Shakespeare Resources

The Plays
Sometimes it may seem that we are swimming in a veritable ocean of different versions of the works of William Shakespeare. Indeed, the proliferation of editions in the past fifty years has been staggering, and the general reader or actor may be baffled about which edition to purchase. Here’s my general recommendation: buy one of the more recent one-volume editions, such as The Riverside Shakespeare or The Norton Shakespeare, as a basic reference. Both of these editions have good notes, as well as strong supplementary material. You’re pretty safe with any of the editions listed below, though the Globe is obviously outdated at this point, and the one-volume Arden and Oxford editions – as opposed to the individual play editions in the Arden and Oxford series – have virtually no support material. Then, when you require more in-depth textual notes and associated scholarly material to supplement the reading or analysis of individual plays, consult individual volumes from the well-known series of individual plays listed below. My personal recommendations for actors and directors are the Everyman series, the Arden series (look for the Third Series when available), and the Oxford or Cambridge single-volume series, which have gotten much stronger and more competitive with the Arden series in recent years.

One-Volume Editions of the Collected Works
The Globe Shakespeare, edited by William George Clark and William Aldis Wright, 1864. This famous edition was itself a derivative of Clark and Wright’s multi-volume Cambridge edition published between 1863 and 1866. The publisher Macmillan repackaged Clark and Wright’s text, dispensing with their intricate textual collation notes, reducing the edition to a single volume, and repricing it for the mass market where for many years it stood as the standard compact Shakespeare, offering a plain text of all the works with a glossary at the end of the volume. It may be properly called the first modern edition, being textually advanced for its time, and continued to be used long after it began to seem outdated, largely because the revised Globe edition of 1891 supplied act, scene and line references to the works for John Bartlett’s Complete Concordance (1894).

The Complete Works, George Lyman Kittredge, editor, 1936 (rev. ed., 1967). This one-volume edition published by Ginn and Co. in Boston, was eagerly welcomed. It was based on a fresh collation of the early printed texts, and retained stage directions found in quartos and the First Folio [added directions and scene locations were printed in square brackets]. Brief introductions preface each text, which is printed in double columns on the page, and there is a full glossary at the end of the book. Kittredge, a celebrated professor and charismatic scholar of English literature at Harvard, where he taught several generations of Shakespeare scholars, also published separate annotated editions of sixteen plays, which were issued by Ginn in 1946. His learned notes on the plays still
repay attention, and they are notable for his concern about the sequence and timing of scenes and other problems of staging them. This edition was re-issued in 1967 with augmented notes by Irving Ribner. Highly recommended.

**The Tudor Shakespeare, edited by Peter Alexander, 1951.** This is the edition referenced by a vast majority of British actors and other stage professionals for the second half of the 20th century. Peter Alexander was a Scottish scholar and academic who became Regius Professor of English Language and Literature at Glasgow University. He provided a brief general introduction, a plain text in double columns per page, and a glossary at the end. This one-volume modernized edition, with its modest size, weight, and price, and good textual scholarship, was adopted as a standard text by the BBC and many academic institutions. It was reissued in 1994 with additional brief introductory material by Germaine Greer, Anthony Burgess and Alex Yearling.

**The Signet Shakespeare, general introduction by Sylvan Barnet, 1963.** Barnet was a Harvard scholar who spent his career teaching at Tufts University. His one-volume American edition, reissued in 1972, presented the plays in chronological order, and displayed the text in double columns. Each play had an introduction by a different scholar or critic, among them W.H. Auden. The edition was eclipsed by the Riverside edition in 1974, which had more lavish illustrations, including some in color, and a more elaborate textual apparatus.

**The Riverside Shakespeare, edited by G. Blakemore Evans (1st edition, 1974, 2nd edition, 1997)** The first Riverside Shakespeare was edited by Richard Grant White and published in 1883 and 1901. A new version was published in 1974 as a full scholarly edition and set a new standard for a well-illustrated, carefully edited, one-volume edition. It contains good textual notes, a number of in-depth introductory essays, illustrations and photographs. This edition was adopted as the basis for references in the Harvard Concordance to Shakespeare compiled by Marvin Spervack in 1973. A revised edition was published in 1996, and is notable for being the first major complete works edition to include the disputed play Edward III, as well as A Funeral Elegy which was written by John Ford and was mistakenly attributed to Shakespeare. Recommended.

**The Oxford Shakespeare, edited by Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (1st edition, 1986, together with a second volume containing an edited “original spelling” text; 2nd edition, 2005).** Oxford University Press first published a complete works of Shakespeare in 1891. Entitled The Complete Works, it was a single-volume modern-spelling edition edited by William James Craig. This 1891 text is not directly related to the series known as The Oxford Shakespeare today, which is freshly re-edited. The modern-day one-volume edition, edited by John Jowett, William Montgomery, Gary Taylor and Stanley Wells, appeared in 1986. It includes all of Shakespeare's plays and poems, as well as a biographical introduction. Each work is given a single-page
introduction. There are no explanatory notes, but there is a glossary at the back of the book. Two related books accompany the main volume: *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion* provides comprehensive data on editorial choices for scholars of the plays, and *William Shakespeare: An Old-Spelling Edition* presents the plays in their original spelling. The *Oxford Complete Works* differs from other Shakespeare editions in attempting to present the text as it was first performed, rather than as it was first printed. This resulted in many controversial choices: for example, presenting *Hamlet* with several famous speeches relegated to appendices on the grounds that Shakespeare added them after the original performances; presenting two separate texts of *King Lear* due to the drastic differences between the two extant texts; and changing the name of Falstaff in *Henry IV Part One* to 'Oldcastle' due to historical evidence that this name was used in the first performances even though it never survived to print. The *Oxford Complete Works* was the first to emphasize Shakespeare's collaborative work, describing *Macbeth*, *Measure for Measure* and *Timon of Athens* as either collaborations with or revisions by Thomas Middleton; *Pericles* as a collaboration with George Wilkins; *Henry VI Part One* as a collaboration with several unknown other dramatists; and *Henry VIII* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* as collaborations with John Fletcher. It also broke with tradition in presenting Shakespeare's works in chronological order, rather than dividing them by genre. In 2005, a second edition of the *Complete Works* was produced. It adds a full text of *Sir Thomas More* (edited by John Jowett), which may contain passages by Shakespeare, and *Edward III* (edited by William Montgomery), another play believed to be partly by Shakespeare. *The Norton Shakespeare*, published by W.W. Norton, is largely based on the Oxford text, but departs from some of its decisions. (Note: don’t confuse this with the Oxford series of individual plays which began issue in 1982 and continues into the 21st century – see below).

*The Norton Shakespeare, edited by Stephen Greenblatt* (1st edition, 1997; 2nd edition, 2008; 3rd edition, 2015). Basically, this is the Oxford Shakespeare with critical notes. It is a well-illustrated edition designed to compete with other student editions in the American academic market. Unlike other one-volume editions, it is printed with a single column per page, with glosses in the right margin, and some longer notes at the foot of the page. It includes three texts of *King Lear*; quarto and Folio texts on facing pages and a composite text. Strong general introduction, as well as good introductions to individual plays. A recommended edition, especially compared to its bare-bones predecessor.

*The Bevington Shakespeare, edited by David Bevington* (1st edition, 1973; 7th edition, 2013) A recent contender in a crowded field, this incorporates material from an edition prepared by Hardin Craig, as well as material from the Bantam edition of individual plays published in the 1980s. This edition, edited by a single scholar rather than a scholarly team, avoids jargon and fashionable critical topics, and aims at the college student with a clear, simple presentation. Some good textual glosses at the foot of each double-
column page of text, but the notes are minimal when compared to such editions as the Arden or Cambridge.


