



# **Jerzy Limon and the Gdańsk Shakespeare Theatre**

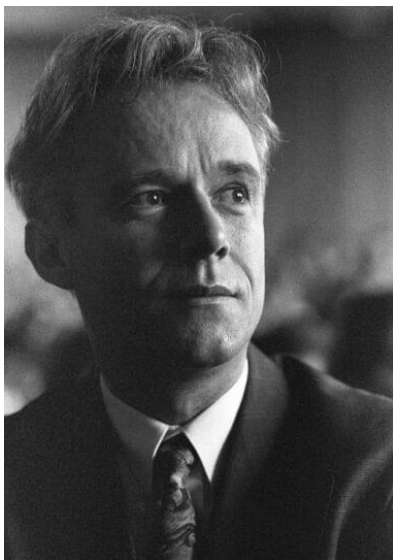
## **Celebrating the man, celebrating English**

**A set of 17 cards  
with tasks at B1 level**

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## CARD 1

Let's meet



1. What do you think about the man in the pictures?
2. What do you think his job is? Why?
3. What do you think he is thinking about in the pictures?
4. If you could ask him one question, what would it be?
5. What hobbies do you think he has?
6. What do you think has happened in his life?

## CARD 2



Jerzy Limon (1950 – 2021)

Imagine you are standing at the Golden Gate (Złota Brama) in Gdańsk. Like many visitors, you might want to walk down Długa Street. But you could also turn right and walk down a side street until you see a large black building. This is a very special theatre, inspired by a similar building from Shakespeare's time. It was created by an extraordinary man, Professor Jerzy Limon.

Before we talk about the theatre, let's learn a bit about Professor Limon. He was born in 1950 in Malbork. When he was 12, he took an **adventurous** trip across the Atlantic Ocean alone to visit his aunt and uncle in North Carolina. He travelled on a famous ship called the MS Batory and spent over a year in the United States, where he learned to speak English very well.

As a teenager, Professor Limon was a bit **rebellious**. He didn't like the school rules or the books he had to read, even though he loved reading. After **failing to get enough credits** to take his final exams, he went to Norway, where he lived like a hippie and did different jobs. A year later, he returned, passed his exams, but didn't get into university. **Instead of** studying economics, he worked for two years as a sound engineer for music bands. Eventually, he started studying English at the University of Poznań, where he met Professor Henryk Zbierski, who inspired his love for Shakespeare.

Professor Limon became a **lecturer** in English Literature in Poznań and Gdańsk. He spent many years studying the history of Elizabethan theatre. He found documents which showed there was a theatre like this in Gdańsk in the 17th century. This discovery inspired him to recreate a Shakespearean theatre in Gdańsk, a project that took almost 25 years.

How did he **achieve** such a **challenging task**? By spreading the word! In 1990, Professor Limon co-founded the Theatrum Gedanense Foundation and started an **annual** Shakespeare festival in 1997 to keep people interested in the project. He even wrote a letter to Prince Charles, who **supported** the idea and became its patron. With the help of politicians, different institutions and theatre lovers he **raised money** for the theatre, the Italian architect Renato Rizzi designed it and the construction began. The theatre finally opened in 2014. It is a technological wonder with **movable** stages and a roof that opens in just 3 minutes to **let daylight in**.

But there was more to Professor Limon. He continued teaching, translated some of Shakespeare's plays, wrote novels and nonfiction, and in 2009, created a small performance space called Teatr w Oknie / Two Windows Theatre in Gdańsk.

**Sadly**, Professor Limon passed away from COVID in 2021. His death was a great **loss** to Polish and European culture. However, his dream lives on. Thanks to him, for the past 25 years, theatre lovers have enjoyed Shakespearean plays directed by some of the world's most interesting directors.

### CARD 3A - STUDENT A

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

Imagine you are standing at the Golden Gate (Złota Brama) in \_\_\_\_\_(1). Like many visitors, you might want to walk down Długa Street. But you could also turn right and walk down a side street until you see a large \_\_\_\_\_(2) building. This is a very special theatre, inspired by a similar building from Shakespeare's time. It was created by an extraordinary man, Professor Jerzy Limon.

Before we talk about the theatre, let's learn a bit about Professor Limon. He was born in 1950 in \_\_\_\_\_(3). When he was 12, he took an adventurous trip across the Atlantic Ocean alone to visit his aunt and uncle in North Carolina. He travelled on a famous ship called the MS Batory and spent over a year in the United States, where he learned to speak English very well.

As a teenager, Professor Limon was a bit \_\_\_\_\_(4). He didn't like the school rules or the books he had to read, even though he loved reading. After failing to get enough credits to take his final exams, he went to Norway, where he lived like a hippie and did different jobs. A year later, he returned, passed his exams, but didn't get into university. Instead of studying economics, he worked for two years as a sound engineer for \_\_\_\_\_(5). Eventually, he started studying English at the University of Poznań, where he met Professor Henryk Zbierski, who inspired his love for Shakespeare.

