ROMEO AND JULIET SYNOPSIS

There is a violent brawl on the streets of Verona, arising from long-simmering tension between two noble families, the Montagues and the Capulets. Tired of seeing them endanger the populace, the Prince bans further confrontation on pain of death. The young heir of the Montague family, Romeo, cares little for all this, as he is obsessed with his love for a girl called Rosaline, who will have nothing to do with him. His cousin Benvolio and friend Mercutio attempt to cheer him up. Benvolio suggests that they all attend a feast at the house of the Capulets, where Romeo can compare Rosaline with other young women, and discover there are many other women to desire in the world.

At the Capulets' home Juliet's mother and nurse give her the news that Paris, a young relative of the Prince of Verona and eligible bachelor, has expressed interest in marrying her. They tell Juliet she will have the chance to meet Paris at the party tonight. Juliet does not seem especially interested, but promises to give him a chance, with the approval of her parents.

At the ball, Romeo and Juliet see each other for the first time, and feel an instant attraction. Within one or two minutes of meeting they share their first kiss, and only later find out who the other actually is. Juliet's cousin Tybalt recognises Romeo, but Lord Capulet forbids him from causing trouble and disrupting the party. Later, Romeo sneaks back into the Capulet grounds and overhears Juliet, at her window, declaring her love for him. Romeo jumps out of his hiding spot and declares his love for her as well. They decide to marry the next day.

Romeo and Juliet are married in secret by their friend and adviser, Friar Lawrence. Juliet's Nurse is the only other person who knows about the ceremony. Later that afternoon, Romeo encounters Tybalt, who tries to pick a fight with him. When Romeo refuses to fight, this angers Tybalt. Mercutio fights with Tybalt on Romeo's behalf, and is killed. Enraged by this, Romeo slays Tybalt. The Prince then banishes him to Mantua, and says Romeo must never return to Verona again.

Knowing nothing of this, Juliet prepares to receive Romeo in her room for their wedding night. Friar Lawrence suggests that Romeo should spend the night with Juliet, and then escape to Mantua at dawn, where he will arrange for Juliet to follow. They may then start a new life together, away from Verona.

Seeing her extreme grief, Juliet's father Capulet decides to arrange her marriage to Paris as soon as possible, to cheer her up. Now there is no time to make plans for Juliet to leave to join Romeo before her wedding. Forced into this crisis by the lack of time, Friar Lawrence gives Juliet a potion to drink that will make her appear dead for 42 hours. He promises to send word to Romeo to come and fetch her from the Capulet vault, where her family will lay her. Juliet drinks the potion and, believed dead, is placed in the Capulet vault. But the Friar's messenger fails to reach Romeo, who hears only that Juliet is dead. He visits an Apothecary to collect a poison so that he can return to Verona and die beside Juliet's body.

Romeo goes by night to the tomb, where he meets the Paris, who is mourning for Juliet. They fight and Paris is killed. Romeo breaks into the Capulet vault and sees the apparently dead Juliet. He drinks the poison and dies beside her. The Friar, hearing that his plan has miscarried, hastens to rescue Juliet, who wakes as he enters. He shows her what has happened and that Romeo has killed himself. Friar Lawrence is fearful of being discovered and so flees, after trying to get Juliet to leave the tomb with him. Upon seeing Romeo dead, Juliet stabs herself with his dagger and dies. The Prince arrives with the Montague and Capulet families where they find Romeo and Juliet dead. The Friar is caught and explains what has happened. The families' grief at realising what calamity their generational war and prejudice has caused, finally forces the Montague and Capulet families to reconcile.

ROMEO AND JULIET
BACKGROUND TO THE PLAY

Romeo And Juliet is an early tragedy written between 1594 and 1596.

There is no proof that the story of *Romeo And Juliet* is in fact true however, in the thirteenth century there were certainly two feuding Italian families. The Montecchi of Verona and the Capelletti of Cremona were locked in political struggle. These two families are referred to in Dante's Purgatorio, *Canto VI*. It is not known if they had children named Romeo and Juliet.

The story of two young star-crossed lovers was most popular in France and Italy, with tales about them existing hundreds of years before Shakespeare. It is known that Shakespeare based his play on a poem published two years before his birth. The poem was an English translation of the French translation of the original Italian.

The English translation was *The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet* (1562) by Arthur Brooke, a poem of 3020 lines in couplets and poulters with lines alternating between twelve and fourteen syllables. This was based on Boaistuau's French translation of a novella in Italian by Bandello.

Dramatists in Shakespeare's time were incredible bower-birds: borrowing and even outright stealing from other sources. Shakespeare stole plots, dialogue, character names and titles. But this was common practice: to Elizabethan playwrights, plots and characters were common property. There were no copyright laws at the time and a loose sense of intellectual property.

It's very revealing to examine what Shakespeare kept and what he changed from his original sources. Shakespeare's changes to the story are telling with regard to his values as a dramatist. He has many verbal parallels with Brooke, and has absorbed the atmosphere of an Italian summer with warm nights and sudden thunder storms. However, the original poem was framed as more of a warning to children who failed to obey their parents and it examined the consequences that would result from such behaviour. It is interesting to read Brooke's address 'To the reader' prefacing his work in order to appreciate Shakespeare's less didactic approach. Brooke states:

"And to this end, good Reader, is this tragical matter written, to describe unto thee a couple of unfortunate lovers, thralling themselves to unhonest desire; neglecting the authority and advice of parents and friends; conferring their principal counsels with drunken gossips and superstitious friars (the naturally fit instruments of unchastity); attempting all adventures of peril for th' attaining of their wished lust; using auricular confession the key of whoredom and treason, for furtherance of their purpose; abusing the honourable name of lawful marriage to cloak the shame of stolen contracts; finally by all means of unhonest life hasting to most unhappy death."

Shakespeare managed to move beyond this, endowing the young lovers with independence and importance, revealing how adult fallacies can impact on their own children's fate. As Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet draws to a close Juliet's father Capulet, looking at the bodies of the two young lovers, states that they are "poor sacrifices to our enmity". Shakespeare does not act as a moralist, judging youthful choices. He simply presents us with three-dimensional characters, living real lives and allows their humanity to unravel: as Harold Bloom states, 'Shakespeare stands back from assigning blame'.

The plight of young lovers has always appealed to writers and audiences alike. Throughout history many young people have fallen in love against their parents' wishes. Shakespeare's version of this story has survived as one of the most loved and respected because he allows us to see the world through the young lover's hearts and minds.

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERY

For over 400 years Romeo And Juliet has been recognised internationally as one of the most beautiful and tragic love stories of all time. Much excitement arose in 2007 when archaeologist Elena Menotti discovered Neolithic remains of two skeletons earthed in an embrace outside Mantua, only 40 kilometres south of Verona where this timeless story is set. "As far as we know, it's unique," Menotti said. "Double burials from the Neolithic are unheard of, and these are even hugging." The pair of human skeletons locked in a tender embrace were found at a construction site near Verona in northern Italy.