This single-volume edition was published recently to capitalize on Arden’s reputation for exemplary scholarship. But a caveat to the buyer: this collection, which includes texts culled from both Arden 2 and Arden 3 (see *The Arden Shakespeare* series below), does not include the critical notes for which the single-volume editions are so famous. It’s just the Arden texts, printed one after another, *without* the textual apparatus (other than a glossary). So if all you’re looking for are great texts with absolutely no scholarly notes or textual glosses, by my guest. Personally, it seems a very high price to pay, and cannot be recommended as a first choice one-volume edition. (The revised paperback edition includes the full text of *Double Falsehood* – an 18th century rewrite of Shakespeare’s “lost” play *Cardenio* – which was published in the Arden Third series to critical acclaim in 2010.)

*The Complete Pelican Shakespeare* edited by Stephen Orgel and A.R. Braunmuller, *2002* The distinguished Pelican Shakespeare, originally edited by Alfred Harbage from 1956 to 1967, has undergone a complete revision and updating under the general editorship of Stephen Orgel of Stanford University and A.R. Braunmuller of UCLA, who have devoted seven years to preparing introductions and notes with a team of scholars. Available in both hardcover and a reasonably priced paperback edition, this is what I would describe as a mid-level edition, not as distinguished as the Riverside or Oxford editions, but eminently serviceable for the casual reader/actor.

*The Modern Library Complete Works* edited by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen, *2007* A new one-volume edition commissioned by the Royal Shakespeare Company and published by the Modern Library. Two eminent Shakespeareans, Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen, have applied modern editing techniques and recent scholarship to correct and update the First Folio, and the Royal Shakespeare Company used this updated version in its productions of all 36 plays in the 2006-7 season. In the words of *Evening Standard* reviewer Colin Burrow: “The general introduction is among the best 50-page guides to Shakespeare you could hope to find, while the short essays prefixed to each play are like the best kind of programme notes - informative, thought-provoking and humane.”

Multi-Volume Editions of Individual Plays (Series)

The 19th Century

*The Family Shakespeare, 1807-1818,* edited by the Reverend Thomas Bowdler (and Henrietta Bowdler). Most of you have probably heard the term “to bowdlerize,” with its implications of crass and insensitive censoring,
especially as it relates to the profane and the sexual. But many of you may not be aware of how the word came into popular use. The Reverend Bowdler (1754-1825) published the 10-volume *Family Shakespeare* in 1818 under his own name, completing the 20-play edition published anonymously by his sister in 1807. His stated objective was to remove from the works ‘only those words and expressions which cannot with propriety be read aloud in a family.’ In practice, he (and his unmarried sister) cut any passage which in their view smacked of obscenity. Bowdler claimed on the title page to have added nothing, but in fact he made changes for the sake of propriety. The edition was attacked in the *British Critic* in April 1822, and Bowdler responded with a long defense. By 1836 the verb ‘to bowdlerize’ was commonplace, and relegated the good reverend to the ashbin of cultural history. I don’t need to point out that this is not a recommended edition.

*The Variorum Shakespeare*, edited by James Boswell and Edmond Malone, 1821, 21 volumes. James Boswell, the son of Dr. Johnson’s biographer, oversaw this edition and relied on the superior text of Malone’s edition of 1790. The first volume contains prefaces from earlier editions, commendatory verses, and an essay on metre; the second, a life of Shakespeare and Malone’s reconsideration of the chronology of the plays; and the third presents an extended version of Malone’s history of the English stage. In remaining volumes, the works are heavily annotated on the page, and for the first time dated in an order close to that now generally accepted. This edition provided a basis for later scholarly editions and for Furness’s *New Variorum*, begun in 1871. Outdated but fascinating.

*The Cambridge Shakespeare*, edited by William George Clark and W. Aldis Wright, Cambridge University Press, 1863-66, nine volumes; rev. ed., 1891-93. The first Shakespeare text to be edited by professional university-based scholars, this important edition was based on a “thorough collation of the four Folios and of all the Quarto editions”. The series later provided the basis for the influential one-volume *Globe Shakespeare*. Outdated at this point.

*The New Variorum Shakespeare*, edited by H.H. Furness, et al., 1871 on. Horace Howard Furness, a Philadelphia lawyer, was the driving force behind this exhaustive series, which was meant to replace the so-called Variorum edition of 1821. By 1912, when Furness died, editions of thirteen plays had appeared, and with the guidance of Furness’s son, five more were published before 1930. Work continued intermittently, but it wasn’t until the Modern Language Association of America took charge of the project that six more volumes appeared between 1936 and 1955. Lack of funding led to a hiatus until 1973, and further volumes began to appear in 1977, now published by the MLAA. The *New Variorum* has established itself as a basic resource for research on Shakespeare’s works. Like its predecessor, these volumes are more useful for scholars than for the general reader or actor.
The Henry Irving Shakespeare, 1890. This edition of the Works, with introductions by various scholars to the individual plays, and numerous illustrations, was published in eight volumes in 1890, and reissued in ten in 1906. It aimed to assist those who wished to read the plays aloud or prepare an acting version for private or public use. Here the influence of Irving is to be seen, in the use of wavy lines at the side of passages in the double-column texts of the plays to mark them as capable of being omitted without ‘any detriment to the story or action of the play’ (preface).

The Temple Shakespeare, edited by Israel Gollancz, 1894-96. A pocket hardback edition for the general reader, with minimal prefaces and glossaries. The later New Temple edition preserves the pocket format, but is in other respects quite different.

20th Century (Pre-WWII)

The Arden Shakespeare, various editors, 1899-1924. The standard by which nearly all subsequent editions have been compared. The First Series (Arden 1), under the general editorship of W.J. Craig (1899-1906) and R.H. Case (1909-1924) began publication in 1899 with Hamlet, edited by Edward Dowden, came to completion in 1924, and set a new standard for editions of individual works by printing extensive textual notes on the same pages as the text, as well as leaving room for critical introductions, appendices, and passages from sources. The Second Series (Arden 2) was launched in 1951 under the general editorship of Una Ellis-Fermor (and later guided by Harold Brooks, Harold Jenkins, and Brian Morris). A complete revision of the earlier series, it was edited by a more distinguished cast of scholars than the first, and was complete by 1982 with Hamlet, by which time it had gained recognition as the foremost critical edition of Shakespeare’s works in its time. A Third Arden Edition (Arden 3) began to appear in 1995 (and are set to finish in 2017), general editors Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson, and David Scott Kastan, showing a greater concern with performance on stage and screen than previous editions. The textual notes tend to be very academic and dry in nature, geared more towards the scholar than the actor. A fourth series has been announced. Highly recommended.

Old-Spelling Shakespeare, general editor Israel Gollancz, 1907-09. An ambitious project to issue all Shakespeare’s works in 40 volumes was part of the plan for the Shakespeare Library. These old-spelling texts, edited initially by F.J. Furnivall and W.G. Boswell-Stone, and from 1908 by Boswell-Stone and F.W. Clarke, included modern stage directions in brackets, collations, and brief textual notes. They were handsomely printed in a limited edition, beginning with the comedies in 1907. Only thirteen plays were issued, as the project was then
halted. It was not until 1986 that another modern old-spelling edition was published, as part of the Oxford Shakespeare.

