

*presents*

# Romeo and Juliet - Abbreviated

*Performed by*

**Stage West**

*for*

**High School Students**

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# Introduction

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Dear Teachers,

We are proud to present an updated, shortened version of *Romeo and Juliet*, produced by Stage West Theatre of Fort Worth. We were interested in presenting the play in a form that students could relate to and in which they might see relevance. We hope that it will make studying the play in the classroom more interesting and enjoyable.

We were happy that Dana Schultes at Stage West embraced this concept immediately and she and her company have done a great deal of work to make this play modern, while staying true to Shakespeare's model. We thank her and her group for their vision.

*There are several TEKS standards which this play addresses. Choose those that are applicable to your classroom--*

110.31 English Language Arts and Reading

(4) Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Drama. Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of drama and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to explain how dramatic conventions (e.g., monologues, soliloquies, dramatic irony) enhance dramatic text.

(12) Reading/Media Literacy. Students use comprehension skills to analyze how words, images, graphics, and sounds work together in various forms to impact meaning. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater depth in increasingly more complex texts. Students are expected to:

(B) analyze how messages in media are conveyed through visual and sound techniques (e.g., editing, reaction shots, sequencing, background music);

Please let me know if you have questions or problems. Otherwise, we will see you and your students at Bass Performance Hall soon.



Sue Buratto

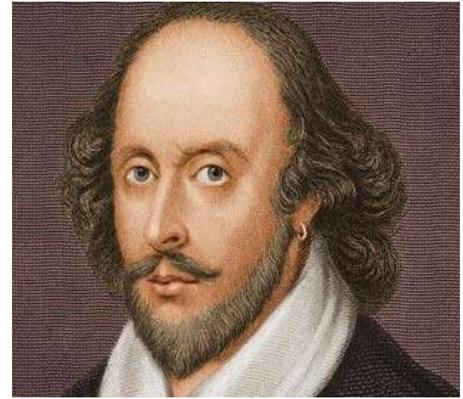
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# The Author

# William Shakespeare

William was 18 at the time and Anne was 26—and pregnant. Their first daughter, Susanna, was born on May 26, 1583. The couple later had twins, Hamnet and Judith, born February 2, 1585 and christened at Holy Trinity Church. Hamnet died in childhood at the age of 11, on August 11, 1596. For seven years William Shakespeare pretty much disappeared from all records, turning up in London around 1592. By 1594 he was not only acting and writing for the theater group, Lord Chamberlain's Men (called the King's Men after the ascension of James I in 1603), but was a managing partner in the operation as well. The first recorded performance of *Romeo and Juliet* was in 1595. With Will Kempe, a master comedian, and Richard Burbage, a leading tragic actor of the day, the Lord



William Shakespeare 1564-1616

## KNOWN FACTS

William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon on or near April 23, 1564. Church records from Holy Trinity Church indicate that he was baptized there on April 26, 1564. William's parents were John Shakespeare, leather merchant and successful businessman, and Mary Arden. In 1556 John bought a large house where William was born. He was an alderman member of the town council and in 1568 appointed High Bailiff, the equivalent of Mayor of Stratford. However when he lost his fortune a few years later, William had to leave school to work. In 1582 William married Anne Hathaway.

Chamberlain's Men became a favorite London troupe, patronized by royalty and made popular by the theater-going public. When plague forced theater closings in the mid-1590s, Shakespeare and his company made plans for The Globe Theatre on the South Bank across the Thames River from London. While Shakespeare could not be counted as wealthy, by London standards his success allowed him to purchase New House in Stratford and retire there in 1611 as a prosperous country gentleman.

When Shakespeare lived in London in the late 1500s, England was a rich and powerful nation under the leadership of Queen Elizabeth I, although the country was divided by religious strife. The Church of England and Catholics were in constant battle for supremacy.

Theater was thriving and Shakespeare was successful as an actor, poet and playwright. He wrote 37 plays

and over 150 sonnets. He wrote more than 100,000 lines of text and devised more than 1,200 characters. He used 30,000 different words in his works, showing he had one of the richest vocabularies of any writer in English. He turned nouns into verbs, linked adjectives together to form new words and borrowed words from other languages.

