

William Shakespeare 1564-1616

- A. Considered the world's greatest dramatist
 - 1. Characters are real, vivid, and unique
 - a. great number
 - b. variety
 - c. many memorable
 - 2. Wide knowledge of variety of subjects
 - 3. Mastery of English language
 - a. real – fits characters and situations
 - b. much quoted
 - c. invented many words
 - d. coined phrases – now a part of language
 - 4. Great poet – blank verse
- B. His dramas
 - 1. Plots not original (not unusual for the time)
 - 2. Form not original – didn't invent new type
 - 3. Wrote popularly
 - a. to please common people
 - b. to please royalty
 - 4. Periods of development
 - a. 1592-1595 – experimentation, editing others
 - b. to 1601 – mainly comedies and histories
 - c. to 1608 – most mature work; greatest tragedies
 - d. to 1613 – still master, less intense
 - e. to 1616 (death) – retired, returned home
- C. Types of plays
 - 1. Histories – chronicle plays, accurate and popular
 - 2. Tragedies – influenced modern tragedy form
 - 3. Comedies – varied from light farces to tragic comedies