**The Yale Shakespeare, edited by Wilbur L. Cross and Tucker Brooke, Yale University Press, 1918.** The Yale Shakespeare was a publishing program undertaken in tandem with the English Department, funded by a $50,000 grant from the Scroll and Key Society of Yale College, with two prominent members of the faculty named as general editors. Wilbur Cross, a Yale man to the core (B.A. 1885, Ph.D 1889) was a longtime Professor of English, Provost, Dean, and editor of the *Yale Review* (1911-40) who later went on to a distinguished political career. His colleague, Tucker Brook, was a Rhodes Scholar from West Virginia with two degrees from Oxford University who was known as a leading authority on Elizabethan literature. To edit the individual volumes, they enlisted colleagues in the English Department, making this a true Yale production. Between 1918 and 1929, the plays were issued in compact, hardcover editions, usually in batches of 3-4 volumes a year; they were reprinted numerous times over the next decade, then brought out again in the 1940s and 1950s in revised editions. Each of the 40 volumes issued – one for each of the 37 plays, plus others for the poems, sonnets, and a short biography – included a brief introduction, an index, and an apparatus quite new for the period, the addition of brief glosses at the foot of most pages to illuminate words, phrases, and quaint concepts that might be unfamiliar to a contemporary readership. It was advanced for its time in featuring texts based where possible on the early quartos, and in adding no stage or scene divisions not in the original texts. It also preserved original lineation and punctuation as far as was practicable in a modernized edition. Though decidedly dates and obsolete by today’s scholarly standards, the books were enormously popular in classrooms throughout the English-speaking world, and affordably priced at fifty cents a volume. The appeal of the series was such that a single-volume edition was offered by the Book-of-the-Month Club as an alternate selection during the 1960s. This American pocket edition of the individual works started to appear in 1918, and a revised series was issued beginning in 1954.


**The Players’ Shakespeare, 1923-27.** This rather grand large-paper limited edition, published by Ernest Benn, set out to print Shakespeare’s plays ‘literatim from the First Folio of 1623’, with line-blocks by various artists, among them Paul Nash, and long introductions by Harley Granville-Barker. The edition ran out of steam after seven plays had been published between 1923-27. It provided the occasion for Granville-Barker to develop performance criticism in what later became well known as his ‘Prefaces’ to Shakespeare; the first three of these (to
Julius Caesar, King Lear, and Love’s Labour’s Lost) were published in a separate volume in 1927.

**The New Temple Shakespeare, edited by M.R. Ridley, Dent, 1934-36.** This handsomely printed pocket edition, featuring wood cuts by Eric Gill, had a brief introduction for each play, plain text on the page, and sketchy notes and glosses at the end. In was innovatory in three respects: first, in relegating act and scene divisions to the top margin in order to maintain flow; second, in returning to a lighter punctuation, in accordance with early printed texts; and third, where quarto and Folio texts co-exist, in using brackets to enclose passages found only in one or the other and not in both. Ridley’s edition bears no relation to the first Temple Shakespeare, edited by Israel Gollancz from 1894.

**Everybody’s Shakespeare, edited by Orson Welles and Roger Hill, 1934.** A unique item in the Shakespeare library. While still in his late teens, Orson Welles collaborated with Roger Hill, his teacher, mentor, and friend, on this series of play-texts. Three volumes were initially produced, Julius Caesar, The Merchant of Venice, and Twelfth Night. They were printed and published in 1934 (both as individual play texts and as a single volume containing all three plays) at the Todd School for Boys in Woodstock, Illinois, where Hill was headmaster and where Welles, several years earlier, had completed his formal education. These texts were revised and reissued in the late thirties as The Mercury Shakespeare, in conjunction with sound recordings of each play, the Mercury Text Records. An additional, final Shakespeare recording, of Macbeth, together with a printed text, was produced in 1941. In its combination of biographical, textual, historical and theatrical materials, this edition is quite unlike any previous edition of Shakespeare. Though clearly designed to be used in secondary schools and colleges, the primary emphasis throughout is on theater, on realizing Shakespeare on the stage. Hill and Welles divided up the editorial labors: Hill wrote the biographical-historical-textual portion of the introduction, Welles the theatrical portion; Hill edited the text, while Welles (probably) wrote the stage business and (certainly) created the drawings that adorn virtually every page. Professional in content and appearance, one would hardly guess that the whole project had been carried out through the talents and facilities of a relatively obscure Midwestern prep school. When the volumes were republished by Harper & Brothers in 1939, the original plates were used for much of the text.

**The Kittredge Shakespeares edited by George Lyman Kittredge and Irving Ribner, 1936/1967** For half a century George Lyman Kittredge enjoyed world-wide fame as a Shakespeare scholar with a gift for imparting to Harvard students his own abounding enthusiasm for his subject. The publication in 1936 of his Complete Works of Shakespeare was a landmark in Shakespearean scholarship. Before his death Kittredge had issued separate editions of sixteen of the plays, each featuring an introduction, the text of the play, copious literary notes following the
text, textual notes, and a glossary. Some of these notes were unusually elaborate, interpreting the Bard’s language with a fullness and precision attained by few other commentators, for Kittredge has few equals in his intimate knowledge of Elizabethan English. In 1967, Irving Ribner added fresh annotations, using Kittredge’s own notes as fully as space would permit, and with new introductions. *Sixteen Plays of Shakespeare,* with a preface by Arthur Colby Sprague, was released as a single volume in 1946. This collection includes all of the notes, textual notes, and play glossaries found in each individual volume. Highly recommended.

**The Penguin Shakespeare, edited by G.B. Harrison, 1937 on.** Penguin Books began a revolution in publishing with their inexpensive pocket paperbacks, and this Shakespeare edition was among their first publications. Attractively printed, with a plain text uncluttered by scene locations, a very brief introduction, and some notes and a short glossary at the end. Harrison preferred Folio texts as closer to what he supposed was acted, but included in brackets passages found only in quartos. Superseded by *The New Penguin Shakespeare* in 1967.

**Post-World War II**

**The Folio Society Shakespeare, 1950-76.** The 37 volumes of this handsomely printed edition used the text of *The New Temple Shakespeare.* They are chiefly notable for the introductions, of varying interest, written mainly by well-known actors and directors, among them Laurence Olivier, Paul Scofield, Richard Burton, Peter Brook, and Peter Hall. The texts are illustrated with reproductions of costume and stage designs from the period. Thirty-five of the introductions were published as a separate book in 1978. The Folio Society have since reprinted the Oxford edition twice.

**The Pelican Shakespeare, general editor Alfred Harbage, 1956-1967.** This paperback edition was designed for the American market, and were separately edited by noted scholars under Harbage’s guidance. He emphasized the flow of action by omitting scene locations and relegating act and scene divisions to the margins. With brief introductions and light glossing at the foot of the page, the volumes offered attractively presented texts at a bargain price. In many respects they resembled the *Penguin* and *New Penguin* editions. The series was completely revised and updated from 1999-2002 under the general editorship of A.L. Braunmuller (UCLA) and Stephen Orgel (Stanford University), who devoted seven years to preparing introductions and notes with a team of scholars.

**The Folger Shakespeare, Washington Square Press, 1957-1964.** This pocket paperback edition of individual plays was edited by the director of the Folger Shakespeare Library, Louis B. Wright, with Virginia A. Lamar. It was aimed at the general reader and proved, with its brief and simple notes on pages facing the text, and
illustrations drawn from old documents and books in the Folger Library, to be very popular for use in schools. Now being revised in the same general format by Barbara Mowat and Paul Werstine.