Source: www.theage.com.au/news/world/neolithic-lovers-unearthed/2007/02/08/1170524193915.html

Photo: Associated Press

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LEARNING RESOURCES *ROMEO AND JULIET*
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ADAPTATIONS OF ROMEO AND JULIET

The best known cinematic versions of *Romeo And Juliet* are those directed by Franco Zeffirelli in 1968 and by Baz Lurhmann in 1996. However, also available is the BBC Shakespeare version of 1978 and the 2013 version directed by Carlo Carlei, with a certain amount of script adaptation by Julian Fellowes.

The Broadway stage production from 2014 staring Condola Rashad and Orlando Bloom is available to watch in its entirety on YouTube:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=eMFlvz_05Jk

This story has inspired all kinds of adaptations, variations, parodies and responses, as people for centuries have been so captivated by these characters and their tale of passion. Some of the most well-known include:

The ballet version by Prokofiev, which was a much-loved vehicle for the famous dancers Margot Fonteyn and Rudolf Nureyev (right).

Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story*, a musical set in 1950s New York. The film version was made in 1961.

John Madden's *Shakespeare In Love* (1998) which imagines a romantic story about the writing of the play.

The Canadian TV series *Slings & Arrows* includes the rehearsal of a production of *Romeo And Juliet* as its season 2 subplot: www.youtube.com/watch?v=sIY4-_LeQtA&list=PL780750213949CF79

Joe Calarco's Shakespeare's *R&J*, which was performed by Bell Shakespeare in 2001.

The recent Irish play *A Tender Thing* imagines Romeo and Juliet living into old age together.

Gnomeo And Juliet (2011), an animated children's comic adaptation about garden gnomes.

Warm Bodies (2013), a love story between a zombie named R and a girl named Julie, with tongue-in-cheek allusions to the original play, and even a balcony scene.

Of course, there are also countless songs and artworks that make reference to the lovers.

Romeo And Juliet (1968)

Director: Franco Zeffirelli

Paramount Pictures

Romeo + Juliet (1996)

Director: Baz Luhrmann

Bazmark Productions

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West Side Story (1961)
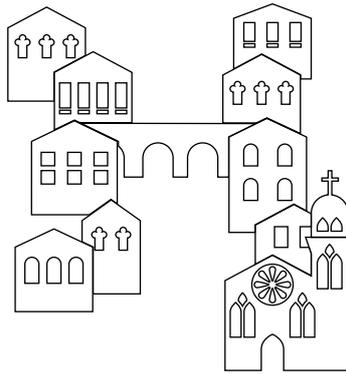
Director: Robert Wise & Jerome Robbins

Mirisch Pictures

Shakespeare In Love (1998)

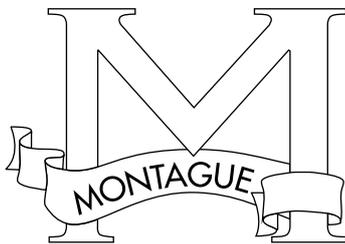Director: John Madden

Universal Studios

ROMEO AND JULIET CHARACTER CHART

NOBILITY
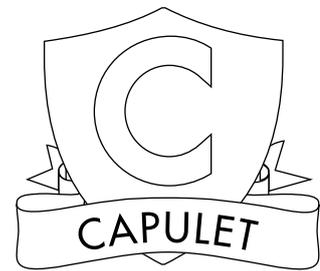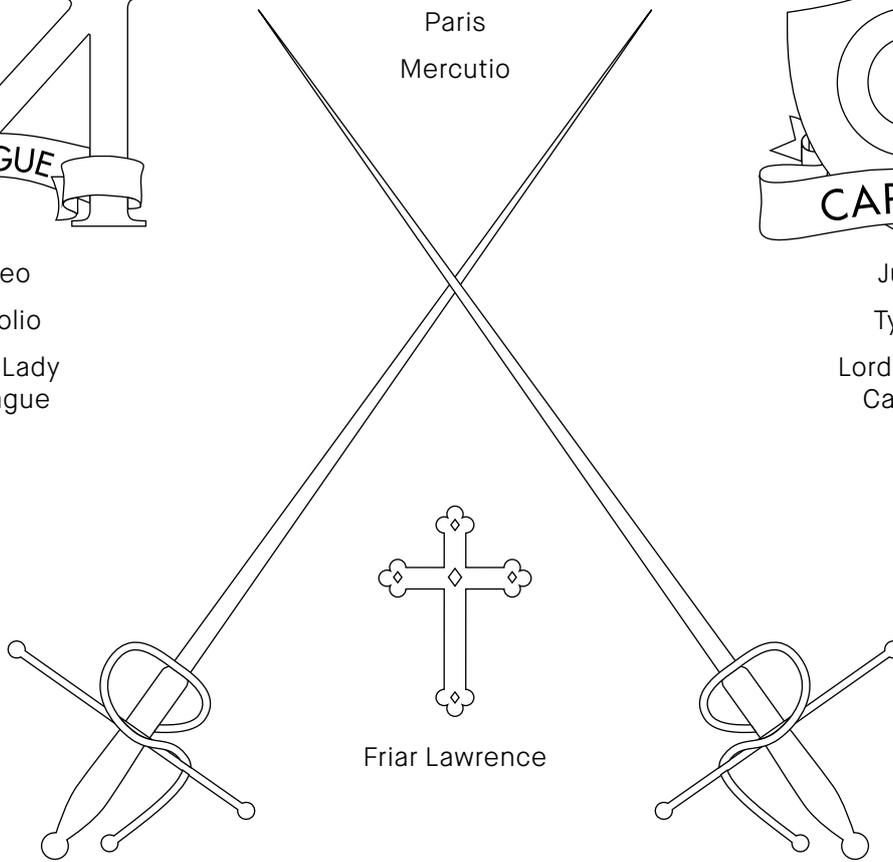
Prince

Paris

Mercutio

MONTAGUE

Romeo

Benvolio

Lord & Lady Montague

CAPULET

Juliet

Tybalt

Lord & Lady Capulet

Friar Lawrence

SERVANTS

Balthasar

Abraham

Nurse

Peter

Sampson

Gregory

ROMEO   *"Teach me how I should forget to think"* Act 1 Scene 1

Romeo is the only son of Lord and Lady Montague. Today, the name 'Romeo' is synonymous with love and lovers. In the play, Romeo's passion drives him to kill himself when he believes that his love, Juliet, is dead. It is the overwhelming power of Romeo's love that clouds his character, making him far more complex than his peers. His intensity of emotion is reflected in his extreme actions throughout the play. Love compels him to creep into the Capulet garden to see Juliet, anger compels him to fight and to kill, and despair compels him to suicide.

