Homework:

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Why we still study texts written a long time ago?

to get information about the nature of human beings;
to understand better the present;
to know about our culture;

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1. Why is Shakespeare so central to studying English culture? William Shakespeare has a central position in English culture because his plays are the greatest literary texts and he is the best teacher of values.
2. Can you provide some examples of Shakespeare’s influence in everyday British life? Shakespeare is quoted in daily newspapers, advertising and there are many films about his plays. Indeed, the English language is full of Shakespeare’s phrases.
3. What are the traditional arguments for studying Shakespeare’s works? Shakespeare’s friend, Ben Jonson, wrote that he “is not of an age, but for all time”. Such statement might be the motto of the traditionalists’ argument for studying Shakespeare’s works. Indeed people believes that Shakespeare’s plays are immortal.
4. What are some of the ideas about how to approach Shakespeare’s works? The new ideas about how to approach Shakespeare’s works are provided by the cultural materialists, critics and thinkers who are mainly interested in the way material factors - like economic conditions and political struggles - have influenced or created a text. They think that the time and place in which works were written and are being read are vitally important.

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I think that Dante has a keep position inside Italian culture and it is important to study his works, in particular La Divina Commedia. Such work provides information about the ideology, world view and culture in the XIVth century.

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Family:
John Shakespeare: William’s father

Mary Shakespeare: William’s mother
William Shakespere was the eldest son and got eight brothers
Anne Hathaway: William’s wife

Education:
He attended the local grammar school; he learnt about the use of language and classical authors.

Experiences:
In 1584 he moved to London; he first experienced the playhouse
In 1593 he worked for the Earl of Southampton
In 1599 his company built the Globe Theatre

First works: between 1590 and 1596 he wrote historical dramas

Later works: between 1593 and 1600 he put ten comedies onto the stage, ranging from farce to romance. He wrote the greatest tragedies between 1595 and 1605.

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I think London was a city of spectacle in the 16th century. There were many different buildings connected together by narrow roads. Indeed, London was a place of great crossroads; it was crowded and filthy.

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1) In the 16th century, London had spread

c. north of the Thames

2) Evidence of the traditional trades can still be seen

1. street names

3)What was the Londoners’ attitude towards the theatre at that time?

 a. it was considered a privilege of the rich

4) Elizabethan theatre were situated

1. along the south bank of the river

5) Boy companies at Shakespeare’s time

a. were more successful than adult companies

6) Why was London such a dreadful place to live in at that time?

1. because it was particularly unhealthy

7) Why were the London acting companies unwelcome in other towns?

1. because they might be carrying disease

8) Overall, London in the 16th century could be considered

 b. unhealthy and overcrowded

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Queen Elizabeth I loved watching plays, but these were generally performed in indoor playhouses for her pleasure. She would not have attended the plays performed at the playhouses such as the Globe.
The upper-class nobles would have paid for the better seats in the “Lord’s rooms” paying 5p for the privilege.
The “groundlings” were the standing members of the audience. For one penny, which was the price of a loaf of bread, they could stand in the open yard.
They used to put the money in a box at the theatre entrance, hence the term “box office”. The gentry would pay to sit in the galleries, often using cushions for comfort. Rich nobles could watch the play on a chair set on the side of the stage itself. The crowd of spectators ate and drank during the performance and freely expressed their emotions. They loved metaphor and extremes and felt deeply moved by long speeches and soliloquies. Horror, macabre scenes and revenge tragedies were most popular, as famous as history plays where heroic deeds, battles and weapons evoked strong feelings.
People used to applaud any notable event during the play, but it was only at the end that they could be really noisy. There was often a “jig”, a comic song and dance story, and the company would announce the next play in the repertoire. The audience would show their approval or disapproval of the choice by calling, whistling and even throwing things.