*The New Penguin Shakespeare, general editors T.J.B. Spencer and Stanley Wells, 1967 on.* Carrying on where *The Penguin Shakespeare* left off, it retained the plain text format, but gave individual editors freedom to determine the text in light of current scholarship. Also provided much more substantial critical introductions, extensive commentaries, and accounts of textual problems. Scenes are numbered in the margins, so that stage directions and text seem to run on from one scene to the next. A very popular series, especially with schools, it was adapted for use by many acting companies, including the Royal Shakespeare Company.

*The Oxford Shakespeare, Oxford University Press, 1982 on.* Began publication under the general editorship of Stanley Wells in 1982 and concluded in 2011 with *Richard II*. Like *The New Cambridge Shakespeare*, which began life at almost the same time, it is a fresh appraisal of the texts by scholarly editors, as well as a concern with performance history for each play, and uses illustrations to enliven the substantial critical introductions. In my opinion, this series gets better and better, and in many cases has surpassed the Arden editions in the depth and quality of its textual notes. Again, these notes do tend towards the academic/literary. Highly recommended.

*The Everyman Shakespeare, edited by John F. Andrews, J.M. Dent.* The *Everyman* series doesn’t rate a mention in *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare*, from which I got most of the information on all these editions. But, in some ways, it is the best kept secret in Shakespearean scholarship. Edited by John F. Andrews, former editor of the *Shakespeare Quarterly*, every volume contains a wealth of scholarship and truly useful information for the actor and director. I find this series even more relevant and utilitarian than the Arden, Oxford or Cambridge editions, in that the textual notes and editorial glosses are geared more toward the theater community rather than an academic one. Also, it is one of the first editions to maintain old spelling and punctuation, sticking very closely to the early texts, with an eye towards preserving the puns and wordplay lost when words are modernized to conform to current spelling standards. Unique, invaluable and, *best of all*, while the other editions range in price from $9.95 to $15.95 per volume, this series can still be purchased for as little as $3.95 or $4.95 per volume. A real bargain. Very highly recommended.

*The New Cambridge Shakespeare, general editors Philip Brockbank and Brian Gibbons, 1984 to the present.* This series is a replacement for *The New Shakespeare*, completed in 1966. British editors have been supplanted by editors from other countries, especially the United States. The volumes are handsomely printed, with notes and collations on the same page as the text, and the well-illustrated critical introductions add a separate stage history. Can be compared to *The Oxford Shakespeare* series, with which it
competes. Highly recommended.

The Bedford Shakespeare Series/Texts and Contexts, various editors, Bedford/St. Martin’s, 1996 to the present. Issued primarily as teaching editions, these volumes use a variety of approaches to Shakespeare including feminist, historical and cultural studies approaches. There is a strong emphasis on primary documents and illustrations, thematically arranged to offer an understanding of early modern culture and Shakespeare’s work within that culture. The David Bevington edition is used for the text, and there are facsimiles of period documents, sermons, popular ballads, and literary works offering alternative versions of the plays. The documents and illustrations contextualize the plays and their treatment of history, religion and culture. With extensive introductions, headnotes and bibliographies.

The Annotated Shakespeare, general editor Burton Raffel, Yale University Press, 2003 to the present. An affordable new paperback series. Each volume includes an introduction by the editor, Burton Raffel, a critical essay by Harold Bloom, and comprehensive on-page annotations that assist with vocabulary, pronunciation, prosody, and alternative readings of phrases and lines.

The New Kittredge Shakespeare, general editor James H. Lake, Focus Publishing, 2006 to present. Starting in 2006 with Hamlet, a new series of single-volume Shakespeare plays was released under the name The New Kittredge. Under the general editorship of James H. Lake, the New Kittredge includes an edited version of Kittredge’s original introductions, new introductions by the editors of each volume, two sets of footnotes below the text (one of literary notes, mostly from Kittredge, and a second set with a running commentary of performance and the film treatments), followed by segments on “How to Read ‘the Play’ as Performance,” “Topics for Discussion and Further Study,” a bibliography, and a filmography. These are slim, elegant, inexpensive, user-friendly volumes targeted largely at high school and first-year college students who are more versed in visual than in print culture.

The Barnes & Noble Shakespeare, general editor David Scott Kastan, Barnes & Noble Books, 2007. This series features newly edited texts prepared by leading British and American scholars in collaboration with one of the world’s foremost Shakespeare authorities, David Scott Kastan of Columbia University. Each volume includes new scholarship (such as essays on editing the text and an in-depth look at the quartos and folios used in the edition); contextualizing essays on Shakespeare’s England, language and life, along with essays on performing Shakespeare; facing-page glosses, one-word margin definitions, and longer end notes after the play; and annotated bibliography of titles.
Great Shakespeare Books

Student/Classroom Editions

**The Hudson Shakespeare, edited by H.N. Hudson, 1852-57.** American scholar and cleric Henry Norman Hudson published a series of lectures on Shakespeare in 1848. His multi-volume edition of the plays became the standard college edition at the turn of the century. Hudson, who edited more of the plays than Rolfe (see below) and whose editions were revised after his death as the *New Hudson Shakespeare* (1908-1910), steered teachers and students away from an exclusive emphasis on “word-mongering” toward something like aesthetic appreciation of the plays.

**The Rolfe Shakespeare, edited by W.J. Rolfe, 1872-1902.** William J. Rolfe, formerly head of the High School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, edited the plays in separate volumes beginning in 1872. He aimed to present them in “essentially the same way as Greek and Latin classics are edited for educational purposes,” but he omitted lines he considered “indelicate.” In conceiving an early version of what would now be called a “school” edition, he also helped to foster the idea of Shakespeare as a “classical” author. Along with the series edited by H.N. Hudson at the same time, this was the most popular school edition of Shakespeare in America at the turn of the century. (Rolfe stressed the philological approach to the plays – a stress on grammar and on the meaning of words – that had become established in colleges and universities in the nineteenth century.)

**The New Hudson Shakespeare, edited by H.N. Hudson, 1908-1910.** See *The Hudson Shakespeare* above.

**Barron’s Shakespeare Made Easy edited by Alan Durband, 1985 on.** In their own words, “At last, Shakespeare in language everyone can understand!” This slightly infamous series presents the complete original text laid out side-by-side with a full “modern translation,” which can be either useful to the confused student/actor, or provide moments of hilarity for the seasoned Shakespearean. In any case, here they are in all their glory – translations of Shakespeare into English!!

**Cambridge School Shakespeare, Series editor Rex Gibson, 1993 to the present.** This series, using the texts from *The New Cambridge Shakespeare*, was established primarily as a teaching edition for middle school, high school and college students, with a wide-range of classroom-tested activities to help turn the script into drama. The series premiered in the early nineties, and became available in a substantially revised and updated edition beginning in 2005, featuring full-color production photographs, new and revised activities, enlarged glosses, and expanded and reorganized notes.

**Oxford School Shakespeare Series editor Roma Gill, 1994 to the present.** Comparable to the *Cambridge School Shakespeare* (see below), this well-established series focuses primarily on the needs of students, aiding in their understanding and enjoyment of the plays. All texts and complete and unabridged with corresponding
notes alongside the text for easy reference. There are plot summaries at the beginning of each scene, detailed introductions, and a range of classwork activities and examination practice as well as background information on Elizabethan England.

The CliffsComplete Shakespeare Series Various editors, 2000. At the beginning of the 21st century, the good folks at Cliff Notes finally acknowledged the howls of protest from teachers across the country by introducing their new revised and expanded study edition of Shakespeare's plays. These new editions contain the full text of the play in addition to the usual Cliff Notes apparatus (glossary, expert commentary in a unique, 2-column format, and a review section following the play). Notes and definitions appear directly opposite the line in which they occur.