Romeo is a lover of women and a lover of poetry. His love is by no means a simple or straightforward matter. At the beginning of the play, Romeo pines for Rosaline, '*Out of her favour where I am in love*' (Act 1 Scene 1). He proclaims her beauty, '*O, she is rich in beauty …*' (Act 1 Scene 1). He explains her lack of interest in him '*She is too fair, too wise, wisely too fair/ To merit bliss by making me despair*' (Act 1 Scene 2). He then continues, in his outburst on love, to proclaim the extremities of his emotion. Here, on his first appearance, pre-empting the later events of the play, '*Do I live dead, that I live to tell it now.*' (Act 1 Scene 1)

Romeo's love for Rosaline disappears in the instant he sees Juliet. Romeo's passion for poetry is reflected in his language in Act 1 Scene 1. Yet his manner of speech here could suggest his emotion is somewhat put on or artificial. Considering Shakespeare's use of metaphor and imagery, this language denotes Romeo's all-encompassing emotion. Perhaps initially he is a self-indulgent and inexperienced teenager but after first kissing Juliet, she tells him 'you kiss by th' book', (Act 1 Scene 5). His love for Juliet develops beyond the crush felt for Rosaline. Juliet's clarity of observation challenges Romeo beyond his superficial love to result in an intense passion. This is revealed through the development of his language later in the play.

JULIET   *"A rose by any other name would smell as sweet"* Act 2 Scene 2

Juliet is the only daughter of Lord and Lady Capulet. She is nearly fourteen when she is told by her mother that girls of her age must marry, as Lady Capulet did. Capulet has agreed that Paris should woo Juliet, and Juliet tells her mother that she will try to love Paris.

Unlike Romeo, Juliet has no friends of her own age. She is isolated and entrapped in the world of the Capulets. In the few days between meeting Romeo and her death, Juliet is transformed from child to woman. Juliet is able to criticise Romeo's actions and decisions, while being profoundly in love with him. She keeps her wits about her and does not blindly follow Romeo after he kills Tybalt. She demonstrates immense courage, strength and willpower in her choices and actions. Juliet releases herself from her Capulet entrapment by following the Friar's plan, which will reunite her with Romeo in the tomb. Waking to find Romeo's dead body, Juliet chooses the path of suicide, not out of loss and weakness but out of intense love for Romeo.

FRIAR LAWRENCE   *"Wisely and slow; they stumble that run fast."* Act 2 Scene 4

Friar Lawrence is the main religious figure in the play and a friend and mentor to Romeo. He shows compassion in his willingness to assist the young lovers, in marrying them and assisting with their escape. This act may seem careless but it is the most political maneuver in the play and born from seemingly honourable intentions. The Friar's mystical knowledge in the sleeping potion plan is unusual for a religious figure and the reason for this diversity in his character is unclear. In the final scene, Friar Lawrence explains everything to the bereft parents, admitting his own part in the tragic story.

MERCUTIO   *"Prick love for pricking and you beat love down"* Act 1 Scene 4

Mercutio is Romeo's quick-witted friend and a relation of Prince Escalus. He first appears in the play with Romeo in Act 1, Scene 4 where he mocks his lovelorn friend. Mercutio jokes frequently but is by no means a light character, as the complexity of his language, however crude, is socially perceptive and functions on many levels. He cares deeply for Romeo and constantly tries to free him from the bounds of romantic love. Mercutio's death at the hands of Tybalt enrages a formerly peaceful Romeo. Mercutio dies cursing the feuding families.

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TYBALT   *"What, drawn and talk of peace? I hate the word
              As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee"* Act 1 Scene 1

Tybalt is Juliet's cousin and the beloved nephew of the Capulet household. He is known as a quick, adept and avid fighter who possesses a hot temper and never lets go of a grudge. Tybalt's skills are acknowledged by Mercutio in Act 2 Scene 4. From Tybalt's own lines we know he is ready and willing to fight: '*Turn thee, Benvolio, look upon thy death*'. (Act 1 Scene 1) He despises the Montagues, and his comments reflect a blind hatred, giving the audience no insight into the origin of the Capulet – Montague feud. He seems to care little for authority and struggles at the Capulet party when he is reprimanded by Juliet's father. He kills Mercutio in a street brawl and is, in turn, killed by Romeo. His death is mourned heavily by Juliet's Nurse.

CAPULET   *"Hang! Beg! Starve! Die in the streets!"* Act 3 Scene 5

Capulet is Juliet's father and the head of the household. He has long been feuding with Montague (Romeo's father) but there is no suggestion in Shakespeare's script as to the grounds for the feud. The Prince states it was '*Born of an airy word*' (Act 1 Scene 1). We can see that Capulet commands respect when he reprimands Tybalt: "*I'll make you quiet!*" His temper is on display both with Tybalt and later with Juliet, when she refuses to marry Paris. He appears to truly love his daughter but believes he knows what is best for her. At the end of the play, having realised the extent of his loss, he is remorseful and makes his peace with Montague, "*O brother Montague, give me thy hand*" (Act 5 Scene 3). We see more of the Capulet parents than the Montague parents during the course of the play.

LADY CAPULET

Lady Capulet is Capulet's wife and Juliet's sometimes distant mother. She reveals that she married at an even younger age than Juliet's current age: '*By my count,/ I was your mother much upon these years/ That you are now a maid*' (Act 1 Scene 3). Lady Capulet leaves the mothering and child-rearing to the Nurse and tends to coax Juliet through social expectation and obligation. We see at many points throughout the play that her relationship with her husband is somewhat strained.

THE NURSE

The Nurse is employed by the Capulet family to be Juliet's caretaker but as she has reared her since birth she is also her friend and confidant. She is the person closest to Juliet and is the only member of the household complicit in her relationship with Romeo

BENVOLIO

Benvolio is Montague's nephew and Romeo's cousin and friend. The name Benvolio derives from the Latin root meaning benevolent, good and charitable. He is a thoughtful character who tries to defuse violent scenes in public places: '*I drew to part them*' (Act 1 Scene 1). However, Mercutio accuses Benvolio of having a nasty temper when in private.

PRINCE ESCALUS

As the Prince of Verona he holds the position of political power and is therefore concerned with maintaining the public peace at all costs. He appears in Act 1 Scene 1 where he proclaims, '*Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace,*' (Act 1 Scene 1) speaking against those who have begun the fight in the street. He banishes Romeo for killing Tybalt and then is seen again at the end of the play, delivering the final line: '*For never was a story of more woe/ Than this of Juliet and her Romeo*'. (Act 5 Scene 3)

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PARIS

He is the man Capulet would like Juliet to marry and is fittingly a kinsman to the Prince. Paris becomes quite presumptuous in his manner after Capulet has promised Juliet will marry him. He refers to Capulet as father: '*My father Capulet will have it so*' (Act 4 Scene 1) and greets Juliet as '*my lady and my wife!*' (Act 4 Scene 1) He is killed by Romeo outside the Capulet family tomb.

ABRAHAM AND GREGORY

They are two servants, Gregory a Capulet and Samson a Montague. They start a fight at the beginning of the play, revealing the rivalry between the two households

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ROMEO AND JULIET
THEMATIC CONCERNS

OPPOSING FORCES

Opposing forces are found throughout the play. The antithetical language, images of night and day, black and white, love and hate, and fate and free will, all reflect this concept of opposition.

Love and Hate

Love is a powerful force in *Romeo And Juliet*, as is hate. The hate between the Montague and Capulet families is the seed that sows the destruction. The bad romantic poetry Romeo reads for Rosaline in the opening of the play disappears as the powerful emotion evolves. Love, in this play, captures Romeo and Juliet but hatred controls the potential of their relationship. In just a few days they are caught up in love and travel on a whirlwind journey, which leads to their tragic ends.

