**CONTEST 1**

**BIOGRAPHIES**

**WILLIAM BLAKE**

1. Considered one of the greatest poets and printmakers in British history, William Blake was an English poet, painter and printmaker who remained largely unknown during his lifetime but rose to prominence about half a century after his death.

2. Born in London on November 28, 1757, William Blake was the third of seven children of James Blake, who owned a hosiery shop, and Catherine Wright Blake. William attended school only till the age of ten after which he was educated at home by his mother.

3. Blake claimed to experience visions throughout his life. When he was four years old he screamed when he saw God “put his head to the window”. At the age of 10, he saw “a tree filled with angels, bright angelic wings bespangling every bough like stars.”

4. During his life Blake was considered insane and was mostly unknown except to a few friends and faithful patrons. Interest in his work grew in the mid-19th century and by the 20th century

5. Today William Blake is regarded as one of the finest artists and poets in Britain’s history. In 2002, he was placed 38 in BBC’s poll of the 100 Greatest Britons.

**ROBERT BURNS**

1. Robert Burns (aka Rabbie Burns) was born on 25th January 1759 in Ayrshire, Scotland. [Burns Night](http://primaryfacts.com/586/burns-night-facts-about-a-burns-supper/) is celebrated with a Burns supper every year in Scotland (and in places all over the world) on 25th January (Burns’s birthday).

1. Burns wrote his poems in Scots, standard English and Scots dialect.
2. Burns was a brilliant lyricist and he contributed over 100 songs to a book called *The Melodies of Scotland*. He also wrote lyrics for *A Select Collection of Scottish Airs for the Voice* and *The Scots Musical Museum*.
3. Robert Burns wrote *Auld Lang Syne* (he added new lyrics to a traditional Scottish tune) and *A Red, Red Rose*.
4. Burns was alive during the French Revolution and he was in favour of reform.
5. On 21st July 1796, Robert Burns died at the age of 37. His body lies to rest in the Burns Mausoleum in St Michael’s Churchyard, Dumfries.

**WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**

1. William Shakespeare was an actor, playwright and poet from Еngland. The actual birthdate of William Shakespeare isn’t known, records prove he was baptized on April 26th, 1564. His birthday is traditional celebrated on Saint George’s Day (April 23rd).

1. William Shakespeare is most famous for his plays, like Hamlet and Romeo and Juliet.

3. During his lifetime, **William Shakespeare** wrote around **37 plays** for the theatre and **over 150 poems**! No one can say the exact number, because some of his work may have been lost over time – and some may have been written with the help of other people.

4. Plays in Shakespeare’s time were different to the ones we have today. There were **no female actors** (women’s parts were played by men!), and audiences could be very rowdy. They would shout, boo and even throw food at the actors they didn’t like!

1. Shakespeare’s plays were immediately big hits! He wrote different kinds of plays, all of which could be divided into three categories:

**Tragedy** – including Hamlet, Othello, King Lear and Romeo and Juliet  
**Comedy** – including Twelfth Night and the The Taming of the Shrew  
**History** – including Henry IV, Henry V and Richard III

6. His plays made him very rich and famous. So much so, that by 1598, William owned houses in London and Stratford-upon-Avon.

**GEORGE GORDON BYRON**

**1. Lord Byron** (born January 22, 1788, [London](https://www.britannica.com/place/London), England—died April 19, 1824, Missolonghi, Greece) British [Romantic](https://www.britannica.com/art/Romanticism) poet and satirist whose [poetry](https://www.britannica.com/art/poetry) and personality captured the imagination of Europe.

2. Byron was the son of the handsome and [profligate](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/profligate) Captain John (“Mad Jack”) Byron and his second wife, Catherine Gordon, a Scots heiress.

**3. Byron** was recognized for his works, and he gained so much popularity that at the age of 21 he won the majority of the vote to be in **the House of Lords.**

4. Lord Byron took a tour of the Mediterranean Sea when he was 22, and began writing a poem titled *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, about a young man traveling in foreign lands.

5. Lord Byron supported the Greeks in their wish to become independent from the Ottoman Empire. He commanded an elite unite of Greek fighters

6. Lord Byron died at the age of 36, on April 10th, 1824