No Fear Shakespeare SparkNotes editors, 2003 to the present. This series, produced by SparkNotes (originally a website started in 1999, but now an imprint of Barnes & Noble), inherits the mantle of the Barron's Shakespeare Made Easy edited by Alan Durband in the 1980s. It puts Shakespeare's language side-by-side with a facing-page “translation” into modern English.

Production Related Series

Shakespeare in Production, general editors Jacky Bratton & Julie Hankey, Cambridge University Press, 1996 to the present. This series offers the fullest possible stage histories of individual Shakespearean texts. In each volume a substantial introduction presents a conceptual overview of the play, marking out the major stages of its representation and reception. The commentary, presented alongside the New Cambridge edition of the text itself, offers detailed, line-by-line evidence for the overview presented in the introduction, making the volume a flexible tool for further research. The editors have selected interesting and vivid evocations of settings, acting and stage presentation and range widely in time and space. Major stage productions outside Britain are also included, as are adaptations, film and video versions. Invaluable and highly recommended.

Shakespeare in Performance, general editors James C. Bulman and Carol Chilington Rutter, 1996 to the present The study of Shakespeare's plays as scripts for performance in the theatre has grown in recent years to become a major interest for many university, college and secondary-school students and their teachers. The aim of the series is to assist this study by describing how certain of Shakespeare's texts have been realized in production. The series in not concerned to provide theatre histories, rather each contributor has selected a small number of productions of a particular play and studied them comparatively. The productions, often from different periods, countries and media, have been chosen because they are significant interpretations in their own right, but also because
they represent something of the range of possible interpretations of the play in hand. Plays covered thus far include all the major tragedies, the *Henry VI* plays, *Love's Labour's Lost, A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and others. Recommended. NOTE: THIS EDITION DOES NOT CONTAIN THE TEXT OF THE PLAYS.

*Shakespeare at Stratford*, general editor Robert Smallwood, Arden Shakespeare, 2002 to the present. The series discusses and analyses the wide range of theatrical interpretation stimulated and provoked by the most frequently performed plays. Each volume explores the ways in which different directors, designers and actors have interpreted and adapted an individual play in terms of narrative focus, themes and characters, scenery and costume. The focus is on productions at Stratford-upon-Avon from 1945 onwards, since the record of Shakespeare performances at Stratford's theatres offers a wider, fuller and more various range of interpretation than is offered by any other theatre company. The volumes also set this record in a wider geographical and chronological context by means of a historical overview of earlier productions and of productions beyond Stratford. NOTE: THIS EDITION DOES NOT CONTAIN THE TEXT OF THE PLAYS.

**First Folio Editions/Facsimiles (Single- and Multi-Volume)**

*The Norton Facsimile: The First Folio of Shakespeare*, prepared by Charlton Hinman, W.W. Norton & Co., 1968; 2nd edition, 1996, with a new introduction by Peter W.M. Blayney. A beautiful, full-size photographic facsimile of The First Folio of 1623, reproducing the finally corrected state of every Folio page, collated from the 29 most satisfactory copies from the Folger Shakespeare Library. The 2nd edition of 1996 is brought fully up to date with a new introduction that considers Professor Hinman’s original findings in light of the most recent scholarship. This is the best Folio facsimile available, but, unfortunately, this slip-cased hardcover edition will set you back $150! Look for the Applause edition listed below.

*The Applause Facsimile: The First Folio of Shakespeare*, prepared and introduced by Doug Moston, Applause, 1995. A very inexpensive trade paperback alternative to the above, durably bound and with generous supporting material, including a glossary, bibliography and history of First Folio scholarship. But there is a serious problem: many of the pages were reproduced from *The Norton Facsimile* without proper care taken to secure the copyright, and because of subsequent legal problems this edition has gone out of print. You’ll need to search used bookshops and the internet to find it, but the money you’ll save will be worth the effort.

*The Applause First Folio of Shakespeare in Modern Type* prepared and annotated by Neil Freeman, 2000 Not to be confused with the Applause Facsimile listed above, this volume is an invaluable addition to any
Shakespearean’s library. For the first time the First Folio of 1623 is reproduced faithfully, page-by-page, in modern type, making for what is inarguably the most reader-friendly edition of the Folio ever published. Freeman’s introductions and endnotes are generous, comprehensive, and typically idiosyncratic, reflecting the staunchly-held views of a true “Foliophile.” Highly recommended.

**Applause First Folio Editions, prepared and annotated by Neil Freeman, 2001-2002** Neil Freeman trained as an actor at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School and has acted and directed in England, Canada and the United States. A Master Teacher with Shakespeare & Company in Lenox, Mass, Freeman’s groundbreaking work in using the first printings of the Shakespeare texts in performance, on the rehearsal floor and in the classroom has made him an important figure in the vanguard of champions of the First Folio. This multi-volume paperback series published by Applause Books is primarily concerned with text variations, line structures, punctuation, capitalization and other such matters near and dear to the First Folio camp. Opposite each page of text is a blank page for reader notes and comments. But warning: this series may be touted as actor-friendly and, in the words of former Globe Artistic Director Mark Rylance, “...the greatest thing to happen for Shakespearean actors at the end of this century...”, but in fact the textual notes common to this sort of edition are practically nonexistent. There is an excellent general introduction, but primarily this edition is for First Folio fanatics and not the general reader/student/actor.

**The Shakespeare Folios edited by Nick de Somogyi, 2001 to the present** This new edition published by Nick Hern Books, accurately reproduces the First Folio letter for letter, dot for dot, but does so in modern type. What makes this preferable to the Applause First Folio series is that, as a further aid to understanding, on each opposite page, the same text appears, but this time in a fully modernized version. Each volume, scrupulously edited by Shakespeare scholar Nick de Somogyi, also contains two introductions - one to the series, one to the particular play - textual notes, an appendix giving variant versions from the Quarto where appropriate, and a facsimile page from the First Folio. In the words of director Peter Hall, “...a quite wonderful idea...so blindingly obvious, I can’t understand why nobody had thought of it before.”

**The Poetry**

**The Sonnets**
There are dozens of editions of the sonnets. These are the five preferred editions from which you can choose when looking for a study version. All five are dependable, comprehensive editions, varying in availability and price, but you are safe with any of them.
Shakespeare’s Sonnets, edited by Stephen Booth, Yale University Press, 1977. A classic in its field, leading the way for the explosion of interest in the poems during the subsequent twenty-five years.


Shakespeare’s Sonnets, edited by Katherine Duncan-Jones, Thomas Nelson/Arden Shakespeare, 1997. Part of the Arden Third Series, this is an exhaustive edition which would probably be the first choice for students and actors alike. Inexpensive and authoritative, it has extensive notes and critical commentary. Highly recommended.

The Art of Shakespeare’s Sonnets, Helen Vendler, Harvard University Press, 1997. Very detailed commentary by one of the finest close readers of poetry in the field. Definitely more scholarly and erudite than most editions, it will no doubt be considered a standard work for many years to come. Recommended.

General Reference Works on Shakespeare
Again, whatever the category, when it comes to Shakespeare there is a mind-boggling number of volumes to choose from. This very short list barely grazes the surface, but it amounts to what I consider a basic Shakespeare reference library for the actor, director, or serious student.

