

Literature

Warm-up

Discuss the following:

- ▶ Do you like reading literature? Why / Why not?
- ▶ What do you think are the benefits of reading literature?

A. Read the texts and answer the questions that follow. Write A for William Shakespeare, B for Charles Dickens, C for Vasyl Symonenko and D for Lesya Ukrainka.

A. **William Shakespeare** is one of the greatest writers of all times in the English language. As well as writing poetry and plays, he was an actor too. He was born in 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon, a market town in England. Not much is known about his early life, his education or when he began his writing career. At some point he moved to London, where he made his living as a playwright, actor and producer of several plays. **Shakespeare** produced a large number of works and his first plays were based on historical events and comedies, with the **exception** of the famous tragedy *Romeo and Juliet*. Later in his life he produced tragedies such as *Macbeth*, *Hamlet* and *Othello*, powerful stories of ambition, betrayal and revenge. His plays are the most performed worldwide, in both theatre and film, and have been translated into many different languages.

B. **Charles Dickens** was an English writer, born in 1812 in Portsmouth, England. He is considered one of the best authors of Victorian times and many of his books have been made into films. **Dickens** did not have an easy childhood. At the age of twelve he was forced to leave school and go to work under terrible conditions to help support his family. However, he later went back to school only to leave again at the age of fifteen. He started his writing career as a journalist, went on to write short stories and then became a novelist. Many of his best known novels have been adapted for the small screen, among them *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield* and *A Christmas Carol*. Apart from a wide **selection** of novels, which have been translated into many languages, **Dickens** wrote plays, travel books and his autobiography.

He was also an **advocate** for the poor and ran a charity organisation.

C. **Vasyl Symonenko** (1935-1963) was a well-known Ukrainian poet, journalist and activist. He is thought to be one of the most important personalities of Ukrainian literature of the early 1960s. He started writing poetry as a student but managed to have just one of his poetry collections published. His works mainly satirise the political situation at that time and describe the **hardships** peasants faced then. His work has been translated into English and in 2008 a Ukrainian coin was produced in his honour. **Symonenko** died when he was just 28, and a literary memorial museum was set up in Cherkasy in 1998.

D. **Lesya Ukrainka**, born in 1871, was one of Ukraine's best-known poets and authors and the foremost woman writer in Ukrainian literature. Since Ukrainian wasn't the main language used in education then, Lesya's parents, both intellectuals, decided on home schooling so that their children would **appreciate** the Ukrainian language and culture. Besides, Lesya came down with tuberculosis at an early age and, as a result, she couldn't attend school. By the age of four she had learnt to read and became an **avid** reader of the classics in later childhood years. She started writing poetry and at the age of thirteen, she got her work published. **Ukrainka** also wrote short stories and critical essays as well as translated works by other distinguished writers. Unfortunately, she was prone to getting ill throughout her life and died in 1913 at the age of 42.

Which writer/writers:

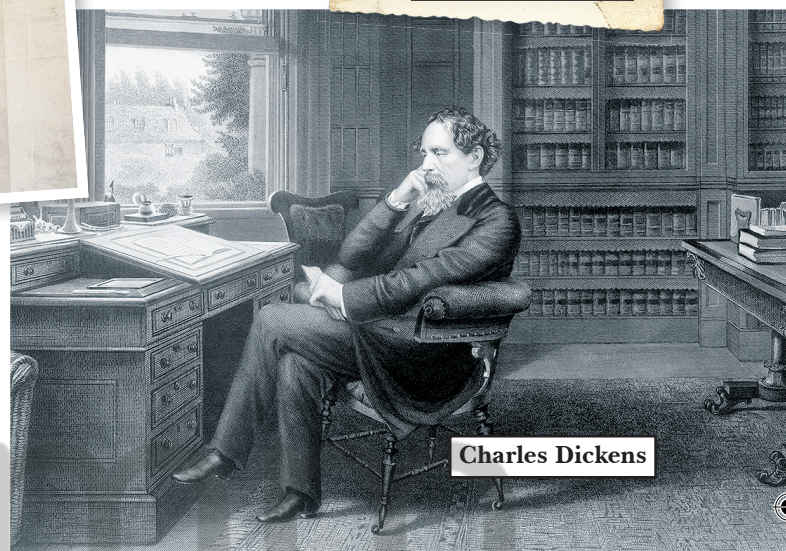
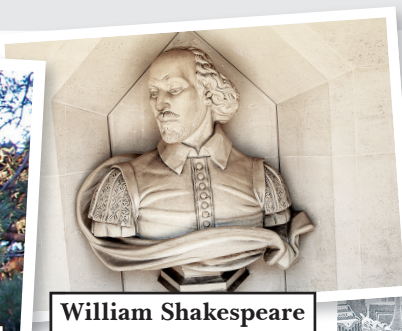
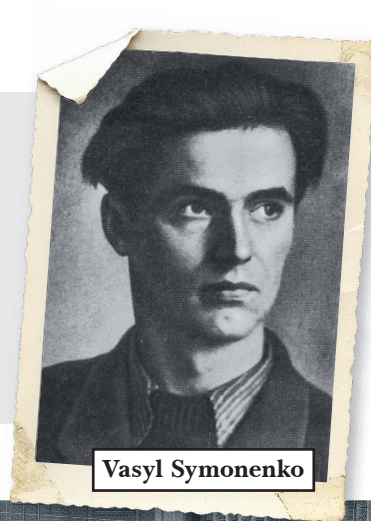
- 1. saw his or her work printed before becoming an adult?
- 2. have had some of their works made into films?
- 3. has had his or her work translated into one other language?

- 4. were sensitive to the problems people in need faced?
- 5. has an unknown childhood life story?
- 6. translated foreign writers' works into his or her native language?
- 7. wrote a book based on his or her own life?

B. Match the words 1-6 highlighted in the text with their meanings.

- 1. exception ○
- 2. selection ○
- 3. advocate ○
- 4. hardship ○
- 5. appreciate ○
- 6. avid ○

- a. someone who publicly supports something
- b. a difficult situation in life
- c. extremely interested
- d. something that does not belong in a group or list of other things
- e. a number of things that can be chosen from
- f. to understand that something is valuable or important



C. Write a short text (100-150 words) about a famous writer. Mention the following:

- ▶ some information about his or her family and childhood
- ▶ his or her works
- ▶ what makes him or her stand out

Full Blast 4
with Culture time for Ukraine
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