

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Your NET has asked you to read an essay about the influence of William Shakespeare's works. Read the essay.

Text 1 Essay

# The enduring influence of William Shakespeare



① William Shakespeare is generally regarded as the greatest English language writer of all time. His numerous plays and poems, written in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, have endured for hundreds of years. Every year, theatre companies host festivals dedicated to the performance of Shakespeare's great works. No other playwright in history has had this level of influence. Shakespeare's famous storylines and delightful phrases have become so ingrained in the English language that we often do not even consider their origin. But a close examination reveals that we owe much more to this great writer than we realize.

② Shakespeare was the master of word play. He coined countless words and phrases that have become part of our popular speech. Many of today's common expressions are actually Shakespearean creations. In the comedy *The Taming of the Shrew*, we find the first ever reference of the everyday phrases 'break the ice' and 'kill with kindness'. In the tragedy *Hamlet*, Shakespeare gives us the expressions 'in my heart of hearts' and 'in my mind's eye'. *Romeo and Juliet* features the first use of the phrase 'wild goose chase', and *The Merchant of Venice* introduces the world to the classic saying 'love is blind'. The list goes on and on. The Bard of Avon, as Shakespeare is often referred to, had a truly magnificent ability to manipulate language.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

③ However, it is not just Shakespeare's ingenious use of language that has endured through the ages. It is also his classic storylines, which appear over and over in books, television shows and films. Adaptations of Shakespeare's stories appear in all kinds of unexpected places. The Disney blockbuster *The Lion King*, for example, is actually based on Shakespeare's play *Hamlet*. Both stories centre on a young prince (Simba in *The Lion King* and the title character in *Hamlet*), whose father, the king, is murdered. Saddened by the death, the young prince seeks to find out who is responsible. In both cases, the murderer is the king's own brother who wants the throne for himself. Seeking to restore order to the kingdom, the young prince exposes the murderer.

④ Shakespeare's influence is also found in the famous musical *West Side Story*, which is directly inspired by the love story of *Romeo and Juliet*. Written by Shakespeare in the 1590s, *Romeo and Juliet* tells the story of two young lovers born into rival families. Their forbidden love wreaks havoc on both of their families. *West Side Story* adapts this story to the streets of New York City in the twentieth century. The musical features two rival gangs, the Jets and the Sharks. When a member of the Jets falls in love with a member of the Sharks, tragic problems arise.

⑤ The lasting impact of Shakespeare's works is hard to overstate. His plays continue to be performed on stages all over the world. Film adaptations continue to be made—it seems like every few years a new version of a Shakespearean play lights up the screens of film houses. The bard's ability to play with language and his illuminating insights into human emotions have made this writer an enduring treasure.



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**Comprehension 1** Your NET wants to know if you understand how Shakespeare influenced the English language. Answer his questions using information from the essay. For multiple-choice questions, choose the best answer and blacken ONE circle only.

- 1 As a writer, what TWO kinds of writing did Shakespeare produce?

i) \_\_\_\_\_

ii) \_\_\_\_\_

- 2 Find a word in paragraph 1 that could be replaced with 'lasted'.

\_\_\_\_\_

- 3 According to paragraph 1, which of the following is NOT a piece of evidence that shows Shakespeare is the 'greatest English language writer of all time' (lines 1 & 2).

- ☐ A His works have endured for hundreds of years.
- ☐ B His storylines and phrases have become part of the English language.
- ☐ C Festivals are held to celebrate Shakespeare's works.
- ☐ D Theatre companies earn a lot from Shakespeare's plays.

- 4 Why does the writer think that Shakespeare is a 'master of word play' (line 9)?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- 5 What does the expression 'coin the phrase' mean?

\_\_\_\_\_

- 6 Which of the following phrases appear in the play *The Taming of the Shrew*? Tick (✓) the boxes that apply.

'love is blind' ☐

'break the ice' ☐

'wild goose chase' ☐

'kill with kindness' ☐

- 7 According to paragraph 2, by what other name is William Shakespeare often referred to?

\_\_\_\_\_

- 8 What does 'whose' refer to in line 29?

\_\_\_\_\_

- 9 According to paragraph 3, are the following statements **True (T)**, **False (F)** or **Not Given (NG)**? Write the letter(s) in the boxes.

**Statements**

i) Shakespeare's storylines have only been adapted into films. ☐

ii) The writer is a fan of *The Lion King*. ☐

iii) Hamlet's father is murdered. ☐

- 10 Which of the following is the theme of *Hamlet* and *The Lion King*?

☐ A survival ☐ C revenge

☐ B isolation ☐ D hope

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11 Why is the love between Romeo and Juliet forbidden?

- A They are from different classes.      C They are from rival families.      A B C D
- B They are from different countries.      D They are not the same age.      O O O O

12 Which of the following statements are facts? Which of them are opinions? Put a tick (✓) in the correct boxes.

Statements	Fact	Opinion
i) Shakespeare inspired many phrases that we use in English.		
ii) Shakespeare is the greatest English writer of all time.		
iii) The best Shakespearean play is <i>Hamlet</i> .		
iv) Many famous plays and films are based on Shakespeare's works.		
v) Festivals are held to celebrate Shakespeare's great works.		

13 What is the purpose of the essay?

- A to examine Shakespeare's lasting impact
- B to introduce Shakespeare's most famous works
- C to identify the films inspired by Shakespeare      A B C D
- D to describe Shakespeare's life      O O O O

14 Complete the following paragraph using information from the essay. Use ONE word to complete each blank. Make sure the words are grammatically correct.

William Shakespeare might be the most influential (i) \_\_\_\_\_ language writer in history. His many (ii) \_\_\_\_\_, written hundreds of years ago, continue to be staged today. He was able to (iii) \_\_\_\_\_ phrases that became part of our everyday speech. He also created classic (iv) \_\_\_\_\_ that have been (v) \_\_\_\_\_ over and over again in books and films.

15 Complete the sentences using the correct form of the words from Text 1.

- i) Having respect for and obeying one's parents and elders is deeply \_\_\_\_\_ in Chinese culture. (paragraph 1)
- ii) Skilled magicians know how to \_\_\_\_\_ the audience and play mind games to make them believe the impossible. (paragraph 2)
- iii) The car crash was a/an \_\_\_\_\_ accident that left many injured. (paragraph 4)
- iv) His talk was extremely \_\_\_\_\_ as it contained helpful advice that most people could act on in everyday life. (paragraph 5)