Best Recent All-Around Reference Works
The Reader’s Encyclopedia of Shakespeare, edited by Oscar James Campbell and Edward G. Quinn, Thomas Crowell Company, 1966. I consider this to be the Bible of Shakespeare reference books, and it has recently been reissued after years of being inexplicably out of print. Between its covers are crammed a thousand double-column pages filled with in-depth articles written by scholars and critics, covering the entire range of Shakespearean topics, including commentary on individual plays, characters, performers, literary conventions, festivals, and on and on. The original edition can still be found in used bookshops and on the internet for as little as fifteen or twenty dollars. If you’re serious about Shakespeare, this is the book to get. Most highly recommended.

The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare, edited by Michael Dobson and Stanley Wells, Oxford University Press, 2001. This new reference book will cost you, but it may be the best $45 you’ll ever invest. It is a wide-ranging general resource for information about the plays, the poems, their interpretation and performance. Laid out in encyclopedia fashion from A to Z, it features more than 500 pages of
contributions from more than a hundred scholars, and touches on everything from Elizabethan culture to film adaptations, providing an up-to-date chronology, a handy thematic list of entries, and a wealth of illustrations and photographs. Although perhaps not quite as comprehensive as Campbell and Quinn (above), I’d be tempted to say that it more than makes up for it by taking full advantage of the intervening 35 years of scholarship. One of the best single-volume reference volumes available, it can be easily found at the local bookstore. Highly recommended.

_Shakespeare A to Z, Charles Boyce, Facts on File, 1990._

Another ambitious reference guide (740+ double column pages) to the complete world of Shakespeare. This volume is geared more towards the general reader, and lacks the more scholarly feel of the _Oxford Companion._ Still, it might prove to be an invaluable purchase for the interested student/reader.

Asimov’s _Guide to Shakespeare: A Guide to Understanding and Enjoying the Works of Shakespeare, Isaac Asimov, 1970 (reissued 2003)._ In an easy-to-read format, the scene-by-scene key reveals the mythological, historical, and geographical roots of all of Shakespeare’s plays and narrative poems while supplying the modern reader with the background and knowledge to understand and enjoy them. With 40 maps and 16 charts.

**Shakespeare Biography**

There are hundreds, if not thousands, of Shakespearean biographies. This is merely the short list, culled from four hundred years of scholarship.

**Best Classic Biographies (Out-of-Print)**

_The Life of William Shakespeare,_ Sidney Lee, 1898. This early classic is a greatly expanded version of Lee’s article written in 1897 for _The Dictionary of National Biography,_ and revised in later editions. It was long regarded as the standard life of Shakespeare, but obviously does not have the advantage of more than a hundred years of recent scholarship and is written in the style of a late-19th century biography.

_The Life of William Shakespeare,_ Joseph Quincy Adams, 1923. This was particularly strong on Shakespeare’s theatrical background, and for decades offered serious rivalry to Sidney Lee as the best life of the Bard.

_William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems,_ E.K. Chambers, 1930 in two volumes. This is a very thorough, very scholarly synthesis and reappraisal of the then-current state of knowledge concerning every aspect of Shakespeare’s life and career. Monumental and still indispensable, though hardly a first purchase for the novice.

_William Shakespeare, A.L. Rowse, 1963._ Very opinionated but written with real flair, this is valued mainly for its setting of the historical scene.
Best Recent Biographies

*Shakespeare, Anthony Burgess, 1970.* This is a fascinating study of the dramatist from the perspective of a successful novelist and translator. Probably a good first purchase for someone just beginning to develop an interest in Shakespeare.

*Shakespeare’s Lives, S. Schoenbaum, 1970, rev. and updated 1991.* This classic study is no mere biography. Rather it is a *history* of Shakespeare biographies and biographers down through the ages, and was intended as a preliminary study for a biography which he not live to write. Highly recommended.


*Shakespeare: A Life, Park Honan, 1998.* Well-written, full and elegant, this biography was highly praised upon publication and continues to be cited as the best of the many recent volumes on Shakespeare’s life.

*Shakespeare the Player: A Life in the Theatre, John Southworth, Sutton Publishing, 2000.* A very recent addition to the landslide of biographical works, this is no doubt one of the most ingenious. Southworth, an actor-director-historian, argues that Shakespeare’s profession as a player, which has been largely ignored, provides the key to understanding his development as a dramatist as well. Astutely argued and persuasive, I nominate this as the most overlooked and underrated of recent biographies. Highly recommended.

*Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare, Stephen Greenblatt, 2004.* Scholar Stephen Greenblatt reminds us that the "surviving traces" are "abundant but thin" as to known facts. He acknowledges the paradox of the many biographies spun out of conjecture but then produces a book so persuasive and breathtakingly enjoyable that one wonders what he could have done if the usual stuff of biographical inquiry--memos, interviews, manuscripts, and drafts--had been at his disposal. Greenblatt uses the "verbal traces" in Shakespeare's work to take us "back into the life he lived and into the world to which he was so open." Whenever possible, he also ushers us from the extraordinary life into the luminous work. The result is a marvelous blend of scholarship, insight, observation, and, yes, conjecture--but conjecture always based on the most convincing and inspired reasoning and evidence. Particularly compelling are Greenblatt’s discussions of the playwright's relationship with the university wit Robert Greene (discussed as a chief source for the character of Falstaff) and of Hamlet in relation to the death of Shakespeare’s son Hamnet, his aging father, and the "world of damaged rituals" that England's Catholics were forced to endure. *Will in the World* is not just the life story of the world's most revered
writer. It is the story, too, of 16th- and 17th-century England writ large, the story of religious upheaval and political intrigue, of country festivals and brutal public executions, of the court and the theater, of Stratford and London, of martyrdom and recusancy, of witchcraft and magic, of love and death: in short, of the private but engaged William Shakespeare in his remarkable world. Throughout the book, Greenblatt's style is breezy and familiar. He often refers to the poet simply as Will. Yet for all his alacrity of style and the book's accessibility, *Will in the World* is profoundly erudite, an enormous contribution to the world of Shakespearean letters.

**Shakespeare: The Biography. Peter Ackroyd, 2005.** Describing himself as a Shakespeare enthusiast instead of an expert, Ackroyd focuses on the bard as an extraordinarily talented theater professional rather than rhapsodizing about the intricacies of the man's genius. He interweaves Shakespeare's life story with England's dramatic history and the fascinating world of the emerging Elizabethan theater. Apocryphal stories are identified and plausible explanations for what occurred during the missing years are offered. Shakespeare emerges as a thoroughly engaging, almost modern man, brimming with humor, eager for social advancement, and carefully tracking the popular trends in entertainment. Students who want to discover whether Shakespeare really was the author of the famous plays will find compelling evidence that only the man from Stratford could have hidden so many ingenious clues in his work. Sixteen pages of color illustrations include portraits of Shakespeare's famous contemporaries, photographs of the interiors of Elizabethan buildings, and illustrated title pages. Those daunted by the length of this book will find it a good reference source. Students looking for information on the building of the Globe, the meanings of the sonnets, the differences in the various editions and revisions of the plays, and other typical academic questions will find useful, well-organized information. A rich, vivid account.

