Websites for the Study of Shakespeare

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A. Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Original Texts

The Bodleian First Folio

https://firstfolio.bodleian.ox.ac.uk

On this website you can read a digital facsimile of a First Folio of Shakespeare's plays held by the Bodleian Library, Oxford University (UK). What is the First Folio? In 1623, members of Shakespeare's acting company published thirty-six of Shakespeare's plays in a book titled *Mr. William Shakespeare's Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies*, commonly referred to today simply as "The First Folio." A "folio" is a large book composed of sheets of paper folded only once. The folio format was most often used in Shakespeare's time for prestigious writers' collected "works" or for important philosophical, theological, or political treatises. The 1623 edition of Shakespeare's plays is called the "First Folio" because it is the first of four seventeenth-century editions of that text. Two hundred thirty-five First Folios are known to survive. Some noteworthy features of the First Folio are the dedicatory poems and the "Catalogue" of plays that divides them into comedies, histories, and tragedies.

English Broadside Ballad Archive [EBBA]

https://ebba.english.ucsb.edu

Developed by Patricia Fumerton at the University of California at Santa Barbara, this public database contains over 9,000 searchable ballads (short narrative poems set to music, for a popular audience) from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. If you are looking for a specific ballad (perhaps one alluded to by Shakespeare!) you can search by ballad title, tune title, or even woodcut image. A fantastic feature is the keyword search, which will identify ballads by category such as "animals," "family," "holidays," "London," "mythology," "race/ethnicity," "royalty," "sex/sexuality," "travel," "vulgar humor," and many more. Ballads on these topics can be taught alongside Shakespeare's treatment of similar issues in his plays.

B. Shakespeare's Works—Texts and Performance

The Complete Works of William Shakespeare

http://shakespeare.mit.edu

This site offers modernized public domain editions of all of Shakespeare's works, which are categorized as "Comedy," "History," "Tragedy," and "Poetry." There are no glosses or explanatory notes, however, which might make comprehension more challenging for less experienced readers.

The Folger Shakespeare

https://shakespeare.folger.edu

This site provides free on-line versions of the Folger Shakespeare editions of Shakespeare's plays and poems. There are no glosses or explanatory notes, however, which might make comprehension more challenging for less experienced readers.

Internet Shakespeare Editions

https://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca

This site provides various open-access Shakespeare resources, including old-spelling and modernized editions of plays, materials from over 1,000 film and stage productions, and scholarly essays on theater, society, politics, art, literature and music in Shakespeare's England. For instance, the *Measure for Measure* page provides digital copies of the First Folio edition of the play; essays on "sex and morality," "crime and punishment," and "religious orders"; information about modern stage performances from around the world; and performance materials such as costume design artifacts, production photographs, and theater programs.

MIT Global Shakespeares Video and Performance Archive

https://globalshakespeares.mit.edu

Directed and edited by Peter Donaldson at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, this database provides access to several hundred performances of Shakespeare from all

over the world. For instance, twenty-six films, stage productions, and adaptations of *Othello* are available, including ones from Cyprus, Spain, Mexico, Brazil, Egypt, and India.

Shakespeare in Quarto

https://www.bl.uk/treasures/shakespeare/homepage.html

Unlike a large, expensive, folio text, a quarto was a smaller, cheaper format of book printed on sheets of paper that were folded four times (hence "quarto"). Curated by the British Library, this site offers free access to the 21 plays by Shakespeare that were printed in quarto format between 1594 and 1642. Plays are presented in facsimile and can be viewed one at a time or through side-by-side comparison.

Shakespeare's Globe

https://www.shakespearesglobe.com/learn/research-and-collections/archive-collections

This site provides free access to the performing arts archive of the Globe Theater in London, including the Performance Archive (documenting performances at the Globe), the Moving Image and Audio Archive, and the Library Collections (featuring scholarly publications and rare books).

C. Research Tools: Shakespeare's Life, Writing, and Culture

Folger Shakespeare Library

https://www.folger.edu/online-resources

The Folger makes several databases available to the public. Shakespeare Documented offers the largest collection of primary source materials relating to Shakespeare's life. The Digital Image Collection (or LUNA) provides access to over 100,000 images from the Library's collections, including books, theater memorabilia, manuscripts, and art.

Early English Books Online [EEBO]

https://www.english-corpora.org/eebo

This website is for highly targeted research into the language of Shakespeare and his contemporaries. It provides an open source version of over 25,000 searchable texts first

published from the 1470s through the 1690s. To use the site, you must first register (for free). You can perform various searches, such as *word frequency* in different decades; *collocates* (words that commonly appear next to each other); and *concordance lines* (the phrases and patterns in which a word appears).

JSTOR Understanding Shakespeare

https://www.jstor.org/understand/shakespeare

This site provides complete texts of Shakespeare's plays, with individual passages linked to scholarly articles and book chapters that discuss that passage. For instance, the first line of *Much Ado About Nothing*, which mentions Don Pedro of Aragon's visit to Messina, is linked to an article called "Spanish Rulers and Slandered Women: Sicily on the Early Modern Stage." If your school or library subscribes to the JSTOR [short for "journal storage"] digital library, you can download complete articles.

OpenSourceShakespeare Concordance

http://www.opensourceshakespeare.org/concordance

This searchable concordance of Shakespeare's complete works allows you to search for any word either in full or in part form. For instance, a search for "natur" in *Othello* yields 22 instances from the play of the words "nature," "Nature," "natures," "natural," and "unnatural." Search results are broken down by play or poem and present the word in the context of the passage in which it appears, along with line citations.

Oxford English Dictionary

https://www.oed.com

With a subscription at a school or public library, you can look up any word in the English language and see how its meanings have changed with time, along with representative quotations (often from Shakespeare!). See "How to Use the *OED*."

Shakespeare's Words

https://www.shakespeareswords.com

Ben and David Crystal's site provides a glossary of all the words in Shakespeare's texts that have since changed their meaning (or no longer exist) in modern English. You can search for individual words or refer to definitions of words that are highlighted in the provided texts of each of Shakespeare's works. An audio option lets you hear how these words are pronounced, both in early modern and modern English. The site also includes a thesaurus and a database of word families (e.g., "majestic" / "majestical" / "majestically" / "majesty").

World Shakespeare Bibliography

www.worldshakesbib.org

Available by subscription, the World Shakespeare Bibliography is a searchable database of Shakespeare-related publications and performances worldwide since 1960.