



## The History of English in Ten Minutes

*Shakespeare*

### **Narrator:**

As the dictionary tells us, about 2000 new words and phrases were invented by Shakespeare.

He gave us handy words like 'eyeball', 'puppy-dog' and 'anchovy' - and more show-offy words like 'dauntless', 'besmirch' and 'lacklustre'. He came up with the word 'alligator', soon after he ran out of things to rhyme with 'crocodile'. And a nation of tea-drinkers finally took him to their hearts when he invented the 'hobnob'.

Shakespeare knew the power of catchphrases as well as biscuits. Without him we would never eat our 'flesh and blood' 'out of house and home' – we'd have to say 'good riddance' to 'the green-eyed monster' and 'breaking the ice' would be 'as dead as a doornail'. If you tried to get your 'money's worth' you'd be given 'short shrift' and anyone who 'laid it on with a trowel' could be 'hoist with his own petard'.

Of course it's possible other people used these words first, but the dictionary writers liked looking them up in Shakespeare because there was more cross-dressing and people poking each other's eyes out.

Shakespeare's poetry showed the world that English was a language as rich vibrant language with limitless expressive and emotional power. And he still had time to open all those tearooms in Stratford.