In writing his plays, he would often use a plot he already knew or had read about, convert it, add to it and make it his own. Seven years after his death, his friends John Heminges and Henry Condell published a book containing 36 of Shakespeare's plays, called the "First Folio." His work covered many subjects and styles, including comedies, tragedies, romances and historical plays. Shakespeare was a well-loved writer in his lifetime; and now, 400 years later, he is the most produced playwright in the world.

William Shakespeare wrote his will in 1611, bequeathing his properties to daughter, Susanna. To his other surviving daughter Judith, he left £300, and to his wife Anne he left "my second best bed." This bed is one of the mysteries of Shakespearean scholarship. William Shakespeare allegedly died on his birthday, April 23, 1616. This is probably more of a romantic myth than reality, but Shakespeare was buried at Holy Trinity Church in Stratford on April 25, 1616.



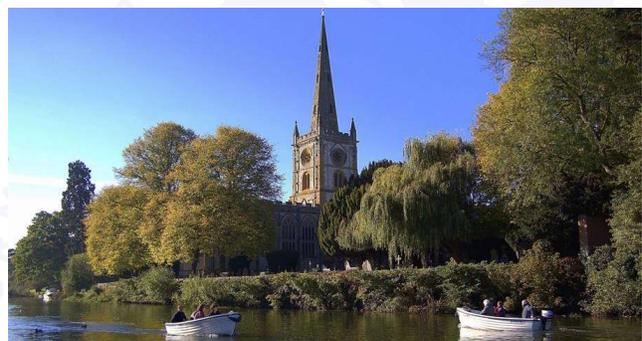
Anne Hathaway



Stratford-upon-Avon



Modern re-creation of Globe Theatre



Trinity Church where Shakespeare was baptized and buried

From "Shakespeare for Teachers" The Acting Company *And Shakespeare's England*



# The Characters

# The Characters

<b>Escalus</b>	Escalus is the Prince of Verona and appears briefly in the final scene in the tomb.
<b>Mercutio</b>	Mercutio is Romeo's loyal friend. He is lively and talkative and represents youth and freedom. He is brave: he comes to the defense of Romeo when Tybalt insults him. When he lays dying from the wound by Tybalt, he pretends it is just a scratch. He plays an important role in the plot: he convinces Romeo to attend the Capulet party where he first meets Juliet. When Mercutio is killed, it sets off the tragic chain of events—Tybalt murders Mercutio, Romeo is enraged and kills Tybalt, he is banished from Verona, and because Romeo and Juliet cannot communicate, there is confusion, and they ultimately die.
<b>Paris</b>	He is handsome and wealthy and the suitor of Juliet. Her parents favor him.
<b>Montague and His Wife</b>	Montague is the father of Romeo; he and his wife are the mortal enemies of the Capulets.
<b>Romeo</b>	As the <b>son</b> of the Montagues, he is a good man who did not want to kill Tybalt. He is a generous and kind friend, who acts impetuously: the moment he hears of Juliet's "death," he leaves for Verona, buys poison before he knows any details and falls in love on first glance. Falling in love with Juliet helps him grow up. At the end of the play, he thinks only of Juliet and kills himself to be reunited with her.
<b>Benvolio</b>	Benvolio plays a small but important role in the play: he is Montague's nephew and Romeo's friend who serves as a peacemaker and the voice of reason.
<b>Capulet and his Wife</b>	Capulet and his wife are the stubborn, short-tempered parents of Juliet. They want what is best for Juliet, but they are not very close to her, nor do they know what she wants or needs. They keep the feud alive through their manipulations.
<b>Juliet</b>	Juliet is not yet 14 and as the daughter of the Capulets, she is generally obedient and gentle to them. She is stronger than most women of the Renaissance, however; she ultimately defies her parents' decision of who she will marry. Her first thoughts are for Romeo, and he is the most important thing in her life. After Romeo is banished from Verona, she does not beg him to stay, knowing that will endanger him. She prefers to die rather than to live without him.
<b>Nurse</b>	The Nurse is the down-to-earth, simple servant of Juliet and has raised her.
<b>Tybalt</b>	As the nephew of Capulet's Wife, he is a troublemaker who loves to fight and likes violence for violence's sake. He is probably the person who keeps the feud between the Montagues and the Capulets alive.
<b>Friar Laurence</b>	Friar Laurence, a Franciscan priest, is a wise and holy man, to whom both Romeo and Juliet turn for advice. Many people have said that he should not have married the young couple in secret, deceiving the parents. In the end he suffers for his part in the death of the young couple.



