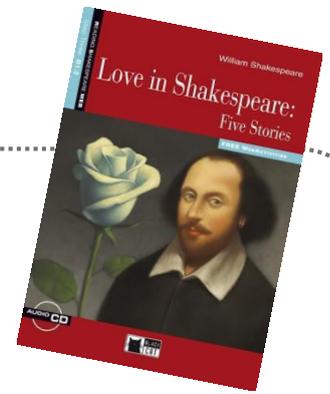


LESSON PLAN

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WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE • SONNET 18

- Aim**
- to develop reading skills
 - to expand vocabulary
 - to interpret the meaning of certain words
 - to identify a literary genre
 - to encourage the pleasure of reading

Level B1.1/B2

Time 50 minutes

Materials: 1 a photocopy of William Shakespeare's Portrait from our graded reader *Love in Shakespeare*
2 a worksheet

Introduction

This lesson plan introduces William Shakespeare's *Sonnet 18*, one of his best known and most-loved sonnets. Students are often put off when they're asked to read, understand and comment a sonnet or a poem, simply because no one has taken the time and effort to explain it to them. Fortunately, the theme of love—romantic love—captures their attention.

Background notes on the sonnet

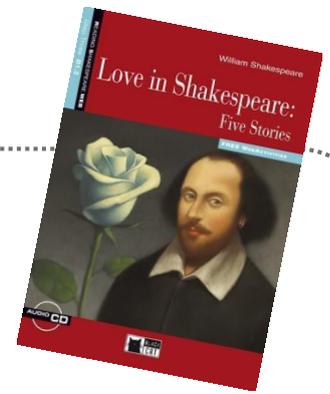
William Shakespeare wrote 154 sonnets which are world famous, and *Sonnet 18* is certainly the best known. What do you know about sonnets? A sonnet is a kind of poem with 14 lines and a rhyme scheme, which originated in Italy during the 13th century. The word sonnet comes from the Italian word *sonnetto*, or little song, and was developed by great poets like Petrarch, Dante and then, by Shakespeare.

Shakespeare's sonnets have appeared also in many of his plays and are about the different aspects of love. The sonnets talk about young love, romantic love, passionate love, jealous love, marriage, life and death. Long before communication became so quick and easy with social media, the sonnet was the perfect way to express love to someone and Shakespeare's ability to play with words made him the forerunner of modern communication. *Sonnet 18*, as an example, is a great expression of love, and a hymn to life and beauty.



LESSON PLAN

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PROCEDURE

Before the lesson

- make a copy of the worksheet (one per student)
- download a portrait of William Shakespeare
- tell your students you're going to be speaking about Shakespeare's *Sonnet 18*
- write the word LOVE on the board
- read the background notes on the sonnet to the class

Warm up (10 minutes)

expectations:

why?

Speaking

Ask students to comment on their first impressions and

- What do you think about sonnets?
- Was the sonnet an effective way of expressing romantic love and
- Do you think a written message of love on a piece of paper, such as a sonnet, means more than receiving the same kind of message on your smartphone or email?

Fun Quiz (5 minutes)

Give each student the worksheet and ask them to do EXERCISE 1: *How much do you know about Shakespeare's plays?*
[KEY: 1c; 2b; 3a]

Analysis (15 minutes)

Reading

Ask students to read the sonnet once silently. Then ask them to read it aloud in pairs and analyze the meaning of the lines. Give them these helpful hints:

- Summer is the season of sun, youth... a beautiful summer day is certainly something people love and look forward to.
- the word **beauty** is not used in the sonnet; the words **fair** and **summer** are used instead.

Comprehension check (10 minutes)

Writing

Ask your students to do Exercise 2 on the worksheet. Then, check it together. This will give your class a chance to further analyse and understand the sonnet.

[KEY: 1b; 2c; 3a; 4c; 5a]

Class Discussion and Debate (10 minutes)

Exercise 3 is meant to stimulate discussion and debate, because it involves eternal themes that students want to talk about.

