

# Shakespearean Newspaper Project

Mr. Chapman

To help you get a sense of the chaotic time period Shakespeare lived in, you and your group will be designing a newspaper. The newspaper can report events in *either* the 1500's *or* the 1600's (talk to me if there's something outside of those years). A lot of things happened during that time. *Some* examples:

- Francis Drake continually raids Spanish galleons
- Queen Elizabeth I becomes queen
- Queen Elizabeth I dies
- The opening of one of Shakespeare's plays
- Jamestown (1<sup>st</sup> English colony in America)
- Mayflower Colony (pilgrims & Thanksgiving)
- Religious wars in Europe (a lot of them)
- Beheading of Charles I, king of England
- Spanish Armada
- English (failed) counterattack
- Isaac Newton
- Nicolaus Copernicus

**Each person in your group will be in charge of one article, one "extra," and one advertisement.** Obviously your newspaper will be fictional from a certain point of view—you are the writer, after all—but you have to do research to write about the events. Put your own voice to it. It can be funny and ironic. For example, you could write an article about the Spanish Armada preparing for battle, and an admiral saying, "We're going to beat those wimpy Brits! I have no doubt about it!"

## **Extras**

An extra can be something like:

- A comic
- A horoscope
- An advice column
- A crossword
- A gossip column
- Obituaries or wedding column
- A word search
- Editorial
- Play review
- Ask if you're unsure

## **In addition:**

- Your articles must have a headline, the author's name and at least one picture/image/drawing with a caption

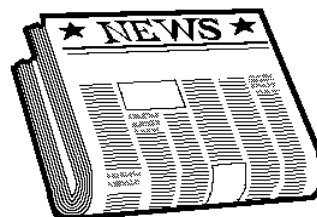
- Your newspaper must have a title

- Check to see what articles other groups are writing about. I don't want five articles about Charles I.

- This can be on regular-sized paper—typed up on computer—or it can be on poster-board on 1-2 pages. It's up to you.

- Don't just write about "news events"; one article should talk at least about popular culture, fashion, or the plight of people in the city.

- This doesn't have to just be based in England. Think what's happening around Europe and the Americas, as that was affecting was going on in England.



The first English newspapers were printed around this time!

May 5, 1349

## Great Plague Reaches London!

Thousands of bodies left rotting in street;  
doctors are perplexed!

*By Chapman the Teacher*

Do you smell something? No, that's not your neighbor's pig—that's your neighbor! Yes, the Great Plague has finally reached London, infecting young and old, rich and poor, the hedonists and pious alike. This mysterious new disease, which according to reports started in Italy, is ripping through all of Europe, killing 75% of some cities that it attacks. By some estimates, half of Europe has already perished!

The most common symptoms of this pestilence are painful buboes, or egg-sized bumps, on the neck and groin, and under the armpits. These are filled with pus and blood. After these appear, your skin starts to blacken and decay from gangrene. In short, you literally smell yourself rotting before you die—which takes anywhere from two to eight days. If you start coughing up blood, though...I'm sorry, my friend: you have only one day to live.

According to the scientists at the Medical Faculty in Paris—if the French can be trusted, of course—the plague is a result of the alignment of three planets together, which causes bad air to filter down to earth. So, dear readers, here are a few remedies you can do to help yourself from the plague:

- 1) Stay indoors if you can and close all your windows. Keep the smell out!
- 2) Do not touch lepers.
- 3) Keep a pocket full of sweet-smelling flowers about you—if you can find any. If you have to go outside, keep those flowers to your nose.
- 4) Whip yourself—chances are, God is punishing us for our sins, and the only way to really show you're repentant is to join the Flagellants!

What to do if you're infected:

- 1) Pray, 'cause you're a goner! Only 5% of people who get the plague survive!

Already, the whole landscape of our dirty city has changed. Groups of Flagellants walk around shouting chants, asking for forgiveness, leaving strips of flesh and blood on the streets. Streets are filled with the dead and the moans of the nearly dead. We even hear that our fair pope is locked in a room in Avignon, France; all his food, clothes, and correspondence are passed over a massive fire to get to him!

Not all of us are as fortunate as our holy father. "I buried my five children with my own hands," Agnolo di Tura lamented, as he picked a flea biting his arm.

"I don't have to worry," bragged Lord Wessex. "I have a pocket full of posies! Besides, I'm too rich to—to—cough...Blood? Uh-oh."

Time will tell whether things get better, or if this really is the End of Days, as most people believe. It's hard not to agree with them, though: it seems that the curtain between life and death has been ripped open, swallowing up millions. To quote Giovanni Boccaccio, "How many valiant men, how many fair ladies, breakfast with their kinfolk and the same night supped with their ancestors in the next world!"

From the looks of it, all of us will be dining with our ancestors very soon. [That supper table is very crowded.]



Even art has changed, with images of death replacing images of heaven!

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

### Potential Newspaper Outline

Your articles should be creative but also need to demonstrate research: remember, you're trying to teach your classmates about something that happened during or around Shakespeare's time. Articles can be more informal than essays, and since this one is quasi-fiction, have some fun with it! In other words, you can talk to the reader if you want. Don't forget that you are there witnessing the event—write it like that!

#### **Requirements:**

- Should be around 500 words
- Should have at least two quotes (one of them should be real—from a primary source of that time period; talk to me if you're having trouble finding it)
- Needs to demonstrate research. Demonstrate to me and your other readers that you have put time into this.

**Article Date:**

**Headline:**

**Sub-headline:**

**Article Author:**

#### **Hook: Hook in the Readers with a(n):**

- **Image** (The streets are filled with the rotting carcasses of our victims *or* Corpses everywhere. Pus-filled bumps. A pocket full of posies. These are becoming common sights in London as the Great Plague spreads.)
- **Question** (“What is that smell?”)
- **Quote:** (“I buried my five children today.” Agnolo di Tura isn't alone.)

