

## The Globe Theatre

Shakespeare's company built the storied Globe theatre about 1598 in London's Bank-side district. It was one of four major theatres in the area, along with the Swan, the Rose, and the Hope. Shakespeare was one of the owners of the Globe.

The open-air, octagonal amphitheater rose three stories high with a diameter of approximately 30 metres, holding a seating capacity of up to 3,000 spectators, including 1,000 standing spectators or 'groundlings'. The rectangular stage platform on which the plays were performed was nearly 13 metres wide and 8.5 metres deep. This staging area probably housed trap doors in its flooring and primitive rigging overhead for various stage effects.

In 1613, the original Globe Theatre burned to the ground when a cannon shot during a performance of *Henry VIII* ignited the thatched roof of the gallery. The company completed a new Globe on the foundations of its predecessor before Shakespeare's death.

The theatre continued operating until 1642, when the Puritans closed it down (and all the other theatres, as well as any place, where people might be entertained). Puritans razed the building two years later in 1644 to build tenements upon the premises. The Globe would remain a ghost for the next 352 years.

The foundations of the Globe were rediscovered in 1989, rekindling interest in a fitful attempt to erect a modern version of the amphitheater. Led by the vision of the late Sam Wanamaker, workers began construction in 1993 on the new theatre near the site of the original. The latest Globe Theatre was completed in 1996; Queen Elizabeth II officially opened the theatre on June 12, 1997 with a production of *Henry V*.

The Globe is as faithful a reproduction as possible to the Elizabethan model, seating 1,500 people between the galleries and the 'groundlings.' It has a thatched roof and an open-air yard and it was built using Elizabethan building materials.

(Adapted from [www.bardweb.net](http://www.bardweb.net))



The Globe in Shakespeare's times



The Globe today

activities

### ↓ WRITING

Summarize the text above.