plays became more popular, theatres were built like The Globe instead of using the courtyards of inns.

Many Elizabethans, including Queen Elizabeth, enjoyed going to the theatre as it provided good entertainment, an escape from their everyday lives and the chance to socialise and catch up on the latest news. Many nobles attended the theatre and the showing of a new play became a social event.

The Globe

In 1599 the Globe Theatre was built in London, England, for the acting company of William Shakespeare. The theatre became famous because Shakespeare's plays were put on there.

The Globe was a 20-sided structure, as close to a circle as Elizabethan carpentry could make it. The stage was a platform that stuck out into a central yard. The stage was covered by a roof, which protected the actors and their expensive costumes from the rain. Through a trapdoor in the roof, actors playing gods could be lowered by crane to the main stage. On the roof were a flag (flown when a play was to be performed) and facilities for shooting a cannon. The Globe Theatre could hold an audience of about 3,000 people. Around 1,000 people could stand in the central yard (or pit) around the stage to watch the play. There were also three levels of seating on wooden benches in the theatre's galleries. A few rooms were reserved for the richest on the stage balcony itself. The yard had no roof; when it rained, the audience in the yard could pay more to take shelter in the lowest gallery. The plays were staged in the afternoons, using the light of day.

In 1613 the Globe Theatre burned to the ground. The company members contributed large sums of money to rebuild the Globe Theatre more splendidly than before. It reopened in 1614.

When the English Civil War broke out in 1642, the Puritans, who were against all forms of entertainment, closed all of England's theatres. The Globe Theatre was pulled down two years later to make way for housing. It was rebuilt and opened again in 1997. Plays by Shakespeare and other writers are presented there.



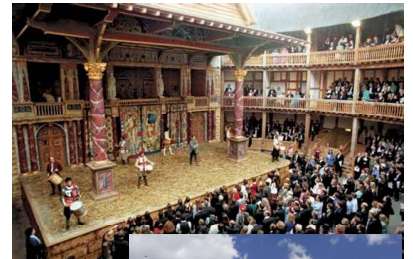
THINKING POINT:

What similarities and differences can you see compared to theatre today?



THINKING POINT:

What do you think it would have been like to watch a play at The Globe?



EXS:

Identify 2 similarities and 2 differences between modern theatre and either Greek or Shakespearean theatre. Why do you think these things have changed/stayed the same?

GDS:

What is something that has stayed the same all the way through the development of theatre, from the Greeks to today? Explain how you know this has stayed the same using evidence from the time period.