William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

I. Born in Stratford upon Avon in England
   A. Attended grammar school (much harder than today, similar to high school)

II. Married Anne Hathaway
   A. She was 26, he was 18
   B. She was pregnant
   C. Had a girl -- Suzanna. Two years later, had twins -- Judith and Hamnet
   D. Much of Shakespeare's early life in unknown
      1. Name on legal documents
      2. Gap of 10 years called the Lost Years

III. Left wife and kids and traveled to London -- joined up with troupe of actors
   A. Worked as writer and actor
   B. While in London, lived the life of an actor -- free, liberal, unfaithful to wife
   C. Criticized by several writers of period for not being university educated -- called "upstart crow"

IV. 1594 -- Shakespeare and other actors formed new acting company -- Lord Chamberlain's Men
   A. Became most famous -- when Queen dies, became King's Men
   B. Was shareholder in company

V. Also wrote poetry -- Sonnets
   A. 14 line poems with specific rhyme scheme

VI. Wrote histories, comedies, tragedies, and romances -- 37 plays in all
   A. Plays not considered great literature during his day -- like TV scripts

VII. 1610 -- retired and bought New Place -- big house
   A. Was famous and rich
   B. Died in 1616

VIII. Shakespeare's plays were published after his death by two fellow actors -- Hemming and Condell in 1623
   A. First Folio -- big sheets of paper folded once
   B. Earlier -- copies of some plays were published during Shakespeare's lifetime, often without consent -- "pirated copies"
      1. Often these were full of mistakes -- actors wrote down what they remembered or "scribes" went to plays and wrote down quickly what they heard
      2. Published in small, cheap editions called Quartos
         a. Sheets of paper folded in fourths

IX. Shakespeare wrote about the human condition
   A. characters from all walks of life
   B. Universal -- emotions still felt today

X. Used language during time when it was new and changing
   A. Invented new words and phrases still used today
      1. "Knock, knock, who's there?"
      2. "Into thin air..."
   B. Used imagery and figurative language

XI. His later plays were complex and darker in tone
   A. OTHELLO is one of these