

William Shakespeare's

The Tragedie

of

Romeo and Juliet

A Study Guide

Created by Kate O'Connor for:



ORIGINAL PRACTICE SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL
BECAUSE SHAKESPEARE SHOULD BE A LITTLE DANGEROUS



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With thanks to the Herbert A. Templeton Foundation

William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*

A Study Guide

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Plot of Romeo and Juliet

In the streets of Verona, a fight erupts between two feuding families, the Montagues and the Capulets. The Prince intervenes and pronounces a death sentence on the next person to engage in a public brawl. Lady Montague is concerned for her son Romeo, who has been acting withdrawn. She asks his cousin Benvolio to find out the cause of his grief. Romeo reveals that he is in love with Rosaline, who will not return his affections.

The head of the house of Capulet speaks to Count Paris about his wooing and marrying his only child, Juliet. Capulet sends out invitations to a masked ball at his home, and the illiterate delivery man asks Benvolio and Romeo for help. Benvolio persuades Romeo to sneak into the party, and Romeo agrees, eager to see Rosaline there.

Lady Capulet broaches the possibility of a marriage with Paris to her daughter Juliet and Juliet's Nurse. Juliet is surprised, and not interested in marriage, thinking herself too young. Romeo, Benvolio, and their friend Mercutio enter the Capulet revels in disguise (after Mercutio mocks Romeo's pining for Rosaline). Romeo feels a strange foreboding.

At the ball, Romeo sees Juliet and is overcome by her beauty. Tybalt recognizes Romeo and although Capulet forbids him to fight Romeo at the party, Tybalt vows to challenge Romeo later. Romeo and Juliet meet, kiss, and then each discovers the other is the child of their family's enemy.

Romeo slips away from Benvolio and Mercutio after the party and waits beneath Juliet's balcony. He overhears her profess her love for him, and offers his own vows in exchange. They plan to marry the next day.



Friar Lawrence meditates on the healing and dangerous properties of plants, when Romeo bursts in and asks for him to perform the clandestine marriage. The Friar is concerned by Romeo's sudden shift of attention from Rosaline, but realizes that their union might heal the rift between the Montagues and the Capulets.

Tybalt has issued challenge to Romeo by letter. Romeo meets his friends in the street, cheerier than before. The Nurse and her servant meet with him and she tells him that Juliet can meet him in the Friar's cell for their wedding. After much rambling, the Nurse relays Romeo's agreement back to Juliet.

Friar Lawrence cautions the young couple about the danger of their violent, sudden passion, but performs the marriage.



Frank Dicksee's
Romeo and Juliet (1884)

Plot of Romeo and Juliet (cont.)



Edwin Austin Abbey's *The Death of Mercutio Romeo's Friend* (1904)

Tybalt meets with Mercutio and Benvolio, wanting to fight Romeo. Mercutio baits Tybalt into a duel. Romeo arrives, now Tybalt's kinsman because of his marriage to Juliet, and tries to intervene. When Romeo gets in the way, Tybalt stabs Mercutio under Romeo's arm. Mercutio curses the houses of Capulet and Montague alike, then dies. Romeo becomes furious after his friend's death, slays Tybalt, and then flees.

The Prince arrives and declares that Romeo is banished for having killed Tybalt. Juliet waits for Romeo to sneak in for their wedding night, but instead the Nurse arrives with the news of Romeo's having killed Tybalt and his subsequent banishment.

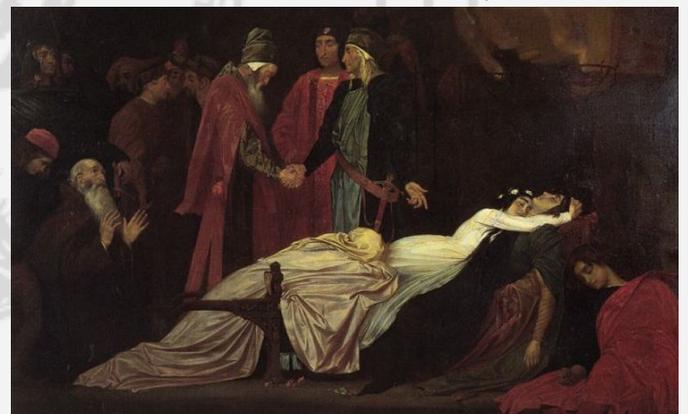
Romeo runs to the Friar, distraught. The Friar arranges for him to hide in Mantua until Juliet can join him, and Romeo visits Juliet for one final night. The next morning Romeo steals away.

