

# The living conditions of elizabethan england

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The living conditions were very different in the time of Queen Elizabeth's reign. Living conditions were abysmal for anyone but the higher classes, as they could not afford basic necessities such as food. In the meantime, the higher classes enjoyed contemporary luxuries such as working toilets. The higher classes were also very fond of plays and regularly frequented the theatre. The poor lived in large slums often sending children to work usually as servants or in mines just so they could survive. This often resulted in death through starvation or disease. One disease in particular known as the 'black death', possibly the most prominent ancient disease, caused large swollen lymph nodes and common adverse symptoms across the body. This was common among the poor and those who had it were frowned upon, not accepted in society and usually left to die by their families.

### **The Globe Theatre**

The Globe Theatre was built around 1600 AD in London and was mostly made of wood and stone reused from an older theatre where lease has expired. This was the main form of formal entertainment for the wealthy and a ground for Shakespeare to improve and show his skills to the people of London. The Theatre was three stories high, had a 360 degree view of the stage and a capacity of around three thousand people which made it very easy to watch plays with many options for seating. This was where where most of Shakespeare's works were performed. It was taken down along with many other theatres by the Puritans, a Protestant group that was trying to purify England and that meant getting rid of plays because they showed themes that they believed were not in God's values.

There are three genres of Shakespeare plays. These were histories, tragedies and comedies. Histories were reenactments of historical events in play form and were popular for being somewhat informative but usually somewhat dramatized such as Richard III. Tragedies were popular for their drama and effect and left the audience deeply impacted. Comedies, were comedic made up stories, but usually with darker themes such as The Merchant of Venice. I will talk about Macbeth which is a tragedy. In Macbeth, an ambitious General kills a King to steal the throne and then continues the killing of other innocent people to mask his original crime, his life finally ending with the fumbled suicide of him and his girlfriend following a descent into madness. Government and royalty conflicts and fights for power were common in those times and still are in our time.

## Conclusion

The living conditions in Elizabethan England were horrible and deadly for most and moderate for others. However, what brought them together and drew their thinking away from their negative lives was theatre - but most importantly the Globe Theatre. The Globe Theatre was possibly the most major theatre in their time that brought them together with joy, sadness, worry and fear.