Juliet, perhaps, most perfectly describes her love for Romeo by refusing to describe it:

> *But my true love is grown to such excess*
> *I cannot sum up some of half my wealth.*

Act 2 Scene 6

Romeo sums up the confusion of love and hate that runs throughout the play and its complex relationship:

> *Here's much to do with hate, but more with love:*
> *Why then, O brawling love, O loving hate,*
> *O anything of nothing first create!*

Act 1 Scene 1

Light and Dark / Night and Day

The contrast between dark and light is vital in this play. This use of light highlights the passing of the days within which the events take place. The light and dark suggest the building tension of the opposing forces in the play and neither definitively represents good or evil. Romeo and Juliet are able to cultivate their young love on the balcony in the safety of night and the Montague and Capulet boys are punished for fighting in the broad light of day.

Light and dark are a particular focus for Romeo and Juliet. When Romeo first sees Juliet he talks of light, 'O she doth teach the torches to burn bright!' (Act 1 Scene 5). In Act 2 Scene 2 (known as the balcony scene) Romeo compares Juliet to the sun and talks of the 'envious moon' (Act 2 Scene 2). After their night together in Act 3 Scene 5 both Romeo and Juliet try to convince themselves it is still night so that Romeo must not flee in the morning, as he has been banished to Mantua.

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Fate and Free Will

Fate is considered a key element of *Romeo And Juliet* and from the very beginning in the Chorus' first speech the title characters are introduced as 'a pair of star-crossed lovers'. Much debate has arisen over the exact meaning of these terms. People in the Elizabethan era were very concerned with the notion of fate as a power controlling social hierarchy and order along with man's destiny. Many theorists claim however that the play should not be reduced to a story of naive love trapped by impending doom; Goddard writes that 'nowhere else does Shakespeare show any tendency to believe in fate in this sense.' Fate or the 'stars' in history are often referring to 'heavenly bodies' inextricably linking man to the universe and those who came before him resulting in a predestined humanity. The term 'Star-crossed' can't merely be taken literally as Shakespeare affords his young lover's 'free will' and this is how the struggle is created. Through dramatic irony the audience are always privy to the young lover's tussle between their independent choices and the world they were born into. In a more direct sense Romeo and Juliet are linked to those who have come before them, their parents and the generations of family turmoil. Shakespeare utilises the device of foreshadowing throughout the play, not merely for suspense but to also highlight Romeo and Juliet's awareness of their existence within a more complex framework of humanity.

Romeo: *I fear too early, for my mind misgives*
some consequence yet hanging in the stars

Act 1 Scene 4

Romeo suspects something bad will happen to him.

Juliet: *Methinks I see thee now, thou art so low,*
As one dead in the bottom of a tomb

Act 3 Scene 5

Juliet fears death when she and Romeo part.

Romeo: *Is it e'en so? then I defy you, stars!*

Act 5 Scene 1

Romeo challenges fate when he hears of Juliet's death.

Fate surrounds Romeo and Juliet: the feud between the two families, the plague holding up the message to Romeo, and finally the timing in the tomb, whereby Romeo drinks the poison and dies before Juliet awakes to find him there. Dickson concludes that the young lover's first exchange, a fourteen-line love sonnet, 'acts as a kind of miraculous confirmation that their destinies are fatefully tied to each other'.

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DRAMATIC DEVICES

Dramatic Irony

Dramatic irony and audience relationship are vital components of *Romeo And Juliet*. He carefully exposes each character to particular knowledge of the events, at precisely chosen times, whilst allowing the audience to always be an omniscient overseer of the action. This technique works to build tension, creates conflict through miscommunication and instantly endows the audience with authority. As the audience are complicit with the young lover's heartache and choices they are invited to empathise with them on a more personal level. Only the Friar, Nurse and of course the audience are privy to the marriage and relationship of Romeo and Juliet. Both Romeo and Juliet are faced with several situations in which they are forced to keep their love secret. For instance, when Romeo is faced with Tybalt's challenge he states:

'*The reason I have to love thee doth much excuse the appertaining rage to such a greeting…till thou shalt know the reason of my love*'   Act 3 Scene 1

He cannot fight Tybalt because they are now related but he can't let Tybalt know the reason for his submission. Only Romeo and the audience are aware of his predicament and they observe how his silence has horrifying consequences for those around him, most notably Mercutio. Similarly when Juliet's parents inform her that she must now marry Paris the audience are aware that she is already married, but her parents cannot understand her defiance. Again the audience share Juliet's struggle as she fights her parents, is rejected by the Nurse, accepts the potion from the Friar and is isolated in her fight to preserve her love with Romeo. Before Juliet drinks the potion she must present a brave face to her parents and states:

'*Henceforward I am ever rul'd by you*'   Act 4 Scene 2

The audience is aware of her false performance and the high emotional stakes of the situation she is in.

Soliloquies are an important element of dramatic irony in this text. Shakespeare affords his audience several intimate moments with both Romeo and Juliet in which they can share their joy, pain and personal struggles. The audience are made aware of their thoughts or inner monologue. Romeo shares his love for Juliet with us: '*It is the east and Juliet is the sun*' (Act 2 Scene 2) and Juliet shares her fear of consuming the potion '*I have a faint cold fear thrills through my veins*' (Act 4 Scene 3). Shakespeare also utilises asides at several moments throughout the text in order to maintain the relationship between the title characters and the audience. When Juliet is informed that Romeo is in fact a Montague she shares her realisation; '*My only love sprung from my only hate*' (Act 1 Scene 5). Similarly, Romeo discusses his relationship with Mercutio with the audience: '*He jests at scars that never felt a wound*' (Act 2 Scene 2).

At times the audience are more aware of events than the title characters. When the lovers first meet at the ball they speak to each other, kiss and are about to exit before being made aware that they are actually enemies. The audience however are privy to this from the very opening chorus of the play. Similarly, when Juliet is anxious of Romeo's arrival to her bed chamber she says; 'Gallop apace you fiery footed steeds' (Act 3 Scene 2). Juliet is unaware of the fight that has just taken place. The audience ironically observe her joy whilst in full knowledge of the impending doom that awaits her.

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Time

Time also plays an extremely important role in this text and has a very interesting relationship with the notion of fate. Shakespeare has afforded himself this dramatic devise in order to compress the events of the play into just three and half days. Time seems to be the vehicle in which fate runs its' course, they parallel each other. As Dickson notes the lovers have very little time with other, they fall in love immediately and only have one night together after a very hurried marriage. Romeo and Juliet fight or constantly try to manipulate time. Juliet yearns for night to 'Gallop apace' (Act 3 Scene 2) and ironically time certainly does until they unfortunately run out of it. Again we see the young couple's freewill fighting with a society, world and history beyond their control.

Too early seen unknown, and known too late! Act 1 Scene 5

Juliet argues with time's cruel hand, that she should find out after falling for Romeo that he is her enemy.

