



Jerzy Limon and the Gdańsk Shakespeare Theatre

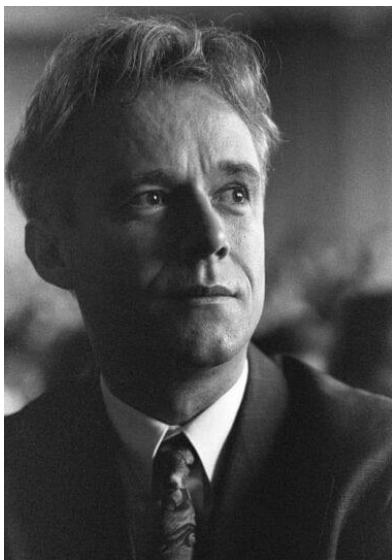
Celebrating the man, celebrating English

**A set of 18 cards
with tasks at B2 level and above**

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CARD 1

Let's meet



1. What are your first impressions of the man in the pictures?
2. What is his job? Why do you think so?
3. What might he be thinking about in these pictures?
4. If you could ask him one question, what would it be?
5. What hobbies or interests do you think he had?
6. What experiences could he have had?

CARD 2



Jerzy Limon (1950 – 2021)

Imagine yourself standing at the Golden Gate (Złota Brama) in Gdańsk. Like many other visitors to the city, you might be tempted to walk down Długa Street. However, you can also turn right and **stroll down** the side street until you see an imposing black building. What stands before you is a very unusual theatre, inspired by a similar building from Shakespeare's times and created by a truly **exceptional** man – Professor Jerzy Limon.

Before we explore the theatre itself, let's look at some interesting facts about the professor's life. He was born in 1950 in Malbork. Among his **memorable** childhood adventures was a **voyage** across the Atlantic, **which he undertook** alone at the age of 12 to visit his aunt and uncle in North Carolina. He travelled on board the famous ocean liner MS Batory and spent over a year in the United States, where he learnt to speak English fluently.

His life as a teenager was pretty rebellious – he did not like the school rules nor, despite being an **avid** reader, the books he was required to study. When he **fell short of credits** to take final exams, he went to Norway, where he lived the life of a hippie and did **odd jobs**. He returned a year later and managed to pass his secondary school final exams but failed entrance exams to university and instead of studying economics he spent two years working as a sound engineer for big beat bands. After that time, he began studying English at the University of Poznań. There, he met Professor Henryk Zbierski who inspired him with his love for all things Shakespeare.

As a **lecturer** in English Literature in Poznań and Gdańsk, he spent many years exploring the history of the **Elizabethan** theatre. He found evidence confirming the existence of an Elizabethan theatre in Gdańsk in the 17th century in the letters from the English actors who came to Gdańsk and **requested permission** to perform from the city council. This discovery became a starting point for a 25-year visionary project to recreate a Shakespearean theatre in Gdańsk.

How does one **tackle** such a monumental and challenging task? By letting the world know it needed a stage 😊. In 1990, Professor Limon co-founded the Theatrum Gedanense Foundation and established an annual Shakespeare festival in 1997 to **maintain public interest** in the project. He also wrote a letter to HRH Charles, the Prince of Wales, who supported the project and became its patron. He turned to politicians and theatre lovers for help. Thousands of hours, phone calls and meetings later an amazing design by the Italian architect, Renato Rizzi was chosen from among

38 submitted entries and the construction began. The theatre opened in 2014 – it is a **technological marvel** with movable stages and a roof which can be opened in 3 minutes to allow daylight in.

There was more, however, to this creative man. He remained an active academic teacher, translated some of Shakespeare's plays, wrote novels as well as academic books on history and theory of theatre, and, in 2009, created a small performance space, Teatr w Oknie / Two Windows Theatre, where artistic events are presented in a small internal space, in the windows and on the stage in Długa Street in Gdańsk.

His **untimely death** from COVID in 2021 was a **profound loss** to Polish and European culture, but what remains is a celebration of his dream; thanks to him for the past twenty-five years theatre lovers have enjoyed Shakespearean productions by the world's most interesting directors.

CARD 3A

Dictate the information to each other to get a complete text.