Mistaking her grief over Romeo's departure for grief over Tybalt's death, Capulet arranges a marriage between Juliet and Paris. When she refuses, he

threatens to disown her. The Nurse tells Juliet to consider Romeo dead and accept this second marriage. Juliet turns to the Friar for help, who offers her a potion that will make her appear dead. He sends word to Romeo to retrieve her. When the wedding party arrives in the morning, Juliet seems dead, and they place her in the Capulet tomb.

The Friar's messenger is waylaid and Romeo receives word from Balthasar that Juliet is dead. He buys poison from an apothecary and heads for Verona. There he encounters, duels with, and kills Paris, who is mourning for Juliet. Romeo bids his farewell, lays by Juliet, and takes the poison. The Friar enters, Juliet awakes, and the Friar runs. Juliet stabs herself.

The Capulets, Prince, and Montagues discover the bodies, and the Friar reveals the true story of Romeo and Juliet's marriage. Capulet and Montague promise to end the feud and build a golden statue of the dead lovers. The play ends with the Prince promising that some will be pardoned and some punished, and says, "For never was a Story of more Woe,/ Than this of Juliet, and her Romeo."



Frederic Leighton's *The Reconciliation of the Montagues and Capulets over the Dead Bodies of Romeo and Juliet* (1855)

Characters in Romeo and Juliet

Capulets:

- Juliet** – The only child of the Capulet family, Juliet falls in love with Romeo and marries him despite their families' feud
- Capulet** – Juliet's commanding and stern father, head of the house of Capulet
- Lady Capulet** – Capulet's young wife and Juliet's mother
- Tybalt** – Juliet's cousin, a belligerent hothead
- Nurse** – Juliet's nursemaid, a verbose and bawdy woman
- Peter** – The Nurse's servant
- Cousin Capulet** – A relative who attends the Capulet ball
- Sampson** – A servant of Capulet who brawls in the first scene
- Gregory** – A servant of Capulet who brawls in the first scene
- Clown** – An (illiterate) servant, frequently doubled with Peter in performance
- Petruchio** – A friend of Tybalt
- Rosaline** – Though never seen on stage, Romeo is wooing Rosaline without success at the start of the play

Montagues:

- Romeo** – The son and heir of the house of Montague, who secretly weds Juliet
- Montague** – Romeo's father, head of the house of Montague
- Lady Montague** – Montague's wife and Romeo's mother
- Benvolio** – Romeo's cousin and friend, a voice of reason throughout the play
- Balthasar** – A servant of Montague who brawls in the first scene and who brings Romeo the news of Juliet's death
- Abram** – A servant of Montague who brawls in the first scene

Unaffiliated Characters:

- Prince Escalus** – Prince of Verona, charged with keeping the peace
- Mercutio** – A relative of the Prince and friend of Romeo and Benvolio, quick-witted and scrappy
- Paris** – Another relative of the Prince, Capulet hopes Paris and Juliet will wed
- Page** – A messenger
- Friar Lawrence** – The friar who agrees to marry Romeo and Juliet in secret
- Friar John** – The friar who is meant to deliver the message to Romeo that Juliet is not really dead
- Apothecary** – The chemist who sells Romeo poison
- Musicians** – The musicians who jest after Juliet's supposed death

Background & Sources

Written:

c. 1595-6

Published:

1597

First Recorded Performance:

1662

After:

The Comedy of Errors

Before:

King John,

The Merchant of Venice

Concurrent:

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Line Count:

2989

Source Text

William Shakespeare's *The Tragedie of Romeo and Juliet* is based on an old Italian tale, but more recently on a popular verse translation of the story by Arthur Brooke published in 1562, titled *The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet*. In 1567, William Painter retold the story in prose and published it under the name *Palace of Pleasure*. Shakespeare's theatrical adaptation was a commercial triumph, frequently revived for performance in Shakespeare's day. The play went through at least two printed editions before the publication of the First Folio in 1623.

