**Directions**: Read the article “T*op Ten Reasons Shakespeare Did Not Write Shakespeare*” then complete Quick Write 2.

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| Part 1 |
| **The Real Shakespeare**  There never was an Elizabethan playwright named William Shakespeare. There was an Elizabethan actor, theater manager and businessman by the name of William Shaxper or Shakespeare born in Stratford-upon- Avon, England. When academics speak of the historical William Shakespeare they are referring to this person.  There is no direct evidence to show that William Shaxper was a writer. There are no original manuscripts of the plays or the poems, no letters and only six shaky signatures, all in dispute. Both his parents, John and Mary, were illiterate signing documents with an ‘X.’ His wife Anne Hathaway was illiterate. His children seem to have been illiterate, which would make Shaxper the only prominent writer in history whose children are believed to have been illiterate. |
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| Part 1 |
| William from Stratford never went to college and as far as can be determined never had any schooling. There has been an attempt by Stratfordians to surmise[1] that William Shaxper attended a grammar school in Stratford. No records of this exist and Shaxper made no mention of this school in his will, a startling oversight if this grammar school was single-handedly responsible for creating perhaps the most literate, scholarly man of all time.  The lack of any letters written by William Shaxper is particularly significant. As a great writer, it is likely he would have written a large number. Voltaire’s collected correspondence totals roughly 20,000 pieces. There are no surviving letters in Shaxper’s or Shakespeare’s own hand.  [1]surmise: suppose something is true without actually having proof |
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| Part 2 |
| **His Vocabulary**  The works attributed to Shakespeare contain one of the largest vocabularies of any single English writer. John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, for example has about 8,000 different words. The King James Version of the Bible, inspired by God and translated by 48 of Great Britain’s greatest biblical scholars, has 12,852 different words. There are 31,534 different words in Shakespeare’s Canon.  There is a startling incoherence[2]between the story of a young man, with at best a grammar-school education, wandering into London, getting involved in theatre, and then suddenly, even miraculously, possessing one of the greatest vocabularies of any individual who ever lived.  [2]incoherence: inconsistency |
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| Part 3 |
| **The Famous Doubters**  The case against William Shakespeare’s authorship is strong enough to have attracted many famous individuals.  A partial list of the Shakespeare doubters include: Mark Twain, Walt Whitman, Sigmund Freud, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Malcolm X, and Helen Keller.  Mark Twain, in his hilarious 1909 debunking[3]of the Shakespeare myth titled “Is Shakespeare Dead?” points out that no one in England took any notice of the death of the actor William Shaxper.  3debunking: showing that something is wrong. |
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| Part 4 |
| **Not a Single Book**  William Shaxper’s will is three pages long and handwritten by an attorney. In these three pages there is no indication that he was a writer. The will mentions not a single book, play, poem, or unfinished literary work, or scrap of manuscript of any kind.  The absence of books in the will is telling, since to write his works the mythical William Shakespeare would have had to have access to hundreds of books. The plays are full of expertise on a wide variety of subjects including contemporary and classical literature, multiple foreign languages, a detailed knowledge of Italy. Italian language and culture, the law, medicine, military matters, sea navigation, painting, mathematics, astrology, horticulture, music and a variety of aristocratic sports like bowls and falconry |
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| Part 5 |
| **Multilingual**  The writer of Shakespeare’s plays had command of not only English, but Latin, Greek, French, Italian, and Spanish. His French in particular is not of the classroom but reflects the vulgar[4]speech of ordinary people.  The thousands of new words Shakespeare added to the English language were created from his multilingual expertise.  There is no way of reconciling[5]the immense scholarship shown in Shakespeare’s works with William Shaxper, who from birth was surrounded by illiterate people, had little or no education, and is believed never to have traveled outside England.  [4]vulgar: crude, crass, unrefined  [5]reconciling: resolving, settling |
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| Part 6 |
| **Genius**  “William Shakespeare was a genius.” This answer is generally supplied to all questions relating to Shaxper’s apparent lack of qualifications for the title of “world’s greatest author.” Genius however has its limitations.  About one third of Shakespeare’s plays are either set in Italy or make specific references to events and locations there. Genius may explain the literary skills in Shakespeare’s works, but it does not supply knowledge of places never visited or languages never learned. |
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| Part 7 |
| **Stratford**  As with virtually everything associated with the “historical” Shakespeare, the tourist sites in Stratford are pure speculation[6]. “It is fairly certain” that the house on Henley Street is where Shakespeare was born and brought up, complete with, as the birthplace website proudly states, “recreated replicas.” The grammar school in Stratford has lost all records from the period, but “is almost definitely” where Shakespeare received his education. This institution even claims to have his original desk, which is “third from the front on the left-hand side.” On and on the fantasy is created with an avalanche of qualifiers like, “most biographers agree,” and “we are permitted to think,” and “we have no reason not to assume,” etc.  No one knows for sure who wrote the works attributed to Shakespeare. What can be said with some certainty is that William Shaxper didn’t.  [6]speculation: theory |
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QuickWrite 2:

You have learned a lot about the arguments for both sides of the question regarding the authorship of Shakespeare. Based on what you have read, which argument do you find most credible why?

QUICKWRITE REMINDER! Use specific evidence from the text to write a paragraph that answers this prompt.

• Answer the prompt completely.

• Provide relevant and complete evidence.

• Your paragraph should include:

– A focus statement stating which argument you believe is the most credible

– At least three pieces of evidence from the text

– For each piece of evidence, an analysis or explanation: What does this evidence mean?

– A concluding sentence

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| \_\_\_\_\_ Prompt is completely answered with focused writing and staying on topic.  \_\_\_\_\_ Introduction is evident (or answer to prompt is addressed in the beginning)  \_\_\_\_\_ (1) strong piece of evidence included from text - direct quote and page number  \_\_\_\_\_ (2) Another strong piece of evidence - (same as above)  \_\_\_\_\_ (3) A third strong piece of evidence - (same as above)  \_\_\_\_\_ (1) First piece of evidence from text is clearly explained  \_\_\_\_\_ (2) Second piece of evidence from text is clearly explained  \_\_\_\_\_ (3) Third piece of evidence from text is clearly explained  \_\_\_\_\_ Conclusion or summary sentence evident  \_\_\_\_\_ Vocabulary used is precise and purposeful  Each criteria worth 5 points to = 50 |