#### **Introduction of Issue:**

Give a brief overview (2-3 paragraphs) of what's going on—what is the event you're about to write about.

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Background/Research: What should the reader know about this time period?** (gives the reader background information about your topic; pretend your reader doesn't know much at all about it. Explain the who, what, when, where, why/how.)

**Extra Information from Event/Quotes:**

**Catchy Ending**

## **Newspaper Project – Group Score**

### **Layout (15)**

- Is the layout clean and neat?
- Is it well-organized?
- Is it easy to read? In other words, can I tell the articles apart?

### **Components (15)**

- Does it have the required number of articles, extras and advertisements?
- Does it have a newspaper title?
- Does it have a table of contents?
- Are the pages numbered if necessary?

### **Overall Quality/Effort (15)**

- Does it look like you worked hard on it?
- Does it demonstrate creativity and thoughtfulness?
- Does it show you checked for errors in each other's articles?

### **Comments**

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### **Comments**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Individual Rubric

<b>Article - Components</b>		<b>Out of 20</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the date at the top of the article?</li> <li>• Is there a headline? Is it written like a headline? Is it short?</li> <li>• Is there a sub-headline? Does it avoid words like “the” and full sentences?</li> <li>• Is there a name? Is it properly capitalized? (e.g. Chapman the Crazy)</li> <li>• Does it have an appropriate picture with an appropriate caption?</li> <li>• Does it have at least two quotes, at least one real from that time period?</li> </ul>		
<b>Article - Introduction &amp; Conclusion</b>		<b>Out of 15</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does it have a hook that engages the reader and makes them want to read more?</li> <li>• Does the first or second paragraph give a quick introduction/background of the topic?</li> <li>• Does the article lead to an ending? (in other words, is there a transition to the end...or is it abrupt?)</li> <li>• Does it have a catchy ending?</li> </ul>		
<b>Article - Content/Voice</b>		<b>Out of 35</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does it read like a newspaper article (which is good)...or does it feel like you're reading an encyclopedia entry?</li> <li>• Does it have a voice? In other words, does the “author” clearly come from that time period?</li> <li>• Does the article show the <i>who</i>, what, when, where, why/how?</li> <li>• Does the article give a good sense of the event/person from this article?</li> </ul>		
<b>Extra – Components, Quality &amp; Effort</b>		<b>Out of 20</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the required number of words (if necessary)?</li> <li>• Are any parts plagiarized? (negative points)</li> <li>• Does it demonstrate quality, effort and creativity?</li> </ul>		
<b>Advertisement</b>		<b>Out of 10</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does it demonstrate quality, effort and creativity?</li> </ul>		
<b>Article - Quality &amp; Effort</b>		<b>+/- Points</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the writer checked for spelling and grammatical errors?</li> <li>• Did the writer clearly put a lot of effort into it?</li> </ul>		
<b>Article – Plagiarism</b>		<b>- Points</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the writer use words and phrases that are <u>not</u> his or her own? (negative points)</li> </ul>		
<b>Final Score (out of 100)</b>		

## Peer-Editing Rubric

<b>Heading &amp; Headlines</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
• Is the date at the top of the article?					
• Is there a headline? Is it written like a headline? Is it short?					
• Is there a sub-headline? Does it avoid words like “the” and full sentences?					
• Is there a name? Is it properly capitalized? (e.g. Chapman the Crazy)					
<b>Hook &amp; Introduction</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
• Does it have a hook that engages you and makes you want to read more?					
• Does the first or second paragraph give a quick introduction/background of the topic?					
<b>Voice &amp; Plagiarism</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
• Does it read like a newspaper article (which is good)...or does it feel like you're reading an encyclopedia entry?					
• Does it have a voice? In other words, does the “author” clearly come from that time period?					
• Is it clearly in the writer’s own words? (Or does it look like the writer just changed a few words around?)					
<b>Content/Information</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
• Does the article show the <i>who</i> : how people in England view this event, or how it affects different people? (e.g. rich and poor, king and commoner?)					
• Does the article answers the <i>what</i> : what is happening and what is important about it?					
• Does the article clearly answer <i>when</i> these events happened/are happening?					
• Does the article clearly answer <i>where</i> the events happened/are happening?					
• Does the article clearly explain <i>why</i> this event was/is happening? (What was/were the cause(s)?) Does it tell you <b>why this event was important and/or how it could change things from the way they were?</b>					
• Do you feel you have a good sense of the event/person from this article? (if not—if you want to know more—write it on the back of this)					
<b>Quotes &amp; Pictures</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
• Does it have an appropriate picture?					
• Does that picture have an appropriate caption?					
• Does it have at least one <u>real</u> quote from that time period?					
• Does it have at least another <u>fake</u> <i>or</i> <u>real</u> quote from that time period?					
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
• Does the article lead to an ending? (in other words, is there a transition to the end...or is it abrupt?)					
• Does it have a catchy ending?					
<b>Quality and Effort</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
• Has the writer checked for spelling and grammatical errors—unless they’re on purpose? (Please help fix them)					
• Do you feel the writer put a great deal of effort into it?					





Author's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Peer Editor's Name \_\_\_\_\_

**After reading this article, can you tell:**

- 1) *who* is affected by these events? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) *what* the specific event is? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) *when* the event takes place? \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) *where* the event takes place? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) *why* the event happened? (What were the causes?) \_\_\_\_\_

6) *why* the event is important? Why it has the potential to change the way things are? (For example, how does Copernicus' heliocentric view challenge previous beliefs? How does Queen Elizabeth's coronation change the way things were the previous ten years?)

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