Imagine yourself standing at the Golden Gate (Złota Brama) in _____(1). Like many other visitors to the city, you might be tempted to walk down Długa Street. However, you can also turn right and stroll down the side street until you see an imposing black building. What stands before you is a very unusual _____(2), inspired by a similar building from Shakespeare's times and created by a truly exceptional man – Professor Jerzy Limon.

Before we explore the theatre itself, let's look at some interesting facts about the professor's life. He was born in _____(3) in Malbork. Among his memorable childhood adventures was a voyage across the Atlantic, which he undertook alone at the age of 12 to visit his aunt and uncle in _____(4). He travelled on board the famous ocean liner MS Batory and spent over a year in the United States, where he learnt to speak English fluently.

His life as a teenager was pretty rebellious – he did not like the school rules nor, despite being an avid reader, the books he was required to study. When he fell short of credits to take final exams, he went to _____(5), where he lived the life of a hippie and did odd jobs. He returned a year later and managed to pass his secondary school final exams but failed entrance exams to university and instead of studying economics he spent two years working as a sound engineer for big beat bands. After that time, he began studying English at the University of Poznań. There, he met Professor Henryk Zbierski who inspired him with his love for all things Shakespeare.

As a lecturer in English Literature in Poznań and Gdańsk, he spent many years exploring the history of the _____(6) theatre. He found evidence confirming the existence of an Elizabethan theatre in Gdańsk in the 17th century in the letters from the English actors who came to Gdańsk and requested permission to perform from the city council. This discovery became a starting point for a 25-year visionary project to _____(7) a Shakespearean theatre in Gdańsk.

How does one tackle such a monumental and challenging task? By letting the world know it needed a stage 😊. In 1990, Professor Limon co-founded the Theatrum Gedanense Foundation and established an annual Shakespeare festival in 1997 to maintain public interest in the project. He also wrote a letter to HRH Charles, _____(8), who supported the project and became its patron. He turned to politicians and theatre lovers for help. Thousands of hours, phone calls and meetings later an amazing design by the _____(9) architect, Renato Rizzi was chosen from among 38 submitted entries and the construction began. The theatre opened in 2014 – it is a technological marvel with movable stages and a roof which can be opened in _____(10) minutes to allow daylight in.

There was more, however, to this creative man. He remained an active academic teacher, translated some of Shakespeare's plays, wrote novels as well as _____(11) works, and, in 2009, created a small performance space, Teatr w Oknie / Two Windows Theatre, where artistic events are presented in a small internal space, in the windows and on the stage in _____(12) in Gdańsk.

His untimely death from _____(13) in 2021 was a profound loss to Polish and European culture, but what remains is a celebration of his dream; thanks to him for the past twenty-five years theatre lovers have enjoyed Shakespearean productions by the world's most interesting directors.

CARD 3B

Dictate the information to each other to get a complete text.

Imagine yourself standing at the Golden Gate (Złota Brama) in Gdańsk. Like many other visitors to the city, you might be tempted to walk down Długa Street. However, you can also turn _____(1) and stroll down the side street until you see an imposing black building. What stands before you is a very unusual theatre, inspired by a similar building from Shakespeare's times and created by a truly exceptional man – Professor Jerzy _____(2).

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There was more, however, to this creative man. He remained an active academic teacher, _____(10) some of Shakespeare's plays, wrote novels as well as nonfiction works, and, in _____(11), created a small performance space, Teatr w Oknie / Two Windows Theatre, where artistic events are presented in a small internal space, in the windows and on the stage in Długa Street in _____(12).

His untimely death from COVID in _____(13) was a profound loss to Polish and European culture, but what remains is a celebration of his dream; thanks to him for the past twenty-five years theatre lovers have enjoyed Shakespearean productions by the world's most interesting directors.

CARD 4

Answer the questions:

1. What inspired Professor Jerzy Limon to create the unusual theatre in Gdańsk?
2. What impact do you think Jerzy Limon's childhood voyage to the United States had on his later life and career?
3. What was the significance of the documents Professor Limon discovered about the Elizabethan theatre in Gdańsk?
4. In what ways do you think Jerzy Limon's rebellious teenage years contributed to his unique approach to his later work and achievements?
5. What steps did Professor Limon take to raise awareness and support for the creation of the Shakespearean theatre?
6. What do you think motivated Jerzy Limon to pursue the idea of building a Shakespearean theatre in Gdańsk for more than 20 years?
7. Which features make the theatre opened in 2014 unique?
8. In what ways did Professor Limon contribute to the cultural scene beyond founding the theatre?

