

Shakespeare's First Folio (B2)

A – Before you start

Answer the questions with a partner.

1. What do you know about William Shakespeare?
2. Which of his plays are best-known in your country?
3. Have you read any of them?
4. Have you seen any performances of his plays at the theatre, at the cinema, or on TV?

B – Listen and answer

Read these statements. Then listen (without reading) and write T (true) or F (false).

1. The first book containing Shakespeare's plays appeared two years after his death.
2. The volume had been prepared by two of his colleagues.
3. Very few copies of Shakespeare's plays written in his own handwriting still exist today.
4. The printer made 500 copies of the book, which went on sale at three different prices.
5. Most of the copies still in existence are in Britain.
6. In 2020, a rare book dealer paid nearly \$10 million dollars for a copy.
7. The text is not identical in all copies.
8. Many of the volumes have notes and drawings made in the past by their owners.

C – Read and answer

Read the article and answer the questions.

1. Why did Shakespeare's colleagues decide to publish a collection of his plays?
2. What did they use to prepare the collection?
3. What would have happened to half of Shakespeare's plays if the folio had not been produced?
4. Why is the First Folio considered to be such an important book?
5. What did Martin Droeshout produce for the volume?
6. Why were some copies sold at a lower price than others?
7. Why is the text of each copy unique?
8. What unintentional marks are there on some of the copies?

D – Learn it! Use it!

Complete these sentences with words from the glossary. (You may have to adapt the expression in some way; e.g. change the verb tense, or change from singular to plural.)

1. Unfortunately, I didn't pass the written test. I made several _____ mistakes.
2. That _____ middle-aged man in the photograph can't be Luke. Luke's only 25.
3. Once you could be sent to a debtors prison if you _____ money and couldn't pay it.
4. There's no bookshop in the village, but there are two _____ in the market on Saturdays.
5. Vincent Van Gogh was an artist who never achieved _____ during his lifetime.
6. Some psychologists say drawing pictures and _____ while listening helps you to concentrate.

E – Ready for the B2 FIRST Certificate in English? (Reading and Use of English, Part 2)

Read the text and think of the word which best fits each gap. Use only one word for each gap.

Although ¹_____ of Shakespeare's notes or handwritten copies of his own plays have ever been ²_____, some documents exist which have his signature on them. There are also three manuscript pages of a play by other playwrights that many experts ³_____ were written by Shakespeare. The play is entitled *The Book of Sir Thomas Moore*, and is thought to have ⁴_____ written by Anthony Munday and Henry Chettle and revised at a later date by a ⁵_____ other writers, including Shakespeare. The play was probably never ⁶_____ during the lifetime of its authors as the playscript was disliked by the Elizabethan censor. It was not ⁷_____ 1871 that scholars recognised Shakespeare's style in one of the scenes and found that the ⁸_____ was similar to his signatures. The three pages can be viewed online on the British Library's Digitised Manuscripts website.

F – Write about it

Write about a famous playwright – living or dead – from your country. Include:

- some biographical information;
- the kinds of plays written by this playwright;
- his/her most famous works;
- where they have been performed; (theatre/TV/cinema)
- famous actors who have performed in them.

Answers

B – Listen and answer

1. F – It appeared seven years after his death. 2. T 3. F – None of them have survived. 4. F – The printer made 750 copies, which went on sale at two different prices. 5. F – Most are in the US. 6. T 7. T 8. T

C – Read and answer

1. Because they didn't want his art to die with him. 2. They used Shakespeare's own manuscripts, theatre prompt copies and old small quarto editions. 3. They would have been lost. 4. Because of the profound effect it has had on the language and culture in English-speaking countries. 5. He produced the portrait of Shakespeare which appears on the frontispiece. 6. Because the cheaper copies were unbound. 7. Because corrections were made while printing and there were also errors made by a careless apprentice at the printing shop. 8. On some copies there are marks made by the owners' pets.

D – Learn it! Use it!

1. careless 2. balding 3. owed 4. bookstalls 5. renown 6. doodles

E – Ready for the B2 FIRST Certificate in English?

1. none 2. found/discovered 3. think/believe/claim 4. been 5. few 6. performed
7. until/till 8. handwriting/writing/hand