Traditions of Courtly Love

As Shakespeare wrote *Romeo and Juliet*, he was aware of the Medieval literary tradition of "courtly love." Courtly love was a way of expressing love in a noble manner, and often involved a man writing poetry about or wooing a distant, unattainable, or aloof woman. The literary convention involves a lot of elegant, flowery, and even hyperbolic language. How do we see this tradition at work in the second half of the first scene when Romeo pines for Rosaline? And how does Shakespeare turn that tradition on its head later in the play?

Romeo and Juliet & A Midsummer Night's Dream

At approximately the same time Shakespeare was writing *Romeo and Juliet*, he was also writing *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. If you are familiar with *Midsummer*, consider in what ways the plays, though of dramatically different genres, are similar. How could Hermia and Lysander have ended up like Romeo and Juliet? How could Romeo and Juliet have found Hermia and Lysander's happy ending? What about the play-within-a-play in *Midsummer*, Pyramus and Thisbe? The mechanicals describe the play as "The Most Lamentable Comedy and Most Cruel Death of Pyramus and Thisbe." In what ways could *Romeo and Juliet* be described as a lamentable comedy? Do you prefer *Romeo and Juliet* or *A Midsummer Night's Dream*? Why?



Themes of Romeo and Juliet

Oppositions and Antithesis

It is fitting that a play that begins with a street brawl is overflowing with images of duality, opposites, antithesis, and oxymoron. As you watch or read the play, use the box to the right as a guide for what common juxtapositions for which you may want to be on the look out.

Consider Friar Lawrence's first appearance in the play in Act II Scene 3: he appears at dawn, just as night becomes morning. As he works his way through his garden, he discusses the properties of various plants, some of which can heal and some of which can kill.

Watch for when these opposites occur even in the same phrase, such as "loving hate" (I.i), "This holy shrine, the gentle sin" and "love a loathed Enemy" (I.v), or "Love-devouring death" (II.vi). How does the day/night conversation between Romeo and Juliet in Act III scene 5 prove a source of both humour and foreshadowing?

Light / Darkness
Age / Youth
Sickness / Health
Love / Hate
Love / Lust
Love / Violence
Fate / Free Will
Life / Death
Haste / Patience
Dreams / Reality

Choose one of these pairings and trace its occurrence throughout the play, then consider what literary purpose it serves.



Benvolio and Tybalt face off in the streets of Verona
Photo credit: Dayle Nelson (2012)

Just as the play is full of opposites, it also is full of parallels. Think about the following characters and how they mirror or resemble one another: Capulet & Montague, Mercutio & Nurse, Friar Lawrence & Nurse, Rosaline & Juliet, and Benvolio & Tybalt.

Questions for Discussion

1. What other oppositions not listed here do you notice throughout the play?
2. Are there points at which a certain antithesis dominates a scene or act?
3. How do the thematic oppositions relate to the plot of *Romeo and Juliet*?
4. Could any of the concepts suggested above appear in the play as effectively without the presence of its opposite?
5. Are there any moments in the play where pure love is depicted, untouched by the opposition of violence, hate, or even death?

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EL.HS.LI.09

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EL.HS.LI.14

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EL.HS.RE.11



Themes of Romeo and Juliet

Love and Lust

How does the play distinguish
Between Romeo's doting (or lust) for

Rosaline when we first meet him and his true love for Juliet? A great deal of the answer lies in the language. Despite the poetic nature of Romeo and Juliet's exchanges, they are in many ways less over the top than his descriptions of Rosaline. How do you think Shakespeare makes the difference between doting and loving clear?

ROMEO Thou chid'st me oft for loving Rosaline
FRIAR For doting, not for loving pupil mine.
Act II, Scene iii

Contrasted with the innocence of the lovers, we have the bawdy bandying of characters like Mercutio and the Nurse, who never miss an opportunity for sexual punning. Are Mercutio and the Nurse intended to serve as foils for Romeo and Juliet? Romeo gives as good as he gets in act II, scene 4. Does this fit with the image you formed of his character prior to reading this scene? Why does Shakespeare place such a heavy emphasis on sex in the play? Is *Romeo And Juliet* more about love or lust?

JULIET:

I have no joy of this contract tonight,
It is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden,
Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be
Ere, one can say, it lightens

Consider how many times characters express concern about how quickly Romeo and Juliet fall in love. Their speedy romance and marriage often is expressed using imagery of lightning.



