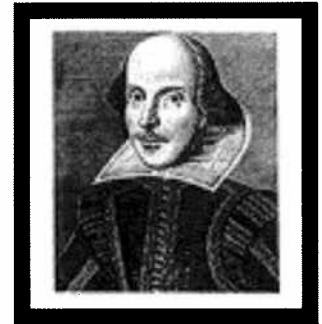


BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR SHAKESPEARE'S ROMEO AND JULIET



- Shakespeare is known as the greatest *playwright* in English Literature.
- Shakespeare wrote thirty-seven (37) different plays.
- Shakespeare's three (3) main kinds of plays were...
 - Comedies: romantic fantasies designed to amuse the audience*
 - Tragedies: plays which deal with death, morality, and destruction and usually end in disaster*
 - Histories: plays which teach moral lessons through the crimes and negative actions of leaders and kings*
- Romeo and Juliet is a tragedy.
- Most plays were performed at the Globe Theatre in the London suburb called Southwark.
- Shakespeare's plays are characterized by...
 - having elaborate costumes*
 - having almost no scenery (he used vivid imagery)*
 - having plays which moved very quickly*
 - having no women actors (these roles were played by young boys whose voices hadn't yet changed)*

- Specific Shakespearean vocabulary...

Soliloquy: an actor is alone on stage revealing inner thoughts and feelings

Aside: an actor speaks words that other characters on stage are not supposed to hear

- Much of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet was written in *Blank Verse*. Each line contains five feet. Each foot has first an unstressed (~) syllable, and then a stressed (') syllable. Check out the example below...

WHO LIKE/ A GOOD/ AND HAR/ DY SOL/ DIER FOUGHT

↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑

foot #1 foot #2 foot #3 foot #4 foot #5