



The Shakespeare family: William with his parents, brothers and sisters.

Hall's Croft

Teacher's Booklet

Answers



Let your pupils be detectives and learn what life would have been like for the people who lived in this house.

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The Bedroom

Amazing Fact! – People in Tudor and Jacobean times were very superstitious. Babies were often given rattles with a whistles and bells on them. The family then taught the baby to blow the whistle because they thought that the noise would summon the parents if evil spirits were around. The bells were meant to keep the bad spirits away!



In the large picture of the mother and child that is hanging on the wall next to the bed, do you think the child is a girl or a boy? What evidence is there to support your answer?

A girl: evidence 1) hair is scraped back from the forehead, 2) she is wearing a necklace with red beads (a boy would have worn a sash), and 3) girls were typically painted with their mothers whilst boys were painted with their fathers.

Find the large box standing on the floor with a circular cover inside it. What do you think this would have been used for? Would you like to use one?

It is a 'close stool' or toilet. The chamber pot would have fitted inside the box. The circular stopper and the box lid helped to disguise the box's purpose. This type of 'close stool' would only have been owned by a wealthy family. Others would just have an ordinary chamber or piss pot.

On the bed there is a warming pan. How do you think this warmed the bed and what made the heat?

Hot coals or wood embers would be put inside. The warming pan would then be placed under the covers and could be moved around to warm up all parts of the bed.

There is a large chest at the end of the bed and it can be locked. Why do you think the family had a lockable chest kept in the parents' bedroom?

It would have been a safe place to keep expensive and valuable things.

The bed has a tester (canopy) above the bed. This was common in Tudor times. What purpose do you think the tester had?

Testers or canopies stopped bugs, animal droppings and other things from falling onto a bed (and into your mouth, if you were sleeping with your mouth open!).

The Parlour

Amazing Fact! – In the picture of the family about to eat, most of the family members are wearing black. This shows that they were a wealthy family as to turn material a deep black colour, it had to be dyed lots of times making it very expensive!

If you look carefully at the upright timber beside the fireplace, you will see two rectangular holes cut out of it. What do you think these might be evidence of?

Places where additional walls may have been. These could be holes that the wall timbers may have slotted into. It is likely (given the position of the original door) that the door would have opened into a passageway and not directly into the room.

Look carefully around the timbers in the frame of the building. What do you think the round wooden pegs are for?

To hold the wooden timbers together.

The large painting on the wall shows a family about to eat dinner. What foods can you see on the table?

You can see meat, white bread, and salt.

The Dispensary

Amazing Fact! – Doctors in John Hall’s time often diagnosed what was wrong with their patients by checking their urine. In fact, you did not even have to go to see the doctor yourself but could just send a servant around with your urine in a pot!

Find the picture ‘Doctor Casting the Water’, showing a doctor diagnosing what was wrong with the patient by checking their urine. How do you think they did this?

By looking at the colour (and whether there was any other substance in it e.g. blood), whether it was clear or cloudy and if it had any smell. Sometimes they even tasted it!

Some of the containers have spouts and some do not. Some are larger than others. Why do you think they are different?

Those with spouts contained liquid while those without contained solids. Some of the ingredients might have been kept in smaller quantities due to cost or amount being used. Others, such as dried herbs or flowers, might have taken up more space.

The pestle and mortar was an important piece of equipment. What do you think it was used for?

It would have been used for crushing and grinding the ingredients into powder.

Why did the doctor have a set of scales in his dispensary?

So he would be able to accurately measure out the dry ingredients for medicines.



The Kitchen

Amazing Fact! – Bread was eaten at most meals. You could tell how wealthy somebody was by the type of bread they ate. Wealthy people ate a fine white bread and poor people ate bread made from rye (and it sometimes even had ground acorns in it!).

Hanging on the right hand side of the fireplace is a metal grill with a handle. What do you think the cook might have used this for?

It is a toaster and would have been used for toasting or grilling food.

At the back of the fireplace is a hanging wooden salt box. Why do you think the Tudors would have the salt in the fireplace?

Salt can absorb moisture from the air so hanging it on the wall in the fireplace would have kept it away from the cold and the damp. It would also have been within easy reach for cooking.

Find the bellows in the fireplace. What would they have been used for?

They acted as an air pump to push air into a small fire or onto a smouldering log to stoke the flames.

Look up at the ceiling. Why do you think the family had hooks hanging down? What might they have hung on them?

For hanging dried herbs and cold meat to keep them out of the way and safe from rats.

