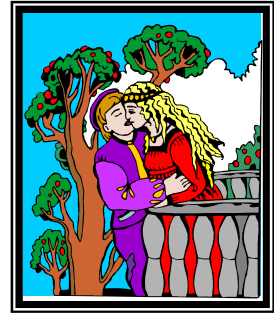


Romeo and Juliet



Shakespeare is one of the most famous and popular authors in the world. People in other countries learn English just so they can read Shakespeare in the original language. His works have survived for over 400 years and, since he was writing at a time when the English language was in transition, they give us an insight into the development of English.

As we read *Romeo and Juliet* together, we will be working in “acting troupes” of four or five students. Each group will be performing a scene from the play, once in the original language, once in translation. See #4 below.

Extra credit will be given to students who are willing to read major parts in the play as we read aloud in class. Please make sure that you are a strong oral reader if you are interested in receiving this extra credit.

For this unit, you must complete the following:

- 1) **Pre-writing:** Write an approximately 150-word response to the pre-writing assignment (on next page). This will be checked for a homework grade.
- 2) **Quiz Game:** Watch a video, listen to a lecture, and read your textbook to create 10 four-answer multiple-choice questions about Shakespeare, his life and times, to be used for a quiz game that will determine the order of scene selection for #4 below. Your multiple-choice questions will be checked for a homework grade.
- 3) **Notes on film:** Watch a film version of the play and take notes on what happens. This will help you with #4 below. Your notes will be checked for a homework grade.
- 4) **Two Scenes:** Decide on one scene of at least 100 lines to enact for the class. The scene must first be performed in the original Shakespearian English. It also must be rewritten/translated into modern English and performed again. We will be doing these scenes as they come up during our reading of the play, and there can be no duplication between groups. Each member of the group needs to contribute, so you might decide to change actors for each scene, and non-actors must make sure they do enough work in directing, props, costumes, or rewriting into modern English to make up for not performing in front of the class. We will create and use a rubric to grade your performances.
- 5) **Study Guide:** Complete a study guide, worth four homework grades: two for the first half about literary terms and devices, two for a scene-by-scene summation of the play. Additional directions are on the study guide.
- 6) **Quizzes:** Take a quiz for each act.

7) **Essay:** Write an approximately 300-word essay from the topics on the following page. Make sure that you refer specifically to the play. Use direct quotes to support your argument, using (act.scene.lines) for a reference. For example, (III.2.1-15) refers to act 3, scene 2, lines 1-15. Your essay will be graded according to the Regents rubric.

8) **Group Evaluation:** Complete a group evaluation form (attached), assessing the performance of your group as well as yourself. Please note that your grade will be decreased by 10 points if a majority of your group grades your performance as below a “3” and will be increased by 5 points if you are rated above a “4”.

GOOD FREND FOR JESVS SAKE FORBEARE,
TO DIGG THE DUST ENCLOSED HEARE.
BLES BE YE MAN YT SPARES THES STONES.
AND CURST BE HE YT MOVE MY BONES.

-Epitaph on Shakespeare's tombstone in Stratford

ROMEO AND JULIET PRE-WRITING EXERCISE

Write an approximately 150-word response to one of the following.

- 1) At a party, you meet the most wonderful, attractive, intelligent person. After talking, you discover that the attraction is mutual, and you make plans to meet again. When you get home, you overhear your parents talking about this person's parents, how they just got cheated by them on a business deal, and how they're planning to take them to court. What do you do about your relationship with this person?
- 2) You are walking with a friend when you see someone you really hate walking down the street toward you. This person starts insulting you, and your friend yells back. Before you know it, your friend and the other person have both pulled out knives and are fighting. Suddenly, your friend is stabbed, and falls to the ground, very badly hurt. Your friend's knife skitters across the ground, stopping at your feet. What do you do?
- 3) Would you allow your friends and family to believe you were dead if it meant you would be able to live happily with the person you love?



Essay topics for Romeo and Juliet

- 1) Choose a character in the play and select one adjective that describes that person. Then, using specific examples from the play, demonstrate that what you say is an accurate description of that character. Some labels that might be useful: hostile, authoritarian, meddling, immature, impatient, passionate, humorous, troubled, caring, practical, short-sighted, spontaneous, passive, instigating, imperious, understanding, stubborn, etc.
- 2) Many characters in *Romeo and Juliet* have counterparts. Compare two characters in the play and show their similarities and/or differences in personality and behavior. Some possible pairs include Romeo/Juliet, Romeo/Paris, Lord and Lady Montague/Capulet, Friar/Nurse, Tybalt/Mercutio, Tybalt/Benvolio, etc.
- 3) Remember that at the beginning of the play, Romeo is in love with Rosaline, but shifts rapidly to Juliet. Is the love between Romeo and Juliet merely a crush, "puppy love," lust, or is it truly love? Make sure you define your view of their love and include both Rosaline and Juliet in your explanation.
- 4) Shakespeare writes in a combination of blank verse (unrhymed iambic pentameter), rhymed couplets (rhyming iambic pentameter), and prose (normal, non-poetic speech). When does he use each in *Romeo and Juliet*, and why does the language change at these points?
- 5) Quite often, the characters in the play say contradictory things, known as paradoxes. For example, Juliet says, "Beautiful tyrant! Fiend angelical! / Dove-feathered raven! Wolvish-ravening lamb!" (III.2.77-78). When are these contradictions used, and how do they relate to the play as a whole?
- 6) "Irony" is when something is done or said that is incongruous with what is expected, often with bittersweet results. Give examples of at least three ironic events and explain what effect they have on the play and its audience.
- 7) The "theme" of a play or novel is the underlying message that the writer communicates to the reader. What is one theme of *Romeo and Juliet* and how is this theme made evident?
- 8) Find at least three key moments in the play that would have to be changed in order to result in a "happy" (or at least non-tragic) ending. Come up with what would have to happen, explain why it would make enough of a difference, and explore what the possible outcome(s) would be of your changes.
- 9) The term "star-crossed lovers" implies that what happens in the play is the result of fate, rather than the free will of the characters. Do you believe this is true, or is what happens clearly a result of choices made by the characters?
- 10) The one thing that can be said about all of Shakespeare's tragedies is that many people die. In *Romeo and Juliet*, there are six deaths. Look at the death of each character and explain what effect their deaths have on the play. In other words, explain *why* they had to die; what was the *purpose* of their deaths, not just *how* they died.
- 11) *Romeo and Juliet* is said to be one of the greatest love stories. Examine the different characters' thoughts on love and make some connections to the events of the play.

Groupwork Evaluation

Name: _____

How well did your group work together? Why do you think so?

How well did the members of your group contribute (including yourself)?
note that, in a well-balanced group, you should all have threes and fours.

Group member (name) not at all helped some did most work

_____ 1 2 3 4 5 6
Comments:

_____ 1 2 3 4 5 6
Comments:

_____ 1 2 3 4 5 6
Comments:

_____ 1 2 3 4 5 6
Comments:

_____ 1 2 3 4 5 6
Comments:

When did you help your group the most?

How could you have helped your group more?