**A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare: 1599, James Shapiro, Harper Collins, 2005.** The year 1599 was crucial in the Bard's artistic evolution as well as in the historical upheavals he lived through. That year's output—*Henry V, Julius Caesar, As You Like It* and (debatably) *Hamlet*—not only spans a shift in artistic direction and theatrical taste, but also echoes the intrigues of Queen Elizabeth's court and the downfall of her favorite, the Earl of Essex. Like other Shakespeare biographers, Columbia professor Shapiro notes the importance of mundane events in Shakespeare's art, starting here with the construction of the Globe Theatre and the departure of Will Kemp, the company's popular comic actor. Having a stable venue and repertory gave Shakespeare the space to write and experiment during the turmoil created by Essex's unsuccessful military ventures in Ireland, a threatened invasion by a second Spanish Armada and, finally, Essex's disastrous return to court. Shapiro is in a minority in arguing for Shakespeare initially composing *Hamlet* at the same time Essex was plotting a coup; there's little textual or documentary evidence for that dating. Still,
Shapiro’s shrewd discussion of what is arguably Shakespeare’s greatest play, particularly its multiple versions, rounds out this accessible yet erudite work.

The Authorship Controversy

*Shakespeare by Another Name: A Biography of Edward De Vere, Earl of Oxford, The Man Who Was Shakespeare*, Mark Anderson, 2005. One of the most recent in what seems to be an endless series of tomes arguing for De Vere as the man who “really” wrote the plays attributed to Shakespeare. Anderson claims to have conducted ten years of research on the subject, though Stratfordians will argue that it’s the same old compendium of misinformation, historical errors, leaps in logic and intellectual dishonesty. All the same, this and its predecessors (including *The Mysterious Williams Shakespeare: The Myth and the Reality* by Charlton Ogburn, 1992, etc.) make for fascinating reading.

*Contested Will: Who Wrote Shakespeare?, James Shapiro, 2010.* This volume explores when and why so many people began to question whether Shakespeare wrote his plays. Among the doubters have been such writers and thinkers as Sigmund Freud, Henry James, Mark Twain, and Helen Keller. It is a fascinating story, replete with forgeries, deception, false claimants, ciphers and codes, conspiracy theories—and a stunning failure to grasp the power of the imagination. As *Contested Will* makes clear, much more than proper attribution of Shakespeare’s plays is at stake in this authorship controversy. Underlying the arguments over whether Christopher Marlowe, Francis Bacon, or the Earl of Oxford wrote Shakespeare’s plays are fundamental questions about literary genius, specifically about the relationship of life and art. Are the plays (and poems) of Shakespeare a sort of hidden autobiography? Do *Hamlet, Macbeth*, and the other great plays somehow reveal who wrote them? Shapiro is the first Shakespeare scholar to examine the authorship controversy and its history in this way, explaining what it means, why it matters, and how it has persisted despite abundant evidence that William Shakespeare of Stratford wrote the plays attributed to him. This is a brilliant historical investigation that will delight anyone interested in Shakespeare and the literary imagination.

Language and Text-Related Reference Works

Dictionaries and Glossaries

*Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. Edmund S. Weiner & J.A. Simpson, Oxford University Press, 1989. More than 100 years in the making, filling a whopping 20 volumes, and costing $1,395, this is hardly what you’d call a space-saving bargain. But the Oxford English Dictionary has long been considered the ultimate reference work in English lexicography. Compiled by the legendary editor James Murray and a staff of
brilliant philologists and lexicographers (not to mention one homicidal maniac), the OED was originally conceived in 1857 as a four-volume set, but by the time the last volume was published in 1928, it had swelled to 10 volumes containing over 400,000 entries. In the years since, the staff of the OED has continued to keep pace with our ever-evolving language, and today the dictionary contains definitions of 500,000 words, 290,000 main entries, 137,000 pronunciations, 249,300 etymologies, 577,000 cross-references, and over 2,412,000 illustrative quotations. The great joy of this dictionary lies in its extensive cross-references and word etymologies, which can run a full page or more. But as large as it is, perhaps its most important feature is its historical focus. The OED records not only words and meanings currently in use but also those that have long been considered obsolete. Moreover, under each definition of a word is a chronologically arranged group of quotations that illustrate the word’s usage down through the years, beginning with its earliest known appearance. The result is a dictionary that offers unique insight into the way our language has, over the centuries, grown, changed, and been put to use. You also have the option of The Compact Oxford English Dictionary – not an abridgement, but a direct photo reduction of the entire 20-volume set, with nine pages of the original on every nine-by-twelve page of the Compact (a magnifying glass comes with it). As in the Second Edition, the Compact combines in one alphabetical sequence the sixteen volumes of the first OED and the four Supplements—plus an extra five thousand new words to bring this monumental dictionary completely up to date.

**Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary, 2 volumes, Alexander Schmidt, 1874 (reissued 1971 as Dover paperbacks).** Exhaustive and comprehensive, this landmark lexical reference has become widely available in the inexpensive Dover reprint, and can be found at most well-stocked bookstores. A treasure trove for actors, directors, and the general reader, and far more comprehensive than Onions. Highly recommended

**A Shakespeare Glossary, C.T. Onions, Clarendon Press, 1986 (revised by Robert D. Eagleson).** Originally published in 1911, and revised in 1919 by Onions, this widely available volume is probably the best known of the Shakespearean glossaries. A classic in the field, it was further revised in 1986 by Robert D. Eagleson and certainly served as a popular compact alternative to the two larger volumes by Schmidt (though it is not nearly as broad in scope).

**Shakespeare’s Language: A Glossary of Unfamiliar Words in His Plays and Poems, Eugene F. Shewmaker, Checkmark Books, 1999.** The latest entry in the landslide of language reference books, this one is fairly good, filled with more than 15,000 entries – arcane references, unfamiliar expressions and made-up words – with definitions and quotes placing each word in context. An invaluable resource, especially if Onions, Schmidt, or the OED are unavailable or difficult to find.
Shakespeare’s Words: A Glossary and Language Companion, David Crystal and Ben Crystal, Penguin, 2002. This is a most ambitious work that will be of immense value to student and scholar alike, a worthy successor to the landmark volumes (Schmidt & Onions) that preceded it. Using the New Penguin Shakespeare as their text, the editors, linguist David Crystal and his actor son Ben Crystal, first collected all of the "problem" words flagged by the Penguin editors and then scoured the plays and sonnets for additional "difficult" words--especially words that are no longer current or that have developed a different sense since Shakespeare's time. After a few further additions, their entries totaled 21,263 under 13,626 headwords. Most entries have three glosses, each providing a slightly different slant. For example, englut is glossed as "swallow up, gulp down, devour." Each entry includes part of speech, an illustrative quotation (with text and context identified), and selected references to other occurrences. Sidebars contain brief tutorials on address forms, money, weapons, and more. Readers newly acquainted with Shakespeare will benefit greatly by browsing through the Crystals' list of 100 frequently encountered words, which are accompanied by more illustrative quotations than are provided elsewhere. Other useful features are a chronology, plot synopses, diagrams illustrating interactions of characters, and 16 appendixes providing brief definitions for historical people, places, foreign terms, and other vocabulary not found in the A-Z section.

Speaking the Text

Shakespeare Aloud: A Guide to his Verse on Stage, Edward S. Brubaker, 1976. This slim, self-published volume is designed to be a clear analysis of the principles underlying Shakespearean verse, written by an experienced actor/director. Not as thoroughgoing as some of its competitors, it remains a sensible approach to the basic challenges of dealing with what Brubaker refers to as “the Shakespearean line.”

The Actor and the Text, Cicely Berry, Applause, 1992. This is a revision of Berry’s classic voice text, The Actor and His Text (1987). Berry, who has served as Voice Director for the Royal Shakespeare Company, addresses the issues surrounding good vocal production and dealing with Shakespearean text, from relaxation, breathing and muscle control to the weight, texture, and color of the words themselves.