Is it possible to love so soon, and so deeply? As an actor or director, how would you convey the extent of their love to an audience? Where else does the image of lightning appear in the play? Who expresses concerns about Romeo and Juliet's hasty wedding, and what imagery or similes do they use?

And if both Romeo and Juliet experience fear and foreboding, why do they go forward with the secret marriage?

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Romeo and Juliet meet at the Capulet ball
Photo credit: Tim Lewis (2012)

Themes of Romeo and Juliet

Fate, Destiny, & Free Will



Juliet seeks Friar Lawrence's ominous counsel after her forced engagement to Paris
Photo credit: Tim Lewis (2012)

The prologue of the play tells us that Romeo and Juliet are star-crossed; it is written in the stars, or destined, that they will kill themselves before the play runs its course.

Do you believe that their fates could not have been avoided? If not, which characters could have made different choices, and when? How would these choices have altered the outcome of the play? Why do you think Shakespeare chose to make this play a tragedy?

ROMEO:

I fear too early, for my mind misgives,
Some consequence yet hanging in the stars,
Shall bitterly begin his fearful date
With this night's revels, and expire the term
Of a despised life closed in my breast:
By some vile forfeit of untimely death.
But he that hath the steerage of my course,
Direct my suit: on lusty Gentlemen.

As you read or watch the play, look for language comparing characters' lives to a sea voyage. How does this image enhance or undermine the idea that Romeo and Juliet's fates are predestined?



EL.HS.LI.05

EL.HS.LI.09

EL.HS.LI.14

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EL.HS.RE.21

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Questions for Productions

“For sweet discourses in our time to come”

- ❖ In 1994, a Palestinian theatre and an Israeli theatre came together to produce *Romeo and Juliet* with the Israelis as Capulets and Palestinians as Montagues. In this production, they cut act I scene 1 (the public brawl). Why do you think the directors might have chosen to do this? Can you think of other historical or modern parallels to the feud between the Montagues and the Capulets? Where and when would you set your production?
- ❖ Mercutio is one of the most-loved characters in the play, but his belligerence sets off a dangerous chain of events. What are his strengths? What are his flaws? What purpose does his Queen Mab speech serve? Does Mercutio’s plague on the two houses take hold?
- ❖ Can true love be expressed convincingly on stage or on film? In your opinion, does it exist? What about “love at first sight”?
- ❖ At the end of Act 4, Scene 5, after the Capulets discover Juliet’s body, there is an exchange of jokes between the servant Peter and the musicians hired for the wedding. What purpose does this interlude serve? Why do you think Shakespeare included it? If you were a director, would you cut or keep the scene?
- ❖ If you read the play before seeing the production, did any moments surprise you by being funnier than you expected? If yes, then what made them so? Is *Romeo and Juliet* a funny play, as well as being a tragedy?
- ❖ How do you imagine the play would be different when performed by an all-male cast, as it would have been in Shakespeare’s day?
- ❖ Choose your favorite line from the play before attending the OPSFest production. Does how the actor speaks the line change your understanding of the it?



EL.HS.LI.01 **EL.HS.LI.09**
EL.HS.LI.14 **EL.HS.RE.02**
EL.HS.RE.05 **EL.HS.RE.26**
EL.HS.SL.10 **EL.HS.SL.17**
HS.6.

Romeo, Mercutio, and Benvolio in an OPS production
Photo credit: Dayle Nelson (2012)



Language in Romeo and Juliet

Sonnets and the Language of Love

Shakespeare offers us two instances of Romeo expressing romantic feelings: first with Rosaline, and then with Juliet. Regarding which woman is he more formal in his language? How does the word choice or style of speech differ between how Romeo and Juliet express his or her love?

Take a look at this passage from when Juliet and Romeo first meet at the ball. What do you notice about their dialogue, when you ignore the speech tags and read the text as a whole?

What do you make of the religious imagery that runs throughout the exchanges between Romeo and Juliet, both at their first meeting and during the balcony scene?

Do you consider Romeo and Juliet's dialogue to be realistic? At what point do the lovers switch to more formal language, or even jump from verse to prose? What different effects do verse and prose have for you as an audience member or reader?

EL.HS.LI.03

EL.HS.LI.09

EL.HS.LI.1

EL.HS.LI.14

EL.HS.RE.06

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EL.HS.RE.12

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EL.HS.SL.17

What's in a name?