CARD 5

Write questions about the underlined words.

Example: He was born in 1950 in Malbork - WHEN was he born?

1. Among his memorable childhood adventures was a voyage across the Atlantic, which he undertook at the age of 12.
2. Jerzy spent over a year in the United States, where he learnt to speak English fluently.
3. In 1990, Professor Limon co-founded the Theatrum Gedanense Foundation.
4. He also wrote a letter to HRH Charles, the Prince of Wales, who supported the project and became its patron.
5. In 2009, Professor Limon created a small performance space, Teatr w Oknie (Two Windows Theatre), where artistic events are presented in a small internal space, in the windows and on the stage in Długa Street in Gdańsk.

CARD 6



As a 12-year-old, Jerzy Limon travelled alone across the Atlantic to visit his aunt and uncle and he did not speak English. Let's think what this experience was like.

Imagine yourself in a country whose language you do not speak.

TASK 1.

Write a postcard/email/social media post describing your first impressions and difficulties.

Here are some phrases you can use:

- I found it hard/easy to (do sth)
- So far, my first impressions have been...
- The language barrier has presented some challenges
- My go-to communication strategy was to (do sth)
- Ordering food / navigating public transport / asking the way was quite the experience
- Despite the initial difficulties...
- I had difficulty (in) doing sth
- I found myself relying on... to do sth

TASK 2.

- A) Make a list of 20-30 **words** in English, which you think are necessary to communicate in a new country.
- B) Write a dialogue using at least 10 of these words.

TASK 3.

- A) Make a list of **10 – 20 expressions/questions**, which you think are necessary to communicate in a new country in everyday non-business situations.
- B) Write a dialogue using at least 5 of these expressions/questions.

CARD 7

As a 12-year-old, Jerzy Limon travelled alone across the Atlantic and spent a year in the USA living with his aunt and uncle and learning English. Let's reflect on his experience.

1. How long do you think it would take you to learn a new language well enough to communicate in everyday situations?

- At school
- At a language course
- In a country where the language is spoken
- On your own

2. How long does it take to get:

- From A1 to B2?
- From B2 to C1?
- From C1 to C2?

3. Calculate how many hours it will take you to get from the level of English you have to the level of English you would like to achieve.

4. What other difficulties can you experience when living abroad?

5. What would you miss most about Poland if you went away for a long time?

6. What can you do to make the best of your stay in another country?

CARD 8

Young Jerzy was a bit of a rebel. Let's explore what being rebellious can be about.

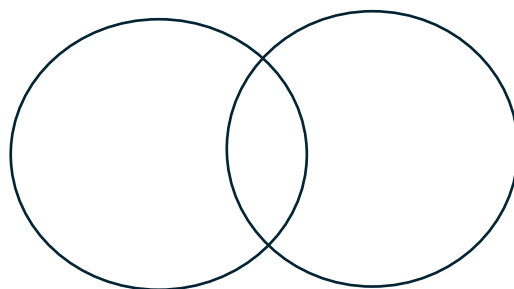
1. What do young people usually rebel against? What about you?
2. How do people demonstrate their rebellion against something? How do you do it?
3. Think of 3 important changes you would like to see:
 - in your life
 - at school
 - in your country
 - in the world
4. If you could take a year off and do whatever you liked, what would you do/where would you go?

CARD 9

The inspiration for the Gdańsk Shakespeare Theatre created by Professor Limon was the Fencing School. It resembled the Fortune Playhouse, contemporary with Shakespeare's Globe, built in London around 1600.

Study the information about both theatres and complete the Venn Diagram. Fill the central part with similarities and the remaining space with differences between them. Make sure to check online pictures of both theatres.

A **Venn diagram** shows how things are similar or different – each circle represents a group of items. The place where the circles overlap shows similar elements. It is a great way to compare information.