Professor Limon became a lecturer in English Literature in Poznań and Gdańsk. He spent many years studying the history of Elizabethan theatre. He found documents which showed there was a theatre like this in Gdańsk in the \_\_\_\_\_(6) century. This discovery inspired him to recreate a Shakespearean theatre in Gdańsk, a project that took almost 25 years.

How did he achieve such a challenging task? By spreading the word! In 1990, Professor Limon co-founded the Theatrum Gedanense Foundation and started an annual Shakespeare festival in 1997 to keep people interested in the project. He even wrote a letter to \_\_\_\_\_(7), who supported the idea and became its patron. With the help of politicians, different institutions and theatre lovers he raised money for the theatre, the Italian architect Renato Rizzi designed it and the construction began. The theatre finally opened in 2014. It is a technological wonder with \_\_\_\_\_(8) stages and a roof that opens in just 3 minutes to let daylight in.

But there was more to Professor Limon. He continued teaching, wrote academic works as well as \_\_\_\_\_(9), translated some of Shakespeare's plays, and, in 2009, created a small performance space called Teatr w Oknie / Two Windows Theatre in Gdańsk.

Sadly, Professor Limon passed away from COVID in \_\_\_\_\_(10). His death was a great loss to Polish and European culture. However, his dream lives on. Thanks to him, for the past 25 years, theatre lovers have enjoyed Shakespearean plays directed by some of the world's most interesting directors.

## CARD 3B - STUDENT B

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

Imagine you are standing at the \_\_\_\_\_(1) in Gdańsk. Like many visitors, you might want to walk down Długa Street. But you could also turn right and walk down a side street until you see a large black building. This is a very special \_\_\_\_\_(2), inspired by a similar building from Shakespeare's time. It was created by an extraordinary man, Professor Jerzy Limon.

Before we talk about the theatre, let's learn a bit about Professor Limon. He was born in \_\_\_\_\_(3) in Malbork. When he was \_\_\_\_\_(4), he took an adventurous trip across the Atlantic Ocean alone to visit his aunt and uncle in North Carolina. He travelled on a famous ship called the MS Batory and spent over a year in the United States, where he learned to speak English very well.

As a teenager, Professor Limon was a bit rebellious. He didn't like the school rules or the books he had to read, even though he loved reading. After failing to get enough credits to take his final exams, he went to \_\_\_\_\_(5), where he lived like a hippie and did different jobs. A year later, he returned, passed his exams, but didn't get into university. Instead of studying economics, he worked for two years as a sound engineer for music bands. Eventually, he started studying English at the University of Poznań, where he met Professor Henryk Zbierski, who inspired his love for Shakespeare.

Professor Limon became a lecturer in \_\_\_\_\_(6) Literature in Poznań and Gdańsk. He spent many years studying the history of Elizabethan theatre. He found documents which showed there was a theatre like this in Gdańsk in the 17th century. This discovery inspired him to recreate a Shakespearean theatre in Gdańsk, a project that took almost \_\_\_\_\_(7).

How did he achieve such a challenging task? By spreading the word! In 1990, Professor Limon co-founded the Theatrum Gedanense Foundation and started an annual Shakespeare festival in 1997 to keep people interested in the project. He even wrote a letter to Prince Charles, who supported the idea and became its patron. With the help of politicians, different institutions and theatre lovers he \_\_\_\_\_(8) money for the theatre, the Italian architect Renato Rizzi designed it and the construction began. The theatre finally opened in 2014. It is a technological wonder with moveable stages and a roof that opens in just \_\_\_\_\_(9) to let daylight in.

But there was more to Professor Limon. He continued teaching, wrote academic works as well as novels, translated some of Shakespeare's plays, and, in 2009, created a small performance space called \_\_\_\_\_(10) in Gdańsk.

Sadly, Professor Limon passed away from COVID in 2021. His death was a great loss to Polish and European culture. However, his dream lives on. Thanks to him, for the past 25 years, theatre lovers have enjoyed Shakespearean plays directed by some of the world's most interesting directors.

## **CARD 4**

### **Answer the questions:**

1. Why did Professor Jerzy Limon start a special theatre in Gdańsk?
2. What important event happened in Professor Limon's childhood and how did it influence his life?
3. Why did Professor Jerzy Limon decide to build a special theatre in Gdańsk?
4. What were his teenage years like?
5. Why were the documents about the Elizabethan theatre in Gdańsk important for Professor Limon?
6. What did Professor Limon do to get people interested in building the Shakespearean theatre?
7. What makes the theatre that opened in 2014 special?
8. How else did Professor Limon contribute to culture besides starting the theatre?

