Conjectures are that Shakespeare may have attended a 'petty school' to learn the alphabet and catechism (a popular Elizabethan learning pattern for children involving question and answer), and then he might have attended a grammar school known as King's New School. In this kind of school, mainly conducted by the church, students were made to work very hard. Boy students from age eight to fifteen attended the classes on an arduous routine, which started at 6:00 A. M. in summer and 7:00 A. M in winter, and continued up to 5:00 P. M., with few breaks and holidays. Quite a harsh discipline was maintained in the school, and flogging was a common punishment, which was executed on the students' buttocks. The principal of the school that Shakespeare attended was Thomas Jenkins, an Oxford graduate, with 25 pounds as salary per year and a rent-free house.

The primary school curriculum of Shakespeare's days was based on Latin and Greek literature. The study of Latin was compulsory in the syllabus, and in fact in higher classes speaking in English was forbidden, much in the same way as speaking in Bangla is not permitted in many English-medium schools in Bangladesh.

The most common grammar book for English children during Shakespeare's time was William Lily's Latin Grammar, *Grammatica Latina*. Learning Latin, however, was a hard task, though Shakespeare may have been one of the fast learners. By the age of twelve the English children would have mastered the elements of the Latin grammar. Roger Ascham (pronounced Askam), a great schoolteacher of the time, who also taught Elizabeth, had designed a lesson in which the English child would simultaneously use a Latin text and a translated version of it into English in order to identify the correct sentences. In the school Shakespeare might have learnt the *sententiae* (Latin word for a morally edifying sentence), and the moral tags. That is why his plays have such lines based on traditional proverbs: 'All the world's a stage', or 'We are such staff as dreams are made on', or in an extreme case, 'Frailty, thy name is woman'.

Shakespeare might have been a very absorbing reader. It is said of Keats that no other poet had read Shakespeare better than he had, and about Shakespeare it can be said that he had read literature and history rather well. His plays show that he might have found *Aesop's Fables*, Apuleius's *Golden Ass* and Ovid's *Metamorphosis* particularly interesting. Shakespeare, however, spares no opportunity in looking back on his school days with mock serenity. English grammar which has so far kept people of this subcontinent mesmerized for hundreds of years, and having a profound knowledge of which has been recognized as the measuring rod of being educated or not, had also bothered Shakespeare to no end. In *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, he makes Sir Hugh Evans, the Welshman ask William Page a question about the genitive case: 'What is your genitive case plural, William?' (4.2.52).

And the fact that he might have felt his time in school as drudgery, the way both Tagore and Nazrul did find it boring, is rather sarcastically stated in *As You Like It*, where Jaques in his famous 'All the world's a stage' (2.1.139ff) speech describes a schoolboy walking to school unwillingly: 'the whining schoolboy with his satchel / And shining morning face, creeping like snail / Unwillingly to school' (2.7.144-46).

Shakespeare may have left school in 1579, or at the latest, 1580.

Ben Jonson, the rival playwright, and a sustained critic of Shakespeare, complained in his prefatory poem to the Folio edition of 1623 that Shakespeare had "small Latin and less Greek." This comment, which meant that Shakespeare knew very little Latin and almost had no knowledge of Greek, had kept Shakespeare scholars sleepless ever since. They have collected evidence to well refute Jonson. However, the comment is unfair. It is like saying Tagore did know very little English because he did not have a university degree. Jonson, who used to sign his name with his degree M. A. written after it, was jealous of Shakespeare, considered him a great rival, and left little to chance when it was to make a remark on his great contemporary.

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On the other hand, a booklist of Shakespeare's reading may prove that he had read, if not in the original but in translation, authors like Cato (through Erasmus, a pioneer Dutch humanist before Shakespeare), Ovid (in Golding's translation), Plutarch (as translated by North, the major source for Shakespeare's Roman plays), Livy (in Holland's translation), and very prominently Montaigne as translated by Florio. The last mentioned is significant, because in