

Shakespeare Authorship Short Lesson Plan

Homework in advance of the class discussion.

1. Google "[Shakespeare Authorship 101](#)." You should land on a website run by the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship. Read "12 Reasons to Question Who Wrote Shakespeare" and "Meet Edward de Vere (Oxford), the real Shakespeare." As you read, make a bullet point list of **claims** and **assertions** that you find compelling, interesting, doubtful, convincing, or unconvincing, and label them as such.
2. Google "[Yes, Shakespeare Really Did Write Shakespeare](#)." You should land on an article in Forbes magazine by Alex Knapp. Make a bullet point list of **claims** and **assertions** that you find compelling, interesting, doubtful, convincing, or unconvincing in this article, and label them as such.
3. **All students:**
 - a. If you have less than **15 bullet points** by the end of your reading, please dig back in and find some more.
 - b. Choose **any two assertions** made in the articles you read, and research them in at least one other place. You will get a round of applause in class for finding any assertion which is false, or *not grounded in evidence.
 - c. Refer to William Shakespeare as the author of the plays and poems, and William Shaksper (pronounced Shax-per) as the man from Stratford. Be ready to make this distinction in pronunciation in our class discussion to be clear about which person you are referencing.

**(For example, in the Knapp article, he contends that William of Stratford "was educated at a free school." In fact, research shows there is no evidence that Shaksper of Stratford received any education at all, or that he was even literate. People believe that if William of Stratford wrote the plays, he must have had an education, so he would have gone to the Stratford Grammar School. No record of his attendance exists, and so this is a logical fallacy called begging the question, a circular argument wherein the conclusion is part of the premise. And no, you can't use this example as one of your assertions.)*

Procedure:

1. Check student's homework (15 bullet points at least, two researched)
2. Start with class discussing assertions made in "A Dozen Reasons to Doubt"
3. Discuss assertions made in "Edward De Vere (Oxford): The True Author?"
4. Discuss those in Knapp article "Shakespeare wrote Shakespeare"

General discussion –

- a. Does anyone feel convinced about who wrote the plays?
- b. Has anyone begun to doubt the traditional biography of William of Stratford?
- c. Does anyone suspect that De Vere is the true author?
- d. Which assertions made in class are most compelling? Doubtful?
- e. Any false assertions, or those made without evidence?

Class Discussion Rubric: Research and Participation on Shakespeare Authorship Debate

Criteria	5 - A (Excellent)	4 - B (Good)	3 - C (Satisfactory)	2 - D (Needs Improvement)	1 - F (Unsatisfactory)
Research Preparation	Provides 15+ detailed bullet points including at least 2 well-researched, accurate assertions fully relevant to the topic.	Provides 15 bullet points with at least 2 researched points, mostly relevant and accurate.	Provides 15 bullet points with some researched points, but some lack clarity or relevance.	Provides fewer than 15 bullet points or research is minimal/inaccurate.	Provides minimal bullet points and no evidence of research.
Use of Evidence	Consistently uses evidence to support assertions; references "A Dozen Reasons to Doubt," De Vere article, and Knapp article effectively.	Uses evidence from most sources; some assertions supported by relevant evidence.	Uses evidence from some sources but with limited support or some inaccuracies.	Rarely uses evidence; assertions mostly unsupported or inaccurate.	No use of evidence; assertions are unsupported or off-topic.
Contributes to Discussion	Actively contributes insightful ideas, asks questions, and engages respectfully with peers throughout discussion.	Contributes ideas and responds to peers with relevant comments most of the time.	Participates in discussion but contributions are limited or occasionally off-topic.	Participates minimally and rarely adds relevant ideas or responds to peers.	Does not participate or disrupts discussion.
Understands Content	Demonstrates a deep understanding of the authorship debate, clearly distinguishes credible vs doubtful assertions.	Shows good understanding with minor confusion about assertions or evidence.	Demonstrates basic understanding, some misconceptions about key points.	Shows limited understanding and confusion about major assertions or evidence.	Shows no understanding of the topic or misconceptions dominate.
Critical Thinking	Critically evaluates assertions, identifies false or unsupported claims, and articulates thoughtful opinions.	Identifies some unsupported claims and expresses reasoned opinions.	Recognizes some assertions but rarely questions or critically analyzes them.	Struggles to identify unsupported claims or articulate opinions.	Does not demonstrate critical thinking or accepts claims without question.