London

Shakespeare's Globe in London is a reconstruction of the Globe Theatre, an open-air round Elizabethan playhouse built in 1599 for which William Shakespeare wrote his plays. It had no roof over the central yard, only the galleries provided protection from the weather. The Globe burnt down in 1613, was rebuilt the following year. It closed in 1642 when theatres were banned in England and was pulled down in 1644 to make room for new houses.

In 1970, American actor Sam Wanamaker wanted to rebuild the Globe, annoyed that the site of the original theatre was marked by only a plaque on a nearby building. He started the Shakespeare Globe Playhouse Trust to raise money for the project and the theatre was completed and officially opened in 1997, 4 years after his death.

The builders of the new theatre used the same kind of wood, techniques and tools as in Shakespeare's time. It also has a thatched roof protected with fireproof material. It can hold 1,570 people, 700 standing in the yard and the rest seated in galleries. The performance season runs from April to October.

Gdańsk

The Gdańsk Shakespeare Theatre stands where a 17th century theatre called the Fencing School (Szkola Fechtunku), built around 1611, used to be. It was the first public theatre of the then Republic of Poland and was used for fencing exercises and competitions, as well as for staging performances. It was replaced by a new theatre called the Comedy House in the 18th century, which was demolished in the early 19th century, and houses were built on site.

In 1990, Professor Jerzy Limon came up with an idea of building a new theatre on the site of the 17th century building and co-founded the Theatrum Gedanense Foundation and established an annual Shakespeare festival in 1997 to maintain public interest in the project. The construction of the theatre started in 2011, and it opened in 2014.

The new theatre mixes old designs with modern technology. It is made of black brick with a wooden playhouse structure inside. It has mobile stages and a 90-tonne roof which can be opened in 3 minutes to allow daylight in. It can hold from 600 to 1000 people and is open throughout the year.

Scan me & see me



London



Gdańsk

CARD 10

Professor Limon needed the support of many people from different institutions and countries - he had to write a lot of letters and talk to many people to realise his project.

Think about a project dear to your heart and choose one of the tasks below:

A) write a letter to an artist/politician/celebrity/institution explaining

- what it is about
- what kind of support you need

B) write to your friend/family member telling them about your project

C) write a note thanking someone who helped you during the project

D) imagine you are an artist/politician/celebrity/institution who was asked to support a project. Write your reply.

CARD 11

In 2009, Jerzy Limon opened a theatre in Gdańsk called Two Windows Theatre. Actors perform in two windows or on a small stage in the street outside.

Work in pairs or groups and:

- Write your own dialogues
- Find fragments from plays / films / series you like to perform in two windows.



CARD 12

Professor Limon loved books – he was an avid reader as well as a writer. His library, which opened in 2022, has more than 3000 books. Now, let’s look at books in your life.

1. Do you enjoy reading? Why/why not?
2. Do you have your own library? How big is it?
3. What kinds of books do you find interesting – choose from the list:

- Adventure stories
- Crime
- Fantasy
- Historical fiction
- Horror
- Literary fiction
- Mystery
- Poetry
- Plays
- Romance
- Science fiction
- Thrillers
- Autobiographies and Biographies
- Essays
- Self-help

4. What do you prefer – paper books/e-books/audiobooks?
5. How much time do you spend reading every week?
6. What do you think about set books you have to read at school?
7. Who do you talk about books with?
8. Have you ever wanted to be a writer? Why/Why not?
9. Make a list of books that you would recommend to your friends.

CARD 13

This card is a bit of a challenge – it introduces **Bloom's Taxonomy** – an interesting way to classify different levels of learning and thinking. It was created by educational psychologist Benjamin Bloom in the 1950s and has **six** levels, which go from simple to more complex:

Bloom's Taxonomy helps you to develop critical thinking skills by encouraging you to move beyond just memorising facts. By moving from one level to another, you learn to ask questions, analyse information, and create new ideas. This process promotes deeper understanding and helps you become a better problem-solver and critical thinker.