Juliet claims, "That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet" (II.ii).

Are these characters aptly named?

Benvolio – benevolent, well-wishing
Mercutio – mercurial (changeable), and related to the trickster god Mercury
Juliet – youthful
Tybalt – brave, the name of a cat in the Reynard tales

Shakespearian Sonnets

Shakespearian sonnets are made up of fourteen lines of iambic pentameter (ten syllables, with every second syllable stressed). They have three quatrains (groups of four lines) and a final couplet. They follow this rhyme scheme:

ABAB CDCD EFEF GG

ROMEO If I profane with my unworthing hand,
This holy shrine, the gentle sin is this,
My lips two blushing pilgrims did 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 Palmer's kiss.
ROMEO Have not Saints lips, and holy Palmers too?
JULIET Ay pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer.
ROMEO O 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 prayers' sake.
ROMEO Then move not while my prayer's effect I take

Puns

Romeo and Juliet is packed full of puns, homophones, and wordplay, especially in Mercutio's dialogue. Take a look at some of the double meanings from Shakespeare's day that you may not recognize now:

Slip = counterfeit coin, escape

Case = Situation, genitals

Goose = Bird, nitwit, prostitute

Light = Source of light, not heavy, sexually loose

Marry = Indeed, wed

Collier = Coal vendor

Choler = Anger

Collar = Noose (for hanging)

What other wordplay
can you spot in
the play?



Juliet

A Study in Character Development

Juliet often is cited as the character who undergoes the most dramatic change in personality and maturity during the course of the play. When we first meet her in act I, scene 3, she seems meek, obedient, and speaks only a few lines. She is only 13 years old, and faces a distant mother and a garrulous Nurse.

In their exchange at the ball, Romeo takes the lead. However, by the time he meets her at her balcony, she seems to have grown linguistically and emotionally. This Juliet transformed by love is quick-witted, able to recognize the danger of a lightning romance, but she is also capable of tremendous depth of feeling.

“My bounty is as boundless as the Sea,
My Love as deep, the more I give to thee
He more I have, for both are Infinite”

This elegant language is leagues away from Romeo’s melodramatic pining for Rosaline at the start of the play. Consider, too, how Juliet handles herself when crisis comes. She turns her back on the closest thing to a mother she has known (the Nurse) and condemns the Nurse’s suggestion that she accept a bigamous marriage. Instead, Juliet faces the Friar’s potion with unabashed courage. Is this like the 13-year-old we saw at the outset?

Prompts:

1. As a director, how would you coach the actress playing Juliet through this transformation?
2. Would you highlight or play down her childishness in her first scene?
3. Do you believe it is love that transforms Juliet?
4. How much of the characterization of Juliet depends on the mood and tone in delivery of the lines by the actress?

Thou vs. You

Did you know that there’s a big difference between calling someone thou or thee and calling someone you? In Shakespeare’s day, **thou** was an **informal address** and **you** was a **formal address**.

Take a look at Lady Capulet speaking to her daughter in act I, scene 3. Where does she switch between the pronouns she uses to address her daughter? What hints does it give you about their relationship?



John William Waterhouse’s “Juliet” (1898)



Classroom Activities: Before Seeing the Play

The Prologue

Before the play begins, the ending is revealed in Shakespeare's prologue. Students can be divided into groups and asked to act out a dumbshow or mime of the events of the play as they are revealed in the prologue, with at least one action or pose per line of verse.

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

A Note on the Prologue: Many scholars believe that the prologue was only performed in the first ever production of *Romeo and Juliet*. It is not included in the Folio text of the play, the collected works of Shakespeare published after his death.

Reflecting on the activity:

1. What does your mime suggest will happen in the play?
2. How did each group's mimes differ from one another's?
3. After seeing the play, what important plot points do you notice are excluded from the prologue? Why do think Shakespeare chose to omit them?
4. How much of the story of the play did you already know before reading the text or watching the play? How did the prologue support or defy your expectations?
5. Why did Shakespeare choose to place a prologue at the beginning of the play that reveals the play's ending? Do you think it was included in later shows in Elizabethan England?
6. How do you feel about the chorus that speaks between Acts 1 and 2? Why do you think that choral interlude is frequently cut in modern performances? Would you include it, or the prologue, if you were directing the play?
7. After seeing the play, why do you think OPSFest does not include the prologue in its productions?