# The Plot

# The Plot

In Verona there are two prominent families who are constantly at war: the Capulets and the Montagues. The play opens with a fight erupting between members of each rival family before the Prince arrives and breaks up the fight. He proclaims that the next person to cause a disturbance will pay with his life.

Romeo, a Montague, is sad because he was unable to woo a woman named Rosaline. Meanwhile, Juliet, who is a Capulet, has been told she is to be married to Count Paris, although she is not in love with him. She is also told she must prepare for a huge party that her parents are giving that night. In order to cheer him up, Romeo's best friend, Mercutio suggests they crash the Capulet party. Reluctantly, Romeo agrees to go to the party.

At the party, Romeo and Juliet see each other for the first time and it is love at first sight. They don't realize they are from the two feuding families. Even once they are told they each belong to their family's enemy, there is nothing that can be done to keep them apart. After the party ends, Romeo finds Juliet's balcony off her bedroom and calls to her. They share ardent vows of love (the famous "balcony scene") and plan their future.

The two star-crossed lovers seek help from their friends. Juliet asks her trusted Nurse for help; Romeo turns to Friar Laurence. These two helpers act as go-betweens to devise a plan. The next day they are married.

While all this is happening, Mercutio and some other Montagues again fight with Tybalt (Juliet's cousin) and other Capulets. Romeo happens upon the scene and desperately tries to break up the fight but fails, and Tybalt stabs and kills Mercutio (who wishes a "plague o' both your houses"). Enraged by the death of his best friend, Romeo chases and kills Tybalt. Romeo flees before the Prince appears. When the Prince arrives, he decides that Romeo should be exiled and may never return to Verona.

The Nurse, though distraught over the death of Tybalt, sends word to Romeo through Friar Laurence that he is to meet Juliet that night in her bedroom. After Romeo leaves Juliet, her father tells her that she is to be married to Count Paris on Monday, much sooner than originally announced. With Romeo banished from Verona, there seems to be little that can be done to bring Romeo and Juliet together.

When a distraught Juliet visits Friar Laurence, he gives her a special potion. The potion will put Juliet into such a deep sleep that she will appear to have died. Once she is entombed, the marriage to Paris will be called off, Juliet will awake, Romeo will find her and they will live happily ever after. Friar Laurence is to send word to Romeo about Juliet's plan and fake death. However, because of a plague, all the gates of Mantua are closed, the messenger never gets through and Romeo never hears about her faked death. Instead, Romeo only hears rumors that Juliet has died. On his way back to Verona, Romeo visits an apothecary to buy poison and proceeds to the Capulet family tomb. As he enters the tomb, he sees Paris. The two men fight and Paris is killed.

Romeo finds Juliet, who is still asleep, and thinking she is dead, drinks the poison and dies next to her. When Juliet awakes from her slumber and finds Romeo's body next to her, she is horrified. With no poison left to drink, Juliet takes Romeo's dagger and stabs herself.

When the Prince, the Capulets, Friar Laurence and Lord Montague enter the tomb, they find Romeo and Juliet both dead. In the end, Mercutio, Tybalt, Paris, Romeo and Juliet are all dead because of the feud between the two families. The Montagues and Capulets reconcile, realizing that the feud has caused so much death and destruction.

As the Prince says, "For never was a story of more woe, Than this of Juliet and her Romeo."



**Text**

# Text

There are many lines in *Romeo and Juliet* which you may have heard before, even though you had not read the play. They may be famous because they capture an idea so succinctly.

