

# Foreword

## About The English Experience

*The English Experience is an independent South African publishing house that specialises in developing high-quality English and Life Orientation educational resources for IEB educators and students. The team of passionate, talented experts behind The English Experience works tirelessly to ensure that every resource encourages insight, growth and debate — enriching and challenging both educators and students — without losing sight of the important goal of examination readiness and success.*

Focused on bringing the subject to life, every resource The English Experience publishes incorporates a range of features — including content and contextual questions and stimulating enrichment materials — designed to encourage a critical appreciation of the subject and to inspire the higher order thinking for which examiners are always looking.

The world-class English Experience team includes highly experienced educators, some with over 25 years of classroom experience, passionate literary experts in various fields, such as South African fiction, poetry and Shakespeare, fanatical historians and researchers, creative writers, skilled editors, pernickety proofreaders and obsessive fact checkers — together with spirited university lecturers and enthusiastic young minds who help to ensure our approach remains unique and fresh.

While examination readiness and success is a non-negotiable, our aspiration is to inspire a genuine interest in, and love of, English literature.



Visit [www.englishexperience.co.za](http://www.englishexperience.co.za) to learn more about The English Experience and the range of educational resources the company publishes. You can scan this QR code to launch the site on your phone automatically. Please note, you will need to have the free 'Tag reader' app installed, which you can download from <http://gettag.mobi>

## Our approach to Shakespeare

*The toughest challenge with Shakespeare can be overcoming the preconceived ideas many students have about how dull and tedious he is to study. Making sense of the language in which the plays are written can be hard going for learners so it's perhaps not surprising that many of them find studying Shakespeare an alienating experience and consider his plays to be works through which they have to slog to pass an examination.*

This resource has been written with this reality in mind and particular attention has been paid to breathing new life into Shakespeare and his world. Not only have we worked hard to make sure the content in this resource is fresh and engaging, we have also divided it into accessible, digestible sections and included numerous quirky, interesting and fun facts.

We have endeavoured to make both the man and his play as accessible and entertaining as possible. We start with the man, exploring his extraordinary life and achievements, and then put these into context by bringing the dirty, dangerous and vibrant world of Elizabethan England to life.

Having armed students with an understanding and appreciation of Shakespeare's intentions and world, we tackle the play. Again, we do so with one goal in mind at every step: to make it as accessible and entertaining as possible for modern Matric learners, while remaining academically sound and accurate.

We start by providing students with detailed historical and literary backgrounds, helping them to understand the places, events, literary genres and conventions on which the play is based. The play is also presented as a short story to help students grasp the plot, before we tackle the characters, themes and structure in detail.

We have not only worked very closely with the text of the play, adjusting punctuation and spelling and providing explanatory annotations to help students grasp its meaning, we have also incorporated act-based learning into the structure of the resource as we believe that working through the play act by act ensures that a solid foundation of knowledge is laid. Students can then build on this foundation methodically and effectively, only dealing with the whole play once they have worked through it scene by scene.

In the end, we have approached Shakespeare in the same way we approach every author and text: with two, interrelated goals in mind. The first, non-negotiable, objective is to ensure examination readiness and success, and the second is to inspire a genuine interest in, and appreciation of, the work being studied.

## Using this resource

*This comprehensive resource includes: the full text of the play; an extensive introduction to Shakespeare and the Elizabethan era; a guide to Shakespearean language; detailed historical and literary backgrounds; accessible summaries; rich literary analyses; diverse content-related short questions and mini essay questions (act-specific and general), together with challenging enrichment tasks. In short, everything needed to study the play intensively and bring the text to life.*

## Preparing with the right mindset

We recommend working through the **Introduction to Shakespeare** section first (even before watching a live/recorded performance) so that students become familiar with the man himself, Elizabethan England and the theatre for which he wrote. Some learners might have preconceived ideas about Shakespeare and even a block about studying him. This resource has been written with such students in mind and particular attention has been paid to breathing new life into Shakespeare and his world.

To complete the introduction to the playwright, learners should work through the **Shakespearean language** and **Background to the play** sections next. These will deepen the understanding the learners have of the play — the characters, themes and plot — before they tackle the text itself. By working through the comprehensive introductory section first, students will be prepared, engaged and able to approach the play with the right mindset.

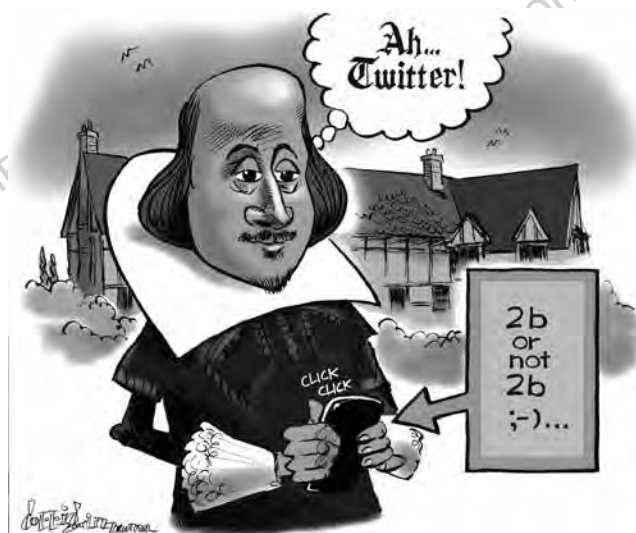
## Tackling the text

Once students have been introduced to Shakespeare and his play, prepare them for working with the actual text by arranging for them to **watch it being performed**. Attending a live performance is often the most effective approach, though not always possible. If it is not, then watching one of the recent film versions of the play, such as Ralph Fiennes's bloodthirsty contemporary adaptation, is a more than adequate substitute.

With the students properly prepared and primed, it is time to **read through the play**. This can be done either act by act or in its entirety. The version of the play included in this resource also features relevant annotations to help students understand the meaning and nuances of the text.

Once students have read through the play, work through the act-based **Summaries and Analyses** section. Working through the play act by act ensures that a solid foundation of knowledge is laid and then built on gradually and effectively. Students are not required to deal with the whole play until they have assimilated it scene by scene.

Every act is broken down into its constituent scenes, each of which is summarised and analysed separately. Students are required to engage with each scene through scene-specific questions. At the end of each act, there are also act-specific essay questions and a series of enrichment tasks (marking rubrics are provided on the companion CD).



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## Ensuring examination readiness and success

To ensure examination readiness and success, the resource also features extensive information regarding the **Mini Essay**. This section provides guidelines on writing mini essays, two annotated examples from which to learn, and a wide selection of rigorous essay topics. It also includes suggestions on how to prepare for the final examination.

We hope you enjoy using this resource as much as we enjoyed putting it together. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact us.

**KEY TO USING THE BOXES IN THIS RESOURCE:****Definition or Glossary**

Provides the meanings of words and/or terms that have been used

**Information**

Provides additional details or facts about a topic

**Alert**

Something to which you need to pay attention

**Quirky Fact**

Fun, interesting, extraneous information

**Checklist**

A list of items or activities required to complete a task satisfactorily