1. **Remembering:** This level is about recalling facts and basic ideas. It's about memorising dates, meanings, or formulas. (verbs used in questions: *name, repeat, define, etc.*)
2. **Understanding:** Here, you explain ideas or concepts. You show you understand by summarising information or explaining its meaning. (verbs used in questions: *translate, paraphrase, summarise, etc.*)
3. **Applying:** This level means using knowledge in real situations. You use what you have learnt to solve problems or do tasks. (verbs used in questions: *illustrate, use, calculate, etc.*)
4. **Analysing:** This means breaking down information and seeing how the parts connect. Students learn to look at data, find patterns, and make connections. (verbs used in questions: *compare, contrast, analyse, etc.*)
5. **Evaluating:** At this stage, learners judge information or arguments. They learn to critique ideas, compare different views, and justify their opinions. (verbs used in questions: *review, assess, justify, etc.*)
6. **Creating:** Students are encouraged to be innovative and think creatively. This level is about producing something new or original. (verbs used in questions: *design, write, role play, etc.*)

The questions below are based on the information about Professor Limon and illustrate what different levels of Bloom's taxonomy look like in practice. Answer them 😊

Remembering:

- When and where was Professor Jerzy Limon born?

Understanding:

- Summarize Professor Limon's teenage years and how they influenced his later life.

Applying:

- Imagine you were helping Professor Limon with his project. What would be a good way to increase public interest in a new cultural project?

Analysing:

- Compare Professor Limon's rebellious teenage years with his later academic success. How do you think his experiences shaped his career?

Evaluating:

- Assess the impact of Professor Limon's contribution to the theatre scene in Gdańsk. What do you think his most important legacy is?

Creating:

- Role play an interview with Jerzy Limon where you ask him about his youth and how it shaped his future. What questions would you ask him?

CARD 14

Here is a picture of Jerzy Limon as a teenager. Describe it and answer the questions.



1. When do you think the picture was taken?
2. What is happening in the picture?
3. What would be the best title for the picture?
4. What can you say about his life based on this photo?
5. Compare this photo with one of a teenager from today / with your picture from a holiday.
6. What might he say about his future?

CARD 15

Professor Limon was also a translator. When you learn a language, translating can help you notice structures you do not understand and makes you more aware of the conventions of your own language and culture. It is also a real-life skill. Let's try to translate some sentences into both Polish and English.

Translate these sentences:

1. The early bird catches the worm, so I got up at dawn to learn my lines.
2. The decision to build a theatre was a leap of faith, but it paid off with unforgettable experiences.
3. The performance had everyone rolling on the floor laughing.
4. Jerzy Limon was an inspiring teacher, a witty raconteur, a good friend, and every inch a gentleman.
5. Gdańsk was one of the most important destinations for English travelling players in the first half of the 17th century.

CARD 16

Professor Limon devoted more than 20 years of his life to realising his dream.

1. What is your dream?
2. What do you have to do to achieve it?
3. Have you ever given up on a dream? Why?
4. Do you need other people to fulfil your dream?
5. What prevents you from fulfilling your dreams?

Which of these **character traits** can help you to realise your dreams? Choose 5 you consider the most important:

- Determination
- Perseverance
- Creativity
- Patience
- Resilience
- Discipline
- Optimism
- Passion
- Flexibility
- Self-confidence

You can add any other traits you consider important.

CARD 17

1. Choose 1 of the tasks and write a short speech:
 - a. welcoming a guest visiting your school (a sportsman, writer, activist, etc.)
 - b. congratulating your schoolmate on winning a competition
 - c. about an event from your life (holiday adventure/journey/learning experience, etc.)

2. Go to <https://jerzylimon.pl/materialy-dla-nauczycieli/>. There, you will find an excerpt from the speech given by H.R.H. The Prince of Wales when he visited Gdańsk.

Practise reading the whole fragment or a paragraph and perform it in pairs/groups or in front of your class.

CARD 18

These questions contain phrases from the cards and will help you revise the vocabulary which appeared in them. Discuss them in pairs or groups.

1. Do you ever **take a stroll** before or after a meal?
2. Do you have any **memorable childhood adventures**?
3. Are you / do you know anyone who is an **avid reader**?
4. How can you learn to **tackle problems**?
5. How do you understand the phrase: ***There is more to it than meets the eye?***
6. What **challenges do you have to face** when you travel on your own / when you learn a language on your own?
7. Which gadgets would you consider **a technological marvel**?
8. Do you remember a time in your life when you needed a lot of **perseverance**?
What happened?
9. Should anyone be **banned** for expressing their opinions online?
10. What do people do **maintain public interest** in what they do?