Space

Shakespeare very astutely uses the device of space in *Romeo And Juliet* to create a sense of increasing tension as the fate of the two young lovers unfolds and the stakes continue to rise. The play starts in the town square, a very open, public communal setting and most of the action in the first half occurs in such a manor, for instance the Capulet Ball. As the second half of the play unfolds the space the action takes place in continues to decrease. The drama moves to the interior rooms of the Capulet house, to the Friar's cell and then concludes in the confines of the Capulet tomb. This technique not only personifies the increasing stakes but is also highlights the ever growing isolation of the lovers.

Note: All the above devices work in a complimentary fashion driving the play further and faster towards a heightened and dramatic finale.

SUCH SWEET SORROW
NOTES FROM THE WRITERS

MATTHEW EDGERTON AND JOANNA ERSKINE

In the creation of *Such Sweet Sorrow* the writers had the complex task of editing the original text down to 50 minutes, whilst including all important characters, plot points and adding contemporary text that discusses and analyses the play. Many creative decisions had to be made. Matt and Joanna developed a unified focus on what themes and ideas they wanted to deconstruct, focusing especially on how the play relates to us today. Research was of course an important part of this process.

Prologue and Fate

The writers didn't start *Such Sweet Sorrow* with the *Romeo And Juliet* prologue or include its premature unravelling of the lover's fate. They didn't want to present this tragedy as being trapped by fate and inevitability, instead they aimed to avoid the belief that for Romeo and Juliet death was the only option. The writers procured ideas from Harold Bloom (1998), who stated:

'Harold Goddard lamented that the prologue's 'A pair of star cross'd lovers take their life" had "surrendered this drama to the astrologers", though more than the stars in their courses are to blame for the destruction of the superb Juliet.'

In *Such Sweet Sorrow* Romeo and Juliet are continually given the option to choose another path, and their important moments of decision are highlighted. Matt and Joanna were interested in the story that Shakespeare tells of the idealism of youth versus the pragmatism of age. For instance, note the key line of the Friar versus Romeo's assertion:

"*wisely and slow, they stumble that run fast*"	Friar (Act 2 Scene 5)
"*thou canst not speak of that thou dost not feel*"	Romeo (Act 3 Scene 3).

The framing characters in *Such Sweet Sorrow* represent either side of this struggle as the young lover's journey unravels. Two actors support the more considered, highly rational choices whilst the two others fight to defend a more immediate, passionate and intense path.

Internal vs External

Matt and Joanna also focused on the opposing forces in the play, in particular the struggle between the internal and external worlds and what they represent in regards to the male and female roles. Romeo is exposed to the danger and unpredictability of the streets as a male, whilst Juliet, as a young female, is mostly restricted to the internal, domestic world which is safe and protected. Whilst Romeo is free to exist in:

"*The public haunt of men*" (Act 3 Scene 1), Juliet is bound up by her upbringing and reminds

herself that with Romeo she "*should have been more strange*" (Act 2 Scene 2).

The balcony then acts as a meeting place for the internal and external inciting possible danger for Juliet and forecasts her transition into becoming an independent woman.

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Love

In approaching the most famous love story of all time the authors began by asking themselves 'What is Love?', and what types of love is Shakespeare presenting. Blooms states that '*Romeo And Juliet* is as healthy and normative a passion as Western Literature affords us' and assures us that the play never suggests that the young pair were 'in love with death' but merely with each other. Matt and Joanna also chose to highlight the difference between Mercutio's perception of love as easy and lust-driven as opposed to Romeo's more poetic and romantic notions. In Playing Shakespeare 2 actor Roger Allum discusses his choices in playing the role of Mercutio noting the importance of "love". He notes that Romeo is:

"*bound*" (Act 1 Scene 2) by love,

whereas Mercutio wants Romeo to...

"*soar...above a common bound*" (Act 1 Scene 4).

Which form of love are we as an audience "bound" to accept?

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ROMEO AND JULIET
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The best version of *Romeo And Juliet* for school students to use is the Cambridge School edition:

Robert Smith / Rex Gibson / Vicki Wienand / Richard Andrews (Eds), ***Cambridge School Shakespeare Romeo and Juliet*** (2014, Cambridge University Press)

However, the RSC version is also excellent and simple to follow, the Arden more thorough, but challenging as the support material is very dense.

Books with good exercises for teachers to use to introduce Shakespeare:

Bayley, P., ***An A-B-C Of Shakespeare*** (1985, Longman Group)

Gibson, Rex, ***Stepping Into Shakespeare*** (2000, Cambridge University Press)

Gibson, Rex, ***Discovering Shakespeare's Language*** (1998, Cambridge University Press)

Winston, ***Joe and Miles Tandy, Beginning Shakespeare*** (2012, Routledge)

General information:

Chubbuck, I, ***The Power Of The Actor*** (2005, Currency Press)

Crystal, David & Ben Crystal, ***Shakespeare's Words: A Glossary & Language Companion***, (2002, Penguin Books)

Dunton-Downer, Leslie & Alan Riding, ***Essential Shakespeare Handbook*** (2013, Fantasia, Dorling Kindersley)

Jackson, Russell, ***Players of Shakespeare 2*** (1988, Cambridge University Press)

Fantasia, Louis, ***Instant Shakespeare*** (2002, Ivan R. Dee)

Wells, Stanley, ***Is It True What They Say About Shakespeare?*** (2007, Long Barn Books)

Some websites (besides ours!) with great resources:

The second series of Shakespeare Uncovered includes an episode on *Romeo And Juliet* narrated by Joseph Fiennes:
http://www.pbs.org/wnet/shakespeare-uncovered/uncategorized/joseph-fiennes-romeo-juliets-famous-balcony-scene/

The BBC's Shakespeare Unlocked series includes material on this play:
http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/484GwDBByzcGTGCy5bvmhLF/romeo-and-juliet

Bell Shakespeare collaborated with ABC Splash on a series of high quality videos featuring performances and commentary, including scenes from *Romeo And Juliet*:
http://splash.abc.net.au/home#!/digibook/1403896/shakespeare-unbound

Shakespeare's Globe in London has a very comprehensive Education section:
http://www.shakespearesglobe.com/education/teachers/teaching-resources

The Royal Shakespeare Company has plot summaries and records of previous productions:
http://www.rsc.org.uk/education/

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The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust has some fun blogs and other bits and pieces:
http://www.shakespeare.org.uk/explore-shakespeare/students-and-enthusiasts.html

Shakespeare Online is a commercial site, but the information is reliable:
http://www.shakespeare-online.com

The Touchstone database is very UK-focused, but has some amazing images from a huge number of productions of all Shakespeare's plays:
http://traffic.bham.ac.uk

Sonnet Central will provide you with everything you could possibly want in model sonnets:
http://www.sonnets.org

SUCH SWEET SORROW
PRE-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITY 1

WHAT IFS... (WHAT WOULD YOU DO?)

The fate of the two title characters in *Romeo And Juliet* is the cause of much heated discussion. Was their tragic end inevitable or did they have a choice along the way to steer their life and love in another direction? Were their choices foolish, impetuous and driven by lust, are they mere victims of the family feud or could they have thought further ahead and just waited? It is important to consider the turning points in the plot when decisions are made and how events would have been otherwise different.