Freening Shakespeare’s Voice: The Actor’s Guide to Talking the Text, Kristin Linklater, TCG, 1992. Linklater, a veteran voice teacher, actor and director who has lately been associated with Shakespeare & Company, explores a variety of techniques for dealing with Shakespeare, covering topics such as the task of creating character, story and meaning through figures of speech,
iambic pentameter, rhyme, and alternations of verse and prose. She uses copious examples from the plays, and includes chapters on Shakespeare’s relevance in today’s world.

Acting Shakespeare

**Playing Shakespeare: An Actor’s Guide, John Barton, 1984 (reissued by Anchor Books in 2001).** Michael Billington says it all on the cover: “One of the sanest, wisest, and most practical volumes I have ever read about Shakespeare.” Barton, of course, is a 35-year veteran of the RSC, having directed and adapted Shakespearean texts for that company, and the wealth of knowledge he has in that area comes into play time and time again as he works with world-class actors – Ian McKellen, Judi Dench, Ben Kingsley, and others – on the explication of Shakespeare’s verse and prose. In the course of twelve chapters, he covers such issues as heightened language, irony and ambiguity, the sonnets, prose, passion and coolness, and soliloquies. Simply the best book ever written on acting Shakespeare. Most highly recommended.

**Secrets of Acting Shakespeare: The Original Approach, Patrick Tucker, Theatre Arts, 2001.** Tucker is a prolific stage and television director and a former assistant director with the Royal Shakespeare Company. He is Vice Chair of the Artistic Directorate of the International Shakespeare's Globe Center on London's Bankside and the head of an intrepid company of London actors, the Original Shakespeare Company (OSC). The OSC works from the First Folio of 1623, paying special attention to its punctuation, spellings, capitalizations, and lineation. In keeping with Elizabethan practice, OSC members receive only their own parts, or sides, what Tucker calls cue scripts, which contain the individual character's lines and the brief cues that precede them. This volume focuses on the lessons learned from years of experience using this process with these actors. Tucker’s advocacy of the First Folio sometimes borders on the fanatical, and has raised the hackles of a number of Shakespearean scholars. But this is a fascinating book and worth any actor or director’s attention.

**The Actor’s Guide to Performing Shakespeare for Film, Television and Theatre, Madd Harold, Lone Eagle, 2002.** Madd Harold is the pseudonym for a young actor (real name unknown) who burst onto the Montreal theater scene in 2001 after studying at the London Academy of Peforming Arts and the Stella Adler Conservatory. The book is written in a straightforward, user-friendly style and covers a wealth of practical advice, from breath control, phrasing, the use of overruns in iambic pentameter, to the logic and structure of argument in monologues and soliloquies. I think it’s one of the best of the many books in this particular field.

**Mastering Shakespeare: An Acting Class in Seven Scenes, Scott Kaiser, Allworth Press, 2003.** The book is structured in a rather odd fashion – in dialogue form, almost like a play – wherein a “master teacher” (Kaiser) and
his class of sixteen students wrestle with the difficulties of acting Shakespeare’s plays. He uses dozens of speeches from the plays, and each of the “scenes” offer solutions gleaned from Kaiser’s experience as head of voice and text at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland, Oregon, where he has coached more than 65 productions. A little precious for my taste, but still a useful compendium of insights.

**Will Power: How to Act Shakespeare in 21 Days, John Basil and Stephanie Gunning, Applause Books, 2006.** Terrible title, but not a bad introduction slash practical guide to putting Shakespeare on its feet. Basil is the producing artistic director and co-founder of the American Globe Theater in New York where, through his conservatory there, he has taught the Playing Shakespeare Series for a number of years. It is broken down into a 21-day approach to the Bard, focusing each day on a new tactic – repetition, capitalization, verbs, physicalization, pace, even the application of Stanislavski’s work to Shakespearean text. Good for rehearsal insights and activities.

**Thinking Shakespeare, Barry Edelstein, Spark Publishing, 2007.** Edelstein, with a twenty-year career directing Shakespeare in collaboration with such actors as Kevin Kline, Bill Irwin, Jeffrey Wright, and John Turturro, has written this book with an eye toward giving student and professional actors alike practical advice on how to bring spontaneity, passion, and a sense of reality to Shakespeare’s words. It is well-written, insightful, and laden with an informality and humor that will appeal to the non-scholar. He structures the book like a play – prologue, five acts, an intermission and an epilogue – and covers all the important bases, from scansion, antithesis and rhythm to irony, wit, prose and stage business. The epilogue, by the way, is a handy little chapter on resources for further reading. Highly recommended. (Recently gone out of print, alas!)

### Monologues and Soliloquies

**Shakespeare for One: Men, The Complete Monologues and Audition Pieces. Douglas Newell, ed., Heinemann, 2002.** This purports to be a comprehensive and actor-friendly assemblage of virtually all of the monologues for men to be found in Shakespeare’s dramatic canon. Some, however, are missing (I noticed immediately that Friar Laurence’s “The grey-eyed morn smiles at the frowning night,” was nowhere to be found), but most of these are cited as “alternates” at the end of each chapter. In any case, it’s probably just nit-picking, as this 300-page paperback is crammed with monologue possibilities, all of them clearly introduced, and the editor provides helpful notes for the initiate. Definitely one of the best starting points for a young actor seeking that perfect Shakespearean monologue.

companion volume for women and girls on the lookout for suitable Shakespearean monologues.

*Speak the Speech! Shakespeare’s Monologues Illuminated, An Actor's Tool Kit.* Rhona Silverbush and Sami Plotkin, Faber & Faber, 2002. This handbook provides easy access to information needed by actors or students preparing a monologue drawn from Shakespeare. Acting coach Silverbush and actor Plotkin offer synopses of Shakespeare's plays and cover his use of iambic pentameter, poetic and rhetorical elements, and historical and social context. They also include the full, modernized text of 150 monologues, arranged by genre. The monologues are identified by play title, act and scene, name of character speaking, character's gender and age range, and frequency of use in auditions. Brief introductions place the monologues in context, and extensive glosses of unfamiliar vocabulary are followed by an analysis aimed at helping an actor interpret the text. No other volume treating Shakespeare's monologues is as complete as this one.

**Shakespeare's Theater**

*Playgoing in Shakespeare’s London, 3rd edition,* Andrew Gurr, 2004. This revision of Gurr's classic account of the people for whom Shakespeare wrote his plays assembles evidence from the writings of the time to describe the physical structure of the playhouses, the services provided in the auditorium, the cost of a ticket and a cushion, the size of the crowds, the smells, the pickpockets, and the collective feelings generated by the plays. He also considers the difference between Shakespearean and modern thinking about early staging, the complex historical process which established the permanent playhouse, and the development of a distinctly different acting style in the open-air playhouses from that of the indoor halls.

**Shakespeare’s World**

*The Elizabethan World Picture,* E.M.W. Tillyard, 1959. This brief and illuminating account of the ideas of world order prevalent in the Elizabethan age and later is an indispensable companion for readers of the great writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—Shakespeare and the Elizabethan dramatists, Donne and Milton, among many others. The basic medieval idea of an ordered Chain of Being is studied by Professor Tillyard in the process of its various transformations by the dynamic spirit of the Renaissance. Among his topics are: Angels; the Stars and Fortunes; the Analogy between Macrocosm and Microcosm; the Four Elements; the Four Humours; Sympathies; Correspondences; and the Cosmic Dance—ideas and symbols which inspired the minds and imaginations not only of the Elizabethans but of all men of the Renaissance.