

**Sir Walter Raleigh (1552-1618)****LINKS****Sir Walter Raleigh (1552 - 1618)**

<http://www.luminarium.org/renlit/ralegh.htm>

From *Luminarium*, an online anthology of English literature from medieval times through the early seventeenth century, this site provides useful background information about Raleigh's life and works.

**BIOGRAPHY**

Sir Walter Raleigh (1552-1618). Born in Devonshire, England, into the landed gentry, Raleigh attended Oxford but dropped out after a year in order to fight for the Huguenot cause in France. He returned to England, began the study of law, but again was drawn to a life of adventure and exploration. Through the influence of friends he came to the attention of Queen Elizabeth, and thenceforth his career flourished. He was knighted, given a number of lucrative commercial monopolies, made a member of Parliament and, in 1587, named captain of the Yeoman of the Guard. During these years, he invested in various colonies in North America, but all his settlements failed.

He was briefly imprisoned in the Tower of London for offending the Queen but was soon back in favor and in command of an unsuccessful expedition to Guiana (now Venezuela) in 1595. In 1603, he was again imprisoned in the Tower, this time on a probably trumped-up charge of treason, where he remained until 1616, spending part of his time writing *A History of the World* (1614). After his release, he undertook still another expedition to Guiana but again returned empty-handed. As a consequence of more political intrigue, James I ordered him executed. Although Raleigh epitomized the great merchant adventurers of Elizabethan England, he was also a gifted poet.