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AR.HS.AC.01

Classroom Activities: During the Play



Carl Thorborg's photo of Nadja Sellrup and Pascal Jansson in the *Romeo and Juliet* ballet, performed in 2010 at the Royal Swedish Opera (sourced from wikicommons)

Spot the Reference

Many of the lines from *Romeo and Juliet* are so well-known as to have become everyday phrases. **As you watch the play**, take note of whatever phrases you have heard before.

What other forms of art can you think of (songs, operas, ballets, paintings, poems) that *Romeo and Juliet* has inspired?

Classroom Activities: After the Play

Facebook Statuses

Six of the crucial characters in the play (Romeo, Juliet, Mercutio, Benvolio, Tybalt, and Paris) are young, fashionable people of Verona. It's a pretty safe assumption that if they lived in the modern era, they would use Facebook. The characters' Facebook statuses could give us a glimpse of what they're thinking, what they're feeling, and how they wish to be perceived at a given moment in the play.

Write 1-2 sentence Facebook statuses for some of the characters, either responding to a specific moment in the text, or presenting their general feelings and attitudes.

What comments or 'likes' might these updates illicit from friends and family members? Can you re-construct the story of Romeo and Juliet through the status updates of different characters?

Can you compress your statuses into the 140 character maximum for a twitter update?

EL.HS.WR.02 **EL.HS.RE.06** **EL.HS.RE.21**
AR.HS.CR.02 **EL.HS.LI.03**



Classroom Activities: After the Play

“Some will be pardoned, and some punished.”

At the end of the play, the Prince declares that in light of the deaths of Romeo and Juliet, “Some will be pardoned, and some punished.” Imagine that you have been assigned to head up the inquest to determine responsibility or fault in the cases of the six deaths of the play (Mercutio, Tybalt, Lady Montague, Paris, Romeo, and Juliet).

Take turns, with different members of the class acting as a character or as the investigator who puts questions to each witness. Then decide, as a class, who should be pardoned and who punished (and to what extent). Suggested characters and possible sample questions to get the deposition started are listed below.

Friar Lawrence

“Why did you leave Juliet alone in the tomb once she awoke and found Romeo dead?”

The Nurse

“Why did you urge Juliet to accept a bigamous marriage with Paris?”

Tybalt

“Why did you feel it necessary to fight Romeo?”

Mercutio

“Why did you incite Tybalt to fight, even though you are not affiliated with either house?”

Romeo

“Why did you kill Tybalt, despite his being your kinsman?”

Capulet/Montague

“Do you believe the family feud that you allowed to continue killed your children?”

The Prince

“As the authority responsible for Verona, why did you permit this feud to continue?”

The Apothecary

“Why did you have illegal poison available for sale?”

Reflecting on the activity:

1. Who did you determine to be most at fault? Were the deaths simply the result of fate or accident?
2. For those you deemed responsible, what would you consider to be appropriate punishments?
3. How did it feel to portray one of the characters defending or explaining his or her actions?
4. What emotions were brought up by this activity? Did the questions become an interrogation?
5. In Shakespeare’s source, the poem by Arthur Brooke, the Nurse is banished, the Apothecary hanged, and Friar Lawrence becomes a hermit. Are these apt fates?
6. How do you feel about Shakespeare’s choice not to depict consequences for the surviving characters?



Classroom Activities: After the Play

Perspectives: Re-writing the Play

Get a new perspective on the play by re-writing it in a new form, from a new point of view. Consider:

- Trying to relate the plot in only 50 words
- Writing the story of Romeo and Juliet as a fairy tale
- Writing a newspaper article describing the events of the play or one major event in the play
- Writing a tabloid article about the sudden engagement of Juliet and Paris, including scandalous speculations
- Writing the obituary of one of the characters who dies (Mercutio, Tybalt, Lady Montague, Paris, Romeo, and Juliet)
- Writing a letter as one of the surviving characters, relaying an event from or the happenings of the play to a friend or family member who lives far from Verona
- Writing up a formal peace treaty between the houses of Capulet and Montague
- Describe an alternate ending to the play, beginning from what you consider to be a crucial point that could shift the story from tragedy to comedy
- Write a scene in which Romeo tries to woo Rosaline, considering how his interactions with her would differ from his interactions with Juliet

1. Do any of these new ways of framing the play change your perspective or provide you with additional insight into *Romeo and Juliet*?
2. Would the story have been as effective if told in a form other than a play?

