



First Theatre

Who were the Elizabethans?

- The Elizabethan period lasted between 1558-1603.
- It is named after the ruler Queen Elizabeth I, the daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn.

Illustration: An archaeological dig.

Elizabethan Theatre Discovered

Archaeologists think they have discovered London's oldest Elizabethan theatre. It could reveal the history of theatres in the UK.

Researchers believe that they have found the of the Red Lion theatre. It is the oldest purpose-built theatre in London, built around 1567.

In 2019, a team of archaeologists came across an unusual rectangular shape and 144 **timbers**.

Stephen White, one of the team, said the Red Lion theatre "marked the dawn of Elizabethan theatre."

Even though this was a theatre, it would have looked a lot different from most theatres today.

The theatre would have had no roof and be open to all weather.

John Brayne, the owner of the Red Lion, built another theatre called The Theatre.

The Theatre put on plays by a young William Shakespeare.

William Shakespeare is one of the world's most famous writers. He wrote plays, such as Romeo and Juliet. Even though he lived so long ago, we still study and perform his plays today.

Shakespeare also built his own theatre called the Globe. It was rebuilt in **modern** times and sits next to the **Thames** in London.

Archaeologists are still checking their finds now to make sure the site is exactly what they think it is. Who knows what we could find next?

Glossary

archaeologist	Someone who studies the past through objects.
timbers	Wooden beams that are used in buildings.
modern	Recent history.
Thames	A river in London.

Questions

1. What was the name of the theatre that has been discovered?

2. The sentence "The theatre would have had no roof and be open to all weather." suggests that...

- ☐ People watching the play would always stay dry.
- ☐ People watching the play would always be warm.
- ☐ People watching the play could be rained on.
- ☐ Weather was better in the past.

3. In the first paragraph, find a word that means the same as 'found'.

4. Tick each statement to show whether it is true or false.

	True	False
William Shakespeare was a famous writer.		
The theatre was built in about 1577.		
The Theatre put on plays by William Shakespeare.		
They found an unusual circular shape.		

5. What do you think historians will think about this news?

6. Summarise the key information in this story in 20 words or fewer.

Answers

1. What was the name of the theatre that has been discovered?

the Red Lion

2. The sentence “The theatre would have had no roof and be open to all weather.” suggests that...

- ☐ People watching the play would always stay dry.
☐ People watching the play would always be warm.
☒ **People watching the play could be rained on.**
☐ Weather was better in the past.

3. In the first paragraph, find a word that means the same as ‘found’.

Discovered

4. Tick each statement to show whether it is true or false.

	True	False
William Shakespeare was a famous writer.	✓	
The theatre was built in about 1577.		✓
The Theatre put on plays by William Shakespeare.	✓	
They found an unusual circular shape.		✓

5. What do you think historians will think about this news?

Accept any answer that refers to historians finding the discovery of London’s oldest purpose-built theatre interesting, e.g. I think that historians will be excited by the discovery of the theatre because it was the oldest purpose-built theatre.

6. Summarise the key information in the story in 20 words or fewer.

Accept any reasonable answer which summarises the information e.g. London’s first purpose-built theatre has been discovered. It was built in 1567. At the time, theatre was watched outside.