

Module 4: Examining Love, Friendship, and Power

Topic 4 Content: The Globe Theater

Introduction



The Globe Theater

- Origins of the Globe
- Later Reconstructions
- Layout of the Globe
- The Audience
- The Experience




At the dawn of the 17th century, the Globe theater in London served as the home of William Shakespeare's most famous plays. Click each of the tabs to explore the history and characteristics of the iconic Globe theater.

At the dawn of the 17th century, the Globe theater in London served as the home of William Shakespeare's most famous plays. Click each of the tabs to explore the history and characteristics of the iconic Globe theater.

Module 4: Examining Love, Friendship, and Power


Topic 4 Content: The Globe Theater

Origins of the Globe



The Globe Theater

- Origins of the Globe
- Later Reconstructions
- Layout of the Globe
- The Audience
- The Experience




The first public theater in England was simply called The Theater. In 1598, the landlord of the property on which The Theater was built refused to renew its lease and tried to claim the building for himself. While he was away on vacation, the actors of The Theater disassembled it, carried it away piece by piece, eventually ferried it to a new location on the other side of the Thames River, and reassembled it in its entirety. This "reborn" theater was called the Globe, and it became home to many of William Shakespeare's most famous plays.

The first public theater in England was simply called The Theater. In 1598, the landlord of the property on which The Theater was built refused to renew its lease and tried to claim the building for himself. While he was away on vacation, the actors of The Theater disassembled it, carried it away piece by piece, eventually ferried it to a new location on the other side of the Thames River, and reassembled it in its entirety. This "reborn" theater was called the Globe, and it became home to many of William Shakespeare's most famous plays.

Module 4: Examining Love, Friendship, and Power


Topic 4 Content: The Globe Theater

Later Reconstructions



The Globe Theater

- Origins of the Globe
- Later Reconstructions
- Layout of the Globe
- The Audience
- The Experience




In 1613, the Globe burned down after a theater cannon had inadvertently caught the roof on fire when it was shot from the third balcony for special effect during a performance of *Henry VIII*. The Globe was rebuilt the following year in the same location, this time with a tiled roof. Although the Globe—along with all the other theaters in London—was closed down in 1642 by the Puritans and soon after destroyed, a modern reconstruction of the Globe was opened in 1997 very near the original location.

In 1613, the Globe burned down after a theater cannon had inadvertently caught the roof on fire when it was shot from the third balcony for special effect during a performance of *Henry VIII*. The Globe was rebuilt the following year in the same location, this time with a tiled roof. Although the Globe—along with all the other theaters in London—was closed down in 1642 by the Puritans and soon after destroyed, a modern reconstruction of the Globe was opened in 1997 very near the original location.

Module 4: Examining Love, Friendship, and Power


Topic 4 Content: The Globe Theater

Layout of the Globe



The Globe Theater

- Origins of the Globe
- Later Reconstructions
- Layout of the Globe
- The Audience
- The Experience




The modern replica, known as Shakespeare's Globe, is based on 17th-century drawings and even analyses of dialogue from some of Shakespeare's plays. The original building had eight sides and a roof that was open to the air, allowing natural light to illuminate the stage. Due to this open-air design, plays were performed during the daytime and only during the warmer seasons. The stage extended into the middle of the open space and was partially covered by a canopy. Trapdoors were fixed along the stage floor to allow seamless exits of spirits, fairies, and even the disappearance of an occasional body. Behind the stage was a changing area. On either side of the stage were doors for entrances and exits. At the back was a door that led to a second-floor gallery, which could be used for a balcony scene or even a hilltop. Musicians and sound effects people worked on the third-floor gallery.

The modern replica, known as Shakespeare's Globe, is based on 17th-century drawings and even analyses of dialogue from some of Shakespeare's plays. The original building had eight sides and a roof that was open to the air, allowing natural light to illuminate the stage. Due to this open-air design, plays were performed during the daytime and only during the warmer seasons. The stage extended into the middle of the open space and was partially covered by a canopy. Trapdoors were fixed along the stage floor to allow seamless exits of spirits, fairies, and even the disappearance of an occasional body. Behind the stage was a changing area. On either side of the stage were doors for entrances and exits. At the back was a door that led to a second-floor gallery, which could be used for a balcony scene or even a hilltop. Musicians and sound effects people worked on the third-floor gallery.

Module 4: Examining Love, Friendship, and Power


Topic 4 Content: The Globe Theater

The Audience



The Globe Theater

- Origins of the Globe
- Later Reconstructions
- Layout of the Globe
- The Audience**
- The Experience




Interestingly, the audience you would find at the Globe during Shakespeare's time was more diverse than what you might find today. Think about the last time you went to a special event. A rock concert might draw younger people, while an opera tends to have more seniors in attendance. However, Shakespeare's audience was a mixed group because the plays were written so that everyone could relate to them. The poorest theatergoers, called groundlings, paid a penny to stand around the three sides of the stage. Wealthier theatergoers paid an additional penny or two to sit in the covered tiers or along the sides. The audience at the Globe would include people from all walks of life: laborers from the lower class, middle class merchants, members of Parliament, and lords and ladies. You could even find the industrious pickpockets mingling among the groundlings.

Interestingly, the audience you would find at the Globe during Shakespeare's time was more diverse than what you might find today. Think about the last time you went to a special event. A rock concert might draw younger people, while an opera tends to have more seniors in attendance. However, Shakespeare's audience was a mixed group because the plays were written so that everyone could relate to them. The poorest theatergoers, called groundlings, paid a penny to stand around the three sides of the stage. Wealthier theatergoers paid an additional penny or two to sit in the covered tiers or along the sides. The audience at the Globe would include people from all walks of life: laborers from the lower class, middle class merchants, members of Parliament, and lords and ladies. You could even find the industrious pickpockets mingling among the groundlings.

Module 4: Examining Love, Friendship, and Power


Topic 4 Content: The Globe Theater

The Experience



The Globe Theater

- Origins of the Globe
- Later Reconstructions
- Layout of the Globe
- The Audience
- The Experience**



The Globe did not use elaborate scenery typical of theaters today. Instead, the audience members had to use imagination to create the scenery. Nevertheless, this did not mean that the audience was any less entertained by the plays. The open-air lighting allowed actors to make eye contact with the faces in the crowd, and the close proximity to the stage allowed the audience to interact freely with the actors. If audience members did not approve of an actor's performance, it was not unheard of for them to throw food or other items at the actor on stage.

The Globe did not use elaborate scenery typical of theaters today. Instead, the audience members had to use imagination to create the scenery. Nevertheless, this did not mean that the audience was any less entertained by the plays. The open-air lighting allowed actors to make eye contact with the faces in the crowd, and the close proximity to the stage allowed the audience to interact freely with the actors. If audience members did not approve of an actor's performance, it was not unheard of for them to throw food or other items at the actor on stage.