'Clearly Shakespeare took some risks in letting us judge this tragedy for ourselves'

Harold Bloom (1998)

Before you see the production, look at these moments in the text and decide what you personally think about the young lover's actions. Go through the questions below and hypothetically imagine possible alternative paths for Romeo and Juliet.

- What if Juliet had never met Romeo?
- What if Mercutio didn't step in for Romeo in the street fight?
- What if Capulet never offered Juliet to Paris in marriage?
- What if the lovers had been discovered earlier, and at what point?
- What if Capulet hadn't stopped Tybalt from fighting at the feast?
- What if Romeo and Juliet were older?
- What if Romeo hadn't found Juliet after the feast? Climbed the orchard wall? Heard her private thoughts?
- What if the Friar did not agree to marry them?
- What if the lover's plan was different and what was an alternative option?
- What would have happened, had they lived?
- If they did live what would they have done in Mantua?

For example:

If the plan had worked and they moved to Mantua maybe life would have been difficult and they would have struggled without the support of their friends and family, despite how much they hurt them.

Student Writing Activity: 'viewpoints and narrative'

1. Considering the questions above find quotes or moments in the text when characters have made decisions that dramatically affect their own lives or the lives of others. By analysing the text around their decision argue how they were thinking, feeling and behaving at this point in the play.

2. Imagining yourself as a playwright, choose one question from the list above and write a short alternative ending to the play drawing from your personal beliefs on how the character could have acted, or would have acted had things been different.

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SUCH SWEET SORROW
PRE-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITY 2

OPPOSING FORCES

Romeo And Juliet is a play full of oppositions: characters are opposed, images are opposed, ideals are opposed. These opposing forces are presented in Shakespeare's choice of language and they are represented in our production *Such Sweet Sorrow* through the conflict and discussion of the 'young actor' characters.

Before you see the performance look for examples of imagery within the play used to present the following oppositions:

· Light and dark

· Fate and free will

· Love and hate

· Death and life

· Public and private

· Past and present

· Fast and slow

· Youth and age

· Dreaming and reality.

For example:

Light and Dark

Romeo and Juliet wish that it would still be night so that Romeo would not have to leave for Mantua. The lark represents morning while the nightingale represents night. Juliet says:

Wilt thou be gone? It is not yet near day:

It was the nightingale, and not the lark

Act 3 Scene 5

Fate and Free Will

If the servant could read and if Rosaline's name was not on the list, surely Romeo would not have gone to the party and consequently met Juliet. (Act 1 Scene 2)

Student Writing Activity: 'examine, interact, and deliver'

1. For each of the oppositions listed above, find examples in the play explaining the opposition and providing a quote from the text. Considering each specific incident explain why you think these opposing forces are in conflict at this point.

2. As an extension activity, have students get into pairs and then have them choose one pair of opposing forces (e.g. Love and Hate) to work on. They are to choose one side of the opposing forces each to represent, either love or hate and then individually develop an argument to defend their side, proving why it is a stronger force. They must use examples or quotes from the text of instances when they believe their force has dominated the action of the play.

<u>Note</u>: This exercise can be enacted as a whole class debate with two separate panels representing each side.

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SUCH SWEET SORROW
PRE-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITY 3

ADAPTATIONS AND INSPIRATIONS

Discussion

Romeo And Juliet was most probably written by Shakespeare around 1594–1596. He took inspiration from two sources – Brooke and Bandello.

Shakespeare's main source was *The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet*, a narrative poem, first published in 1562 by Arthur Brooke, who is reported to have translated it from an Italian poem by Bandello. It was a very popular poem and was re-printed in 1582 and 1587. It had also been adapted at least once for the English stage – as a masque, and made into a ballad. So Shakespeare was being very bold as a young writer selecting this very popular story as the basis for his play.

His major changes are:

1. Shakespeare telescopes the action from several months to four or five days. In Brooke's version, the courtship is very long. They meet at Juliet's balcony, but even when it's snowing her modesty doesn't allow her to let the freezing Romeo come inside.

2. Shakespeare reduces Juliet's age to 13. In Bandello Juliet is 18. Brook makes her 16. In both there is an emphasis that she is too young for marriage.

3. Shakespeare creates a central structure to the play – the opening closing and central scene of the play all have the same form: both families on stage, with Escalus adjudicating between them.

4. Shakespeare replaces the moralistic tone with one far more sympathetic to the lovers. As we might expect from Shakespeare, he is interested in the humanity of the characters. Arthur Brooke censures the children for ignoring parental advice, whereas Shakespeare is much more sympathetic to them. He is exploring this very modern notion of 'romantic love', which was only just displacing ideas of 'courtly love'.

Critical thinking: 'interpret, analyse, evaluate'

Ask students to write their answers to the following questions:

1. What do each of these adaptations do to the story? What is the effect for an audience?

2. Why do you think Shakespeare made these changes?

3. What do the changes tell us about the way Shakespeare crafts a story? His values?

4. Do you think Shakespeare made the right decision in making these changes? Why?

5. How do you think the Elizabethan's at the time Shakespeare was writing would have viewed his changes?

Once students have formed their own individual opinions, open the questions up for classroom discussion.

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SUCH SWEET SORROW
PRE-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITY 4

MORAL AMBITIONS

Discussion

As discussed in Activity 3, Shakespeare adapted the story of *Romeo And Juliet* from previous texts, and made it his own with changes that altered the story. Arthur Brooke is believed to have done so previously with the *Romeo And Juliet* story, taken from a poem by Bandello. Below is a quote from Arthur Brooke's introduction "To The Reader":

And to this end, good Reader, is this tragical matter written, to describe unto thee a couple of unfortunate lovers, thralling themselves to unhonest desire; neglecting the authority and advice of parents and friends; conferring their principal counsels with drunken gossips and superstitious friars (the naturally fit instruments of unchastity); attempting all adventures of peril for th' attaining of their wished lust; using auricular confession the key of whoredom and treason, for furtherance of their purpose; abusing the honourable name of lawful marriage to cloak the shame of stolen contracts; finally by all means of unhonest life hasting to most unhappy death.

1. Read the above excerpt with students.

2. Discuss Brooke's language with the class, with a focus on words the students are unfamiliar with or are no longer in use in modern English.

Lead students in the discussion of the following (or ask students to write a response):

1. Compare Brooke's representation of the "superstitious" Friar with Shakespeare's Friar in *Romeo And Juliet*.

2. Compare each author's representation of the characters of Romeo and Juliet.

3. Compare each author's representation of parental influence.

4. Compare each author's use of language to describe love.

5. What are the main moral ambitions of Brooke and Shakespeare in their approach to telling the story of *Romeo And Juliet?*

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SUCH SWEET SORROW
PRE-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITY 5

SHAKESPEARE'S WORDS

Research: 'respond and create'

Shakespeare invented around 3000 words and many phrases during his lifetime including 'such sweet sorrow', and many of these first appeared in *Romeo And Juliet*. Before seeing the production students should research and create a list of words and phrases that Shakespeare invented that first appeared in this text.

1. Students can first pick one scene from the text, go through it and make a list of all the words Shakespeare used that they have not heard of before.

