

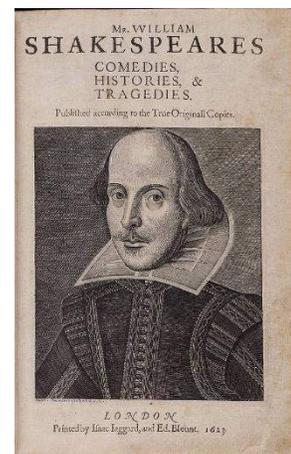
# The Shakespeare Authorship Inquiry

In this unit, we will develop several skills. First, you will need to research carefully. Second, you will need to be able to tell facts apart from speculation, historical evidence from guesses and supposition. Third, you will need to be able to evaluate an argument: is it doubtful or does it seem possible? The **Shakespeare Authorship Question** (SAQ) is fiercely debated online and in academic circles, and this is a study of the controversy.

**Directions:** research the topic you are assigned. Read over all the topics first, to be sure you won't be duplicating another person's work. Keep track of your sources as you go; you will need to check the credibility of your source. Your assessment will be a **presentation** to the class explaining your findings. Each bullet point below is a topic for research - use the links provided plus at least one or two others.

## Topic: Shakspere is Shakespeare

- ❖ [The facts we know from the historical record](#) about the life of William Shakspere of Stratford. (I use the spelling "Shakspere" as it is the name on his legal documents.)
  - Make sure these are facts, not speculation. (eg. It is said he attended Stratford Grammar School, but there is no evidence, so it's not a fact. Be careful!)
- ❖ [Reasons people believe he wrote the works](#)
  - What is the argument and the evidence that the man from Stratford wrote plays and poems?
- ❖ [Reasons people doubt he wrote the works](#)
  - What is the argument and the evidence that William of Stratford was not the author?
- ❖ Shakspere's signatures, the Droeshout engraving, the Stratford monument – what are the controversies over each?
  - William Shakspere left behind nothing in his own [handwriting but six signatures](#).
  - [The Droeshout portrait](#) on the first folio is the most famous image of Shakespeare. Why do some claim it is a mask, or that the doublet has two left arms?
  - [The funeral monument](#) in Trinity Church, Stratford, shows a writer, but an earlier sketch of the monument by William Dugdale shows Shakspere holding a sack of grain. How is this significant?



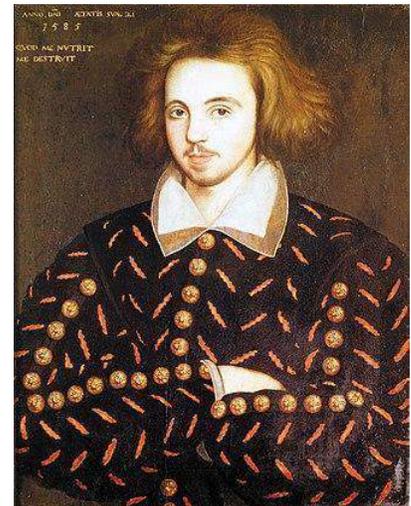
## Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, is Shakespeare

- ❖ [The facts we know from the historical record](#)
  - What facts do we know about the life of Edward de Vere, 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford?
- ❖ [Reasons people believe he wrote the works](#)
  - What is the argument and evidence that the Earl of Oxford wrote the plays and poems?
- ❖ [Reasons people doubt he wrote the works](#)
  - What is the argument and the evidence that Oxford was not the author?
- ❖ [Connections between Oxford's life and \*Hamlet\*](#)
  - Some people argue that *Hamlet* is not only the work of Oxford, but has many connections to his life. What are they?



## Other Leading Candidates

- ❖ [Christopher Marlowe](#)
  - The greatest playwright of his time, he died young under mysterious circumstances. What are the arguments for and against him as the writer “Shakespeare?”
- ❖ [Others?](#)
  - Francis Bacon, William Stanley (6th Earl of Derby), Philip and Mary Sidney, Thomas North, Emilia Bassano, Henry Neville, and even Queen Elizabeth have been suggested as candidates. Briefly, what are the arguments for and against them as the writer “Shakespeare?”



### Rubric Research and Presentation on the Shakespeare Authorship Question (SAQ)

Criteria	A (5)	B (4)	C (3)	D (2)	F (1)
<b>Research Quality</b>	Thorough research using multiple credible sources; sources are diverse and highly relevant.	Good research with several credible sources; most sources are relevant and reliable.	Adequate research with some credible sources; some sources may be less relevant or reliable.	Limited research with few credible sources; sources lack relevance or credibility.	Inadequate research; sources are not credible or missing.
<b>Distinguishing Fact from Speculation</b>	Clearly distinguishes facts from speculation and supposition throughout the presentation.	Generally distinguishes facts from speculation with minor inaccuracies.	Attempts to distinguish facts from speculation but with some confusion or errors.	Struggles to separate facts from speculation; many errors present.	Fails to distinguish facts from speculation; presentation is mostly inaccurate or speculative.
<b>Evaluation of Arguments</b>	Thoroughly evaluates arguments; clearly identifies doubtful vs. possible claims with strong reasoning.	Evaluates arguments well; identifies doubtful vs. possible claims with reasonable reasoning.	Some evaluation of arguments; occasionally unclear or weak reasoning.	Minimal evaluation; reasoning is unclear or unsupported.	No evaluation of arguments; reasoning is missing or illogical.
<b>Source Credibility</b>	All sources are credible and well-documented; source evaluation is clearly explained.	Most sources are credible and documented; source evaluation is generally clear.	Some sources are credible; documentation or evaluation of sources is inconsistent.	Few credible sources; poor documentation or explanation of source credibility.	Sources lack credibility; no documentation or evaluation provided.
<b>Presentation Skills</b>	Clear, confident, and engaging presentation; information is well-organized and easy to follow.	Good presentation with clear delivery; information is mostly organized and understandable.	Presentation is somewhat clear; organization or delivery needs improvement.	Presentation is unclear or disorganized; difficult to follow.	Presentation is ineffective; unclear and disorganized.