EL.HS.LI.03

EL.HS.RE.21

EL.HS.WR.21

EL.HS.LI.05

EL.HS.RE.26

EL.HS.WR.22

EL.HS.LI.15

EL.HS.WR.02

AR.HS.CP.02

EL.HS.RE.20

EL.HS.WR.03



Romeo and Juliet Resources

Professor Peter Saccio's lecture on *Romeo and Juliet* for Northern Stage Presents:

<http://blip.tv/northern-stage-presents/romeo-and-juliet-athena-lecture-6013393>

Folger Shakespeare Library's *Romeo and Juliet* teaching modules:

<http://www.folger.edu/template.cfm?cid=2779>

The National Theatre's *Romeo and Juliet* Education Pack:

<http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/document/romeo-and-juliet-education-pack/>

The Royal Shakespeare's Company *Romeo and Juliet* teacher packs:

<http://www.rsc.org.uk/education/resources/bank/romeo-and-juliet/teacher-packs/>

Clips from the RSC's production via PBS:

<http://www.pbs.org/shakespeare/works/work157.html>

Shakespeare's Globe Playing Shakespeare *Romeo and Juliet* website:

<http://2013.playingshakespeare.org/>

Harold Bloom, ed. *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Romeo and Juliet*. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2000.

Marjorie Garber. "Romeo and Juliet." *Shakespeare After All*. New York: Anchor Books, 2004.

James N. Loehlin, ed. *Romeo and Juliet (Shakespeare in Production)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Demitra Papadinas, ed. *Romeo and Juliet: A Frankly Annotated First Folio Edition*. Jefferson, NC: Mcfarland, 2002.



Original Practice Shakespeare

In Shakespeare's day, there were no copyright laws to protect a play from publication or performance without the author's consent. When Shakespeare wrote a play, it belonged to his playing company (at the time of *Romeo and Juliet*, this was the Lord Chamberlain's Men). He wrote the play for a specific acting company, with specific actors in mind, all of whom would have been male. Plays were usually performed in contemporary dress. They were brimming with music and dance, and were often followed by a jig, a sort of comic dance performed by the actors.

Competitions between the different playhouses was fierce. London's audiences didn't want to see the same play twice, so a company like the Lord Chamberlain's Men would have to perform a new play almost every day (possibly rotating through a series of plays). With a different performance each day, there was little time for rehearsal.

To keep the play safe, actors were never given the whole play to study, lest they sell the script to a rival company. Instead, they were given cue scripts: scripts that showed them only their own lines, and the few cue words proceeding that line so that they would know when to speak. The first night a play was performed, an actor might not have known much about the play's plot, as he didn't know the other actor's parts. These cue scripts could be wound up into scrolls, which may be where the word "role" comes from in the theatrical sense.

At the Original Practice Shakespeare Festival, we try to preserve these same elements of performance when we bring you the works of William Shakespeare. The actors receive only their own parts, and rehearse only fights, songs, and dances prior to the show. This results in a great many surprises, a huge amount of energy, a little improvisation, and a lot of fun.



Cast members open a production of *Romeo and Juliet* with some music
Photo credit: Dayle Nelson (2012)

To learn more about Original Practice Shakespeare, visit our website (www.opsfest.org), come see any of our free outdoor shows (a tour calendar is available on our website), or check out the following books for a scholarly perspective:

Simon Palfrey and Tiffany Stern. *Shakespeare in Parts*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Tiffany Stern. *Making Shakespeare: From Stage to Page*. London: Routledge, 2004.

Patrick Tucker. *Secrets of Acting Shakespeare: The Original Approach*. New York: Routledge, 2013.



Oregon State Standards Addressed in this Guide

EL.HS.LI.01

Listen to text and read text to make connections and respond to historically or culturally significant works of literature that enhance the study of other subjects.

EL.HS.LI.03

Identify and/or summarize sequence of events, main ideas, and supporting details in literary selections.

EL.HS.LI.05

Analyze interactions between characters in a literary text and how these interactions affect the plot.

EL.HS.LI.09

Identify various literary devices, including figurative language, imagery, allegory, and symbolism; evaluate the significance of the devices; and explain their appeal.

