

English Renaissance Timeline: Some Historical and Cultural Dates

This list offers an overview of some historical and cultural dates from the English Renaissance, with links to resources in our collections. For more information about the world of Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre in England, check out the [Renaissance Theatre \[1\]](#) section.

- **1558:** Queen Elizabeth I is crowned, and [Thomas Kyd \[2\]](#) is born.
- **1563:** Martin Luther's Thirty-Nine Articles are published.
- **1564:** [William Shakespeare \[3\]](#) and [Christopher Marlowe \[4\]](#) are born.
- **1569:** Northern England rebels on behalf of Mary Queen of Scots.
- **1570:** The Catholic Church excommunicates Queen Elizabeth I.
- **1572:** [Thomas Dekker \[5\]](#) and [Ben Jonson \[6\]](#) are born.
- **1574:** The St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre takes place in England, on which Marlowe based his play *The Massacre at Paris*.
- **1576:** The Curtain theatre is built.
- **1577:** Raphael Holinshed publishes his *Holinsheds Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, the primary source text for most of Shakespeare's history plays.
- **1578:** James VI becomes King of Scotland.
- **1580:** Francis Drake completes his circumnavigation of the globe.
- **1580:** [Thomas Middleton \[7\]](#) and [John Webster \[8\]](#) are born.
- **1584:** Sir Walter Raleigh establishes the first English colony in the New World.
- **1585-1604:** England is at war with Spain.
- **1586:** The Babington Plot to assassinate Queen Elizabeth I and place Mary Queen of Scots on the throne is discovered.
- **1587:** Mary Queen of Scots is executed at the Tower of London.
- **1587:** Theatre impresario Phillip Henslowe builds The Rose theatre.
- **1588:** The Spanish Armada is destroyed by England's fleet.
- **1592:** Christopher Marlowe is arrested at Flushing in the Netherlands for coining.
- **1592:** Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy [9]* is published.
- **1592:** Anti-alien riots break out in London.
- **1593:** The theatres are closed due to plague.
- **1593:** Christopher Marlowe is murdered, Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* is published. [10]
- **1594:** The theatres re-open, Thomas Kyd dies, and the first recorded performances of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus [11]* and *The Taming of the Shrew [12]* take place.
- **1597-1601:** Ireland rebels against England.
- **1597:** The performance of Ben Jonson and Thomas Nashe's *The Isle of Dogs* results in Jonson's arrest; he is released a few months later.
- **1599:** The Earl of Essex is arrested, The Globe theatre is built, Shakespeare's *Henry V [13]*, *Julius Caesar [14]*, *As You Like It [15]*, *Hamlet [16]*, and *Much Ado About Nothing [17]* open, and Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday [18]* opens.
- **1599-1602:** Ben Jonson battles John Marston and Thomas Dekker with wits and words in the War of

- Theatres, or Poetomachia.
- **1600:** Queen Elizabeth I grants the East India Company its charter.
- **1601:** The Earl of Essex is executed.
- **1602:** Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* [19] opens.
- **1603:** Queen Elizabeth I dies, and James VI of Scotland becomes King James I of England.
- **1605:** The Gunpowder Plot is foiled and Guy Fawkes apprehended, Ben Jon's *Volpone* [20] opens, and Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker's *The Roaring Girl* [21] is performed at The Fortune theatre.
- **1606:** The first recorded performances of Shakespeare's *King Lear* [22] and Middleton's *The Revenger's Tragedy* [23] take place.
- **1608:** John Milton is born.
- **1610:** Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist* opens.
- **1612-1618:** Thomas Dekker is in debtor's prison.
- **1612:** John Webster's *The White Devil* [24] opens.
- **1613:** The Globe theatre burns down during a performance of Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* [25].
- **1614:** Plans begin for the Spanish Match between Prince Charles of England and Princess Anna Maria of Spain, John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* [26] opens, and The Globe is rebuilt.
- **1616:** William Shakespeare dies, King James I publishes his complete works, and *Ben Jonson's First Folio* is published.
- **1617:** Ben Jonson is named England's first Poet Laureate.
- **1623:** *Shakespeare's First Folio* [27] is published, and negotiations for the Spanish Match collapse.
- **1624-1630:** England wars with Spain.
- **1624:** Middleton's *A Game at Chess* opens.
- **1625:** King James I dies and is succeeded by King Charles I.
- **1627-1629:** England wars with France.
- **1627:** Thomas Middleton dies.
- **1632:** Thomas Dekker dies.
- **1634:** John Webster dies.
- **1637:** Ben Jonson dies.
- **1642:** The English Civil War commences, and the Puritan parliament bans the theatre and closes the playhouses.

For more historical background, take a look at Charlotte Barrett's [Victorian Poetry and Fiction: Some Historical and Cultural Dates](#) [28].

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Links

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- [2] <http://writersinspire.org/writers/thomas-kyd>
- [3] <http://writersinspire.org/writers/william-shakespeare>
- [4] <http://writersinspire.org/writers/christopher-marlowe>
- [5] <http://writersinspire.org/writers/thomas-dekker>
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- [14] <http://writersinspire.org/content/tragedie-ivlivi-caesar>
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- [18] <http://writersinspire.org/content/shoemakers-holiday>
- [19] <http://writersinspire.org/content/twelve-night-or-what-you-will>
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- [21] <http://writersinspire.org/content/roaring-girl-or-moll-cutpurse>
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- [26] <http://writersinspire.org/content/duchess-malfi>
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