2. Answer this: What makes Shakespeare's phrases so effective, what conventions and grammatical techniques has he used to achieve this? i.e. Alliteration

3. As an extension exercise, using their list of Shakespeare's invented phrases from *Romeo And Juliet*, students can then invent their own modern phrases using a variety of different symbols, images and metaphors, drawing from their own social experiences.

   e.g. 'Such Sweet Sorrow' ------ 'Satisfying sky lit skating'

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SUCH SWEET SORROW
PRE-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITY 6

THE SONNET

Along with his plays Shakespeare wrote 154 sonnets and he also included several sonnets within his most beloved texts, such as *Romeo And Juliet*. The first fourteen lines that the young lovers speak to each other happen to create a perfect sonnet.

Romeo: If I profane with my unworthiest hand
          This holy shrine, the gentle sin is this,
          My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand
          To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.

Juliet: Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much
          Which mannerly devotion shows in this.
          For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch,
          And palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss.

Romeo: Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too?

Juliet: Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use in pray'r.

Romeo: Oh then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do,
          They pray--grant thou, lest faith turn to despair.

Juliet: Saints do not move, though grant for prayer's sake.

Romeo: Then move not while my prayer's effect I take.

Discussion - 'understand and identify'

1. Firstly take the students through the structure, rhyme and meter of a Shakespearean sonnet. Discuss the components that make up these poems and the themes that they often discuss. i.e. rhyming couplets

2. Go through each line with the students as a group so they understand the meaning of each line and why the character is saying it.

3. Have the students identify different symbols that Shakespeare is using in this sonnet, can they identify a recurring theme to the symbols he uses. i.e. 'holy shrine, pilgrims, dear saint'

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Student Writing Activity: 'respond'

1. Why do you think Shakespeare chose to have the first lines that the young lovers speak to each other form a perfect Sonnet?

2. Can you identify any repetition in the above Sonnet and why has Shakespeare used this?

Performance Exercise: 'interact and create'

1. Using the above script, the students should get into pairs and assign themselves either role. Firstly read through the scene to get a feel for the text.

2. Act out the scene using simple physical objectives e.g. Juliet needs to be as far away from Romeo as possible, he must be as close to her as possible. (then visa-versa) Repeat this exercise using a variety of character traits, such as a shy Juliet, confident Romeo, dominant Juliet etc…to show students how many ways a scene can be played. Have a class discussion about the different versions, which they preferred and how each interpretation effects meaning etc…

Extension Exercise

Have the students choose another moment from the play when only Romeo and Juliet are present and using the existing dialogue and the context of the scene have them create their own sonnet between the two lovers. Or alternatively have the students write a sonnet from Romeo or Juliet to each other, possibly written whilst Romeo was banished in Mantua.

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CLASS IDEAS BOARD

Reading and critical thinking: 'research and respond'

1. Ask students to collect newspaper, magazine and internet articles about young love and family feuds.

2. Display found articles on a board in the classroom and use this as a resource for stimulating students' ideas about the story prior to reading the play or viewing the performance.

3. Discuss with students the following questions:

    · Where do the stories originate from?

    · What are the key features of the culture/beliefs of these places?

    · How have these beliefs influenced these real life stories?

    · What are the key similarities between the stories?

    · What are the key differences between the stories?

Extension activity: Creative Writing

4. As an extension activity, ask students to create a new setting for a story involving young love and a family feud. Students should write about how the feud was born, and the nature of the culture of the setting, the key beliefs, etc.

5. If time allows, ask students to write one scene from this story at a climactic moment, e.g. A young man and woman decide to tell their parents about their love.

SUCH SWEET SORROW
PRE-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITY 7

CHARACTER EXPECTATIONS

Viewing and Analysis: 'reflect and share'

After reading the text, and before viewing the *Such Sweet Sorrow* performance:

1. Ask each student to select a character, incident or scene to watch closely.

2. Each student records their own expectation of the character, scene or incident before attending the performance thinking about the following questions:

    · How would you expect it to be portrayed?

    · What is the mood/tone of the moment?

    · What are the character's motivations?

    · Analyse your character's language, how would this affect their portrayal?

Post-performance

3. Students report back to the class on how their expectations of the chosen character, scene or incident were/were not met and why. Why do they think the actor made certain choices?

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SUCH SWEET SORROW
PRE-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITY 8

CHARACTER EXPECTATIONS

Viewing and Analysis: 'reflect and share'

After reading the text, and before viewing the *Such Sweet Sorrow* performance:

1. Ask each student to select a character, incident or scene to watch closely.

2. Each student records their own expectation of the character, scene or incident before attending the performance thinking about the following questions:

    · How would you expect it to be portrayed?

    · What is the mood/tone of the moment?

    · What are the character's motivations?

    · Analyse your character's language, how would this affect their portrayal?

Post-performance

3. Students report back to the class on how their expectations of the chosen character, scene or incident were/were not met and why. Why do they think the actor made certain choices?

SUCH SWEET SORROW
PRE-PERFORMANCE 9

THE CHORUS

Practical Drama: 'rehearse and deliver'

The Chorus gives a narrative view of the story in *Romeo And Juliet*. In Greek Theatre the chorus was an ensemble who kept the narration of the story going, with three actors playing the characters in the story. In Baz Lurhmann's film the chorus was presented as a television news reporter. The way the opening Chorus and the prologue are presented establishes the concept and tone for the production.

> Two households, both alike in dignity,
> In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,
> From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
> Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
> From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
> A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life;
> Whose misadventured piteous overthrows
> Do with their death bury their parents' strife.
> The fearful passage of their death-mark'd love,
> And the continuance of their parents' rage,
> Which, but their children's end, nought could remove,
> Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage;
> The which if you with patient ears attend,
> What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.

The Chorus tells the audience at the very start of the play, the tragic course of the play's story.

1. Have the students make a list of all the facts about the play that they learn from the opening chorus.

2. As a class try presenting the opening Chorus as an ensemble and then with individual students each taking a line. Experiment with the tone of speech e.g. excited, anxious, fearful, concerned, sad.

3. Ask students to imagine they are directing their own production of *Romeo And Juliet*. Utilising a variety of modes, how might they present the Chorus, in a way that fits with their directorial concept?

4. Ask students to discuss the following question: By stating the play's tragic conclusion at the beginning how does Shakespeare add to the drama rather than reduce it?

SUCH SWEET SORROW
PRE-PERFORMANCE 10

CHARACTER PROFILING
Reading and Writing

1. Character Profiling

Students select two characters and then find information about each character from the script. By listing quotes, students can create a character profile.

For example:

Create a profile of Tybalt from what other characters say about him and what he says himself. Who refers to him as 'rat-catcher'? Who says he is 'deaf to peace'? Who calls him 'the best friend I had'? Find as many quotes as you can.

2. Character Contrast

Take pairs of characters and consider how they differ. They may have different temperaments, likes and dislikes, approaches to people, etc.

Suggested character pairs to contrast:

- Benvolio and Mercutio
- Romeo and Tybalt
- Lady Capulet and the Nurse
- Friar Lawrence and Paris.