EL.HS.LI.10

Interpret and evaluate the impact of subtleties, contradictions, and ironies in a text.

EL.HS.LI.14

Identify and describe the function of dialogue, soliloquies, asides, character foils, and stage directions in dramatic literature.

EL.HS.LI.15

Analyze the impact the choice of literary form has on the author's message or purpose.

EL.HS.RE.02

Make connections to text, within text, and among texts across the subject areas.

EL.HS.RE.05

Match reading to purpose – location of information, full comprehension, and personal enjoyment.

EL.HS.RE.06

Understand and draw upon a variety of comprehension strategies as needed--rereading, self-correcting, summarizing, class and group discussions, generating and responding to essential questions, making predictions, and comparing information from several sources.

EL.HS.RE.08

Understand, learn, and use new vocabulary that is introduced and taught directly through informational text, literary text, and instruction across the subject areas.

EL.HS.RE.11

Identify and use the literal and figurative meanings of words and phrases.

EL.HS.RE.12

Distinguish between the denotative and connotative meanings of words, and interpret the connotative power of words.

EL.HS.RE.20

Clarify understanding of informational texts by creating sophisticated outlines, graphic organizers, diagrams, logical notes, or summaries.

EL.HS.RE.21

Infer an author's unstated meaning and draw conclusions about an author's stated meaning based on facts, events, images, patterns or symbols found in text.

EL.HS.RE.25

Infer the main idea when it is not explicitly stated, and support with evidence from the text.

EL.HS.RE.26

Draw conclusions about the author's purpose based on evidence in the text.

EL.HS.SL.10

Formulate judgments about ideas under discussion, and support those judgments with convincing evidence.

Oregon State Standards Addressed in this Guide

EL.HS.SL.17

Analyze how language and delivery affect the mood and tone of the oral communication and make an impact on the audience.

EL.HS.WR.02

Discuss ideas for writing with classmates, teachers, and other writers, and develop drafts alone and collaboratively.

EL.HS.WR.03

Write responses to literature:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the significant ideas of literary works.
- Support important ideas and viewpoints through accurate and detailed references to the text or other works.
- Demonstrate an awareness of the author's use of stylistic devices and an appreciation of the effects created.
- Identify and analyze the impact of perceived ambiguities, nuances, and complexities within the text.

EL.HS.WR.21

Write biographical or autobiographical narratives or short stories:

- Relate a sequence of events, and communicate the significance of the events to the audience.
- Locate scenes and incidents in specific places.
- Describe with concrete sensory details the sights, sounds, and smells of a scene and the specific actions, movements, gestures, and feelings of the characters; use interior monologue to depict the characters' feelings.
- Pace the presentation of actions to accommodate changes in time and mood.
- Make effective use of descriptions of appearance, images, shifting perspectives, and sensory details.

EL.HS.WR.22

Write responses to literature:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the significant ideas of literary works.
- Support important ideas and viewpoints through accurate and detailed references to the text or to other works.
- Demonstrate an awareness of the author's use of stylistic devices and an appreciation of the effects created.
- Identify and analyze the impact of perceived ambiguities, nuances, and complexities within the text.

AR.HS.CP.02

Explain the choices made in the creative process when combining ideas, techniques, and problem solving to produce one's work, and identify the impact that different choices might have made.

AR.HS.AC.02

Explain personal preferences for works of art based on an analysis of how the essential elements and organizational principles contribute to the work's artistic merit.

HS.6.

Analyze ideas critical to the understanding of history, including, but not limited to: populism, progressivism, isolationism, imperialism, communism, environmentalism, liberalism, fundamentalism, racism, ageism, classism, conservatism, cultural diversity, feminism, and sustainability.

William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* A Study Guide

Created by Kate O'Connor for:



ORIGINAL PRACTICE SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL
BECAUSE SHAKESPEARE SHOULD BE A LITTLE DANGEROUS

Visit us at <http://www.opsfest.org/>



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A note on the text: All quotations (except the prologue) are taken from the First Folio, with modernized spelling.

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All paintings & artwork sourced from wikicommons

Photographs of actors are by Tim Lewis and Dayle Nelson, taken from 2012 OPS productions of *Romeo and Juliet* performed at Laurelhurst Park and Nehalem Bay