Shakespeare led the writing of Edward III

LEVEL C1


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I. WARM-UP

1. How do scholars decide who wrote an old text?
2. What tools can help study literature today?
3. Do creative rivals ever work together well? Why?

II. KEY VOCABULARY

canon
the official list of works accepted as written by an author

collaboration
people working together on the same project

anonymously
without a writer's name being given

analysis
careful study to understand patterns or facts

segment
a clearly defined part of a larger whole

rival
a person who competes with another for success

marker
a sign or feature used to identify something

attribution
the act of saying who created a work

III. READING

New research argues that the play Edward III should enter William Shakespeare's canon, and that it was a major collaboration with Christopher Marlowe.

First published anonymously in 1596, the history play has long been debated, but a team now says computerised linguistic analysis puts Shakespeare's role "beyond any reasonable doubt".

Dr Rory Loughnane of the University of Kent and Prof Brett Greatley-Hirsch of the University of Leeds compared Edward III with securely attributed works by 10 dramatists from the late 1580s to mid-1590s. Their analysis identifies 23 segments as Shakespeare's and nine as Marlowe's.

One clue was the distribution of "marker" words, including martial, that are typical of Marlowe. The finding reshapes both canons. Edward III was absent from the 1623 First Folio, and earlier editors accepted only a few scenes.

A 2016 project had already named Marlowe as co-author of Shakespeare's three Henry VI plays. If the new attribution is right, the pair were not merely rivals but collaborators in their mid-to-late 20s. Marlowe died in 1593, aged 29, after a brawl in a lodging house, which may explain why the partnership ended.

Reading text adapted from reporting by **The Guardian***: "Scholars conclude 'beyond doubt' that...". Original article linked at theenglishwire.com.*

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. When was Edward III first published?
2. Which two scholars led the new study?
3. How many segments were attributed to Shakespeare and to Marlowe?
4. What type of linguistic clue supported Marlowe's share?
5. Which earlier Shakespeare plays were linked to Marlowe in 2016?

V. DISCUSSION

1. Should Edward III be added to Shakespeare's canon now? Why?
2. How useful is computerised analysis in literature?
3. Can rivalry improve collaboration in the arts? Give an example.
4. Should anonymous works be attributed or left uncertain?

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Three-word phrasal-prepositional verbs

Verb + particle + preposition (e.g., come up with, put up with). These are inseparable: the object follows the preposition, not between particle and preposition.

> *"The editors* **came up against** *gaps in the record."*
> *"Readers* **put up with** *uncertainty for years."*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Circle the correct option in each sentence.

1. Scholars (came with up / came up with) a test idea. _____
2. Editors (ran of / ran out of) patience in debate. _____
3. Researchers looked (forward to / to forward) a new edition. _____
4. Critics (made for up / made up for) thin evidence with analysis. _____
5. The project (lived up to / lived to up) its claims. _____

Teacher's Notes

TEACHERS ONLY

These notes are designed to help you get the most out of this lesson. Please do not share this page with students.


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I. LESSON GUIDE

- Timing: 8–10 minutes warm-up, 10 minutes vocabulary, 12–15 minutes reading and comprehension together, 8–10 minutes grammar, 12–15 minutes discussion.
- Pre-teach names and references on the board (Shakespeare, Marlowe, First Folio, Henry VI), then set a gist question before reading: Who mainly wrote Edward III?
- Run reading as a jigsaw: half the class focuses on methods and numbers; half on context and implications; then pair to summarise across groups before answering questions. The text mentions a death (Marlowe), so begin discussion in pairs and tell students they may comment on the news rather than personal experiences.
- Differentiation: stronger students justify whether the evidence crosses the "beyond doubt" threshold; others list three concrete facts that support authorship.

II. DISCUSSION FACILITATION TIPS

1. Start with a quick show of hands, then have mixed-ability pairs give one reason each.
2. Elicit one benefit and one risk, then prompt examples from other fields (music, art).
3. If answers stall, ask students to name a famous artistic rivalry and compare it.
4. Set up two lines: one for attribution, one for uncertainty; swap sides and argue the other view.

III. EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Debate: In teams, prepare and deliver a 2-minute case for adding Edward III to Shakespeare's canon.

Research: In pairs, create a 6-slide overview of one authorship test the study used and present it.

IV. ANSWER KEY OVERVIEW

Comprehension questions: short factual answers from the text.

Grammar exercise: Three-word phrasal-prepositional verbs

Discussion: open-ended. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

Answer Key

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IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. When was Edward III first published?
   1596.
2. Which two scholars led the new study?
   Rory Loughnane and Brett Greatley-Hirsch.
3. How many segments were attributed to Shakespeare and to Marlowe?
   Twenty-three to Shakespeare and nine to Marlowe.
4. What type of linguistic clue supported Marlowe's share?
   The distribution of "marker" words such as martial.
5. Which earlier Shakespeare plays were linked to Marlowe in 2016?
   The three Henry VI plays.

V. DISCUSSION

Open answers. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Circle the correct option in each sentence.

1. Scholars (came with up / came up with) a test idea. **came up with**
2. Editors (ran of / ran out of) patience in debate. **ran out of**
3. Researchers looked (forward to / to forward) a new edition. **forward to**
4. Critics (made for up / made up for) thin evidence with analysis. **made up for**
5. The project (lived up to / lived to up) its claims. **lived up to**

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Key point: Verb + particle + preposition (e.g., come up with, put up with). These are inseparable: the object follows the preposition, not between particle and preposition. (Examples constructed.)

> *"The editors* **came up against** *gaps in the record."*
> *"Readers* **put up with** *uncertainty for years."*