For example:

Romeo and Mercutio are friends, yet they are quite different in their nature. Romeo is the romantic Renaissance lover. He writes poetry and speaks in flowery, rhymed couplets. Outside the Capulet's party he is melancholy. Mercutio is keen to fight and tends to use harsh and bawdy imagery. Look at the contrasts in their language in Act 1, Scene 4.

3. Casting Activity   'multimodal interpretations'

Imagine you are a Hollywood director. Using what you know about the characters, cast an ensemble of actors who will best portray the characters. Consider who would be best in an American production, and in an Australian production using well known Australian/ American actors. Using available software and word processing programs create a character casting profile for each actor highlighting why they are suitable for the role. Use examples from the text to support your argument.

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INSIDE THE DESIGNER'S MIND

Critical and creative thinking

Take a look at the design of the banners by Nathanael van der Reyden on the following page and answer the following questions.

Design: 'interpret and create'

1. What is your first impression of the image they has chosen for the backdrop?

2. What elements or features of the design stand out?

3. What mood do you think the designer is trying to create with this backdrop?

4. What do you think the designer is symbolising with thier chosen images?

5. What images would you include if you designed a backdrop for this production?

Extension Activity

Students can then go back to the text and find quotes that they think inspired the designer's creation.

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SUCH SWEET SORROW
POST-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITY 1
CULTURAL CLASHES

RESEARCH AND WRITING: 'EXPLORE INTERCONNECTEDNESS'

Research and discuss activities associated with cultural content in the play.

Productions of *Romeo And Juliet* use costume, characterisation and music to suggest cultural differences in the Montague and Capulet families. Shakespeare's script does not indicate what the feud is based on. It is only clear that this feud caused hatred between the families that has lasted for a long time.

Around the world and even in communities across Australia today there are cultural feuds or clashes which have their origins deep in history. Consider the following:

- Israel and Palestine
- Iraq and Kuwait
- Russia and Chechnya
- The Northern Territory Intervention
- Apartheid South Africa
- France and England
- Ireland and England
- Northern Ireland – the Catholics and the Protestants

1. Ask students to select one of the above or carry out an internet search for another historical feud. Try to compile the following evidence for the feud:

   - Who is involved?
   - When it began?
   - Why it began?
   - How it is manifested today?

2. Ask students to create a treaty or a peace plan for their selected feud. This may be a letter of agreement for the representatives of the feuding groups to sign or a list of steps to be followed.

3. Using the idea of *Romeo And Juliet* as a model, ask students to write a short story about two people caught up in the feud you have researched. How will they overcome the feud and find a way to maintain their friendship/respect? Students may choose to write this in any form:

   - Narrative
   - Play script
   - Film script
   - Hip hop or rap
   - Poetry
   - Song

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32-SECOND ROMEO AND JULIET

(Written by James Evans, with acknowledgement to the Folger Library)

Actor 1	Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?
Actor 2	I do bite my thumb, sir.
Actor 3	On pain of death, all men depart!
Actor 4	Here's much to do with hate, but more with love.
Actor 5	My lord, what say you to my suit?
Actor 6	Woo her, gentle Paris.
Actor 7	I'll look to like, if looking liking move.
Actor 8	Nay, gentle Romeo, we must have you dance.
Actor 4	My mind misgives.
Actor 9	This is a Montague, our foe!
Actor 4	She doth teach the torches to burn bright.
Actor 7	O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?
Actor 4	Call me but love and I'll be new baptised!
Actor 9	Romeo... thou art a villain.
Actor 8	A plague on both your houses! (8 dies)
Actor 4	Now, Tybalt, take the villain back again! (9 dies)
Actor 3	Immediately we do exile him hence.
Actor 7	Romeo, I come – this do I drink to thee.
Actor 6	Alack! My child is dead.
Actor 4	I defy you stars!
Actor 5	O I am slain! (5 dies)
Actor 4	Thus with a kiss I die. (4 dies)
Actor 7	Thy lips are warm. (7 dies)
Actor 3	All are punished.

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PRACTICAL DRAMA EXERCISE

There are many variations to this exercise so feel free to play with what suits your students and classroom, and note it can also be adapted and applied to any Shakespearean text.

1. Have students break up into groups of 9 (or 10 if you want to assign a director) and assign a numbered character to each student. They must first work out which character they are playing from the lines they have been assigned. The students work as a group to create this short performance aiming for style, speed, clarity and characterisation. Each group are then to perform in front of the class whilst being timed.

2. A simpler version always works. Choose 9 students to perform at the front of the classroom, assign them each a numbered character. Have them read the scene, time them, and then finish with a class discussion about who each character was and what moments of the story were included.

(Note: in the script certain characters (die), the proceeding lines should continue as these deaths take place. You can challenge the students on a performance level by awarding the most creative and dramatic death scenes.)

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

As an extended activity students can create their own 32 second/1 minute *Romeo And Juliet*, choosing what characters, lines and events they feel are important in the telling of this story. They can perform their own versions in front of the class focusing again on clarity, style, speed and performance.

Note: This exercise works as a quick, effective and fun review of the *Romeo And Juliet* plot. It highlights all the key moments and characters and as the text is short and simple it gives students who find performance difficult a chance to be involved. The competitive element of the exercise really motivates the students.

SUCH SWEET SORROW
POST-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITY 3
OPPOSITES ATTRACT

TEXT RESEARCH: ANTITHESIS - 'LANGUAGE FEATURES'

Have the students go through the text and find different moments when Shakespeare highlights the opposing forces (discussed in Pre-performance activities: Activity 2) through language, using antithesis.

1. Firstly define antithesis, showing examples such as…

    "Heavy lightness" (Act1 Scene 1) or "happy dagger" (Act 5 Scene 3)

2. Have the students find examples of antithesis the text, then explain why they believe it has been used. What is the effect of this literary technique?

3. Which characters use the most antithetical images and why?

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SUCH SWEET SORROW
POST-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITY 4
AFTER THE FEUD

WRITING/SPEAKING: 'PERSONAL REFLECTION AND RESPONSE'

Who is to Blame?

It can be argued, that many of the characters in *Romeo And Juliet* could take responsibility for the final outcome of the story, with the two lovers dead.

1. For each character listed below, ask students to write how they could be responsible for the deaths of Romeo and Juliet:

   - Romeo

   - Juliet

   - Nurse

   - Prince Escalus

   - Friar Lawrence

   - Lord and Lady Capulet

   - Mercutio

   - Lord and Lady Montague

   - Tybalt

2. Cast individual students in the roles of the characters above, with the rest of the class to form a jury. Ask each character to sit on the 'hot seat', a single seat placed at the front of the classroom, before the jury. Members of the jury can then ask them questions about the role they played in the story, and whether they could have helped avoid the tragic outcome. Characters must defend themselves and respond to accusations, using their knowledge of the story and other characters. This allows students to view the text from particular character's perspectives whilst also expressing their own personal responses. It also helps the students to identify and analyse Shakespeare's complex narrative structure.

   Note: Students can use quotes from the text as evidence, but only quotes or statements that their particular character witnessed.

3. Following the above activities, ask students to write a detective's account of the deaths of Romeo and Juliet, which should summarise their personal opinion. The account should indicate which of the characters are to blame and in what ways, and may include excusing the behaviour of some characters who they believe are innocent.