## CARD 5

Write questions about the underlined words.

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

1. When he was 12, he took an adventurous trip across the Atlantic Ocean alone to visit his aunt and uncle in North Carolina.
2. Jerzy spent over a year in the United States, where he learnt to speak English very well.
3. After failing to get enough credits to take his final exams, he went to Norway, where he lived like a hippie and did different jobs.
4. Sadly, Professor Limon passed away from COVID in 2021.
5. This discovery inspired him to recreate a Shakespearean theatre in Gdańsk, a project that took almost 25 years.

## 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 something).
- It was hard to understand people in the street / the accent /TV programmes.
- I communicated by (doing something).
- Ordering food / using public transport / asking the way was challenging.
- Despite the early problems, I...
- I had trouble (doing something).
- I needed help from... to (do something).

### **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.

## **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**

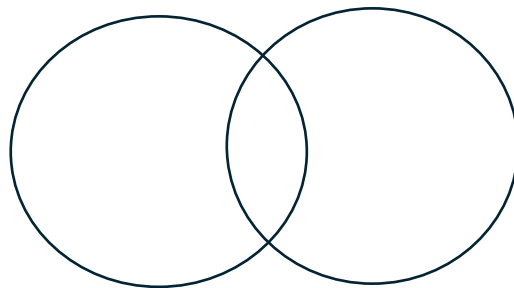
**Young Jerzy was a bit of a rebel. Let's explore what it means to be rebellious.**

1. What do young people usually **rebel against**? What about you?
2. How do people show 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 what you liked, what would you do/where would you go?

**The inspiration for the Gdańsk Shakespeare Theatre created by Professor Limon was the Fencing School (Szkola Fechtunku). It resembled the Fortune Playhouse built in London around 1600 and similar to the Globe Theatre.**

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 is a reconstruction of a theatre from 1599 for which Shakespeare wrote his plays. It was round and had no roof over the central yard. It burned down in 1613, was rebuilt in 1614, closed in 1642, and was taken down in 1644 to **make room for** new houses.

In 1970, an American actor Sam Wanamaker wanted to rebuild the Globe because the original site where the theatre stood only had a **plaque** informing about it. He started a foundation to raise money for it, and the theatre opened in 1997, 4 years after he died.

The new Globe was built like the old one, using the same type of wood and tools. It has a **thatched roof** over the galleries that is safe from fire. **It can hold** 1,570 people, with 700 standing and the rest sitting. Plays are performed from April to October.

### **Gdańsk**

The Gdańsk Shakespeare Theatre was built where an old theatre, called the Fencing School (Szkola Fechtunku), used to be. It was the first public theatre at the time and was used for **fencing** and plays. This old theatre was **replaced** by another one in the 18th century, which was **pulled down** later. New houses were built where it stood.

In 1990, Professor Jerzy Limon **came up with the idea** of building a new theatre in this place. He helped start a foundation and created a Shakespeare festival to get people interested. The construction of the new theatre started in 2011, and it opened in 2014.

The new theatre is a mix of old designs and modern ideas. It is made of black bricks and has a wooden stage inside. It has stages which can move and a roof which needs only 3 minutes to open to let in light. **It can hold** between 600 and 1,000 people and is open all year round.

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 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

**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 / from your childhood.
6. What do you think he would say about his future?

## **CARD 14**

**Professor Limon was also a translator. When you learn a language, translating can help you notice different structures and understand how the language works better. It is also a real-life skill. Let's try to translate some sentences into both Polish and English.**

### **Translate these sentences:**

1. I got up at dawn to learn my lines.
2. The decision to build a theatre was a challenge, but it brought unforgettable experiences.
3. The performance made everyone laugh a lot.
4. Jerzy Limon was an inspiring teacher, a funny storyteller, a reliable friend, and a true gentleman.
5. The new theatre did not resemble the old one.

## **CARD 15**

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 features of character can help you to realise your dreams?  
Choose 3 you think are the most important:

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

You can add other features you think are important.

## CARD 16

1. Choose one 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://jerylimon.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 17

These questions will help you practice vocabulary from the cards. Discuss them in pairs or groups.

1. Why do people sometimes **give up on their dreams**?
2. What are you **looking forward to** this year?
3. What is the best **idea** for a summer trip you have **come up with**?
4. Is there anything you would like to **raise money** for? What could it be?
5. Would you **let** a complete stranger **into** your house?
6. What is the most **adventurous** trip you have ever taken?
7. What do you need to complete **challenging tasks**?
8. Would you prefer to **design** clothes or houses?
9. Are **determination** and **patience** important features of character?
10. Do you find it easy to **congratulate people on** their success? Why?/Why not?