

Chronological Order of when the plays are set

Play	Set in time
<i>Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	1230 BCE
<i>Troilus and Cressida</i>	1190 BCE
<i>Coriolanus</i>	494 BCE
<i>Timon of Athens</i>	≈ 425 BCE
<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	≈ 220 BCE
<i>The Winter's Tale</i>	pre-Christian Greek
<i>Pericles, Prince of Tyre</i>	≈ 200 BCE
<i>Julius Caesar</i>	45–42 BCE
<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>	42–30 BCE
<i>King Lear</i>	800 BCE
<i>Cymbeline</i>	≈ 5–40 CE
<i>Titus Andronicus</i>	≈ 385
<i>Macbeth</i>	1040–1057
<i>Hamlet</i>	1050
<i>King John</i>	1199–1216
<i>All's Well that Ends Well</i>	1353
<i>Richard the Second</i>	1398–1400
<i>1 Henry the Fourth</i>	1402–1403
<i>2 Henry the Fourth</i>	1403–1413
<i>Merry Wives of Windsor</i>	1413
<i>Henry the Fifth</i>	1414–1420
<i>1 Henry the Sixth</i>	1422–1445
<i>2 Henry the Sixth</i>	1445–1455
<i>3 Henry the Sixth</i>	1460–1471
<i>Richard the Third</i>	1471–1485
<i>Henry the Eighth</i>	1520–1533

Play	Set in time
<i>Twelfth Night</i>	1531
<i>Two Gentlemen of Verona</i>	1542
<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	1558
<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	1562
<i>Othello, the Moor of Venice</i>	1565
<i>Measure for Measure</i>	1565
<i>Love's Labor's Lost</i>	1589
<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>	1590
<i>As You Like It</i>	1590
<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>	1599
<i>The Tempest</i>	1609

Of course, every Shakespeare play comprises three time frames that we must constantly be aware of: the time in which it was set, the time in which it was written, and the time in which we are reading it. Each period of time affects the play.

For instance, in *Julius Caesar*, Caesar wears an Elizabethan doublet; Cleopatra asks Charmian to cut her lace, which are the ties to her Elizabethan girdle. And we judge them all by our own current standards of morality and policy.

BCE = Before Common Era, or BC

CE = Common Era, or AD

Dates are according to Asimov or the date of the original source story.