A pair of star-crossed lovers	Prologue	Chorus
Love is a smoke rais'd with the fume of sighs; Being purg'd, a fire sparkling in lovers' eyes; Being vex'd, a sea raging with lovers' tears' What is it else? A madness most discreet, A choking gall and a preserving sweet.	Act I, Sc 1	Romeo on the nature of love
O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright! It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night As a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear...	Act I, Sc 5	Romeo on first seeing Juliet
My only love sprung from my only hate! Too early seen unknown, and known too late!	Act I, Sc 5	Juliet describing love for Romeo
But soft! What light through yonder window breaks? It is the east, and Juliet is the sun. Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon, Who is already sick and pale with grief That thou her maid art far more fair than she. ...her eyes in heaven Would through the airy region stream so bright That birds would sing and think it were not night.	Act II, Sc 2	Romeo on seeing Juliet on balcony
O Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo? ...O, be some other name! What's in a name? That which we call a rose By any other name would smell as sweet,	Act II, Sc 2	Juliet on Romeo's name
Lady, by yonder blessed moon I swear, That tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops--	Act II, Sc 2	Romeo swears his love
O, swear not by the moon, th'inconstant moon, That monthly changes in her circled orb, Let that thy love prove likewise variable.	Act II, Sc 2	Juliet's response
My bounty is as boundless as the sea, My love as deep, the more I give to thee, The more I have, for both are infinite.	Act II, Sc 2	Juliet declares her love

How silver-sweet sound lovers' tongues by night,  
Like softest music to attending ears.

Act II, Sc 2

Romeo

Good-night, good-night! Parting is such sweet sorrow  
That I shall say good-night till it be morrow.

Act II, Sc 2

Juliet says goodbye

For this alliance may so happy prove,  
To turn your households' rancor to pure love.

Act II, Sc 3

Friar Laurence

These violent delights have violent ends,  
And in their triumph die; like fire and powder  
Which as they kiss consume.  
Therefore, love moderately; long love doth so;

Act II, Sc 6

Friar's warning

Come, gentle night, come, loving, black-brow'd night,  
Give me my Romeo, and, when he shall die,  
Take him and cut him out in little stars,  
And he will make the face of heaven so fine,  
That all the world will be in love with night.

Act II, Sc 2

Juliet longs for night

A plague o' both your houses!

Act III, Sc 1

Mercutio

**Juliet:** Wilt thou be gone? It is not yet near day;  
It was the nightingale, and not the lark,  
That pierc'd the fearful hollow of thine ear;  
Nightly she sings on you pomegranate-tree;  
Believe me, love, it was the nightingale.

**Romeo:** It was the lark, the herald of the morn,  
No nightingale: look, love, what envious streaks  
Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east:  
Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day  
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops:

Act III, Sc 5

At break of day

**Romeo:** Farewell, farewell! One kiss, and I'll descend.

**Juliet:** Art thou gone so? My lord, my love, my friend!  
I must hear from thee every day in the hour,  
For in a minute there are many days:  
O! by this count I shall be much in years  
Ere I again behold my Romeo.

Act III, Sc 5

Romeo and Juliet's  
farewell

More light and light, more dark and dark our woes.

Act III, Sc 5

Romeo

Her blood is settled, and her joints are stiff;  
Life and these lips have long been separated.  
Death lies on her like an untimely frost  
Upon the sweetest flower of all the field.

Act IV, Sc 5

Juliet's death

...Ah, dear Juliet,  
Why art thou yet so fair? Shall I believe  
That unsubstantial death is amorous,  
And that the lean abhorred monster keeps  
Thee here in dark to be his paramour?

Act V, Sc 3

Romeo gazes on Juliet

...Eyes, look your last!  
Arms, take your last embrace! And lips, O you  
The doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss...

...O true apothecary,  
Thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die.

Act V, Sc 3

Romeo's last kiss

Oh happy dagger,  
This is thy sheath: there rust, and let me die.

Act V, Sc 3

Juliet

...Capulet! Montague!  
See, what a scourge is laid upon your hate,  
That heaven finds means to kill your joys with love,  
And I, for winking at your discords too,  
Have lost a brace of kinsmen: all are punish'd.

Act V, Sc 3

Prince blames deaths  
on feud

A glooming peace this morning with it brings.  
The sun, for sorrow, will not show his head.  
Go hence, to have more talk of these sad things;  
Some shall be pardon'd and some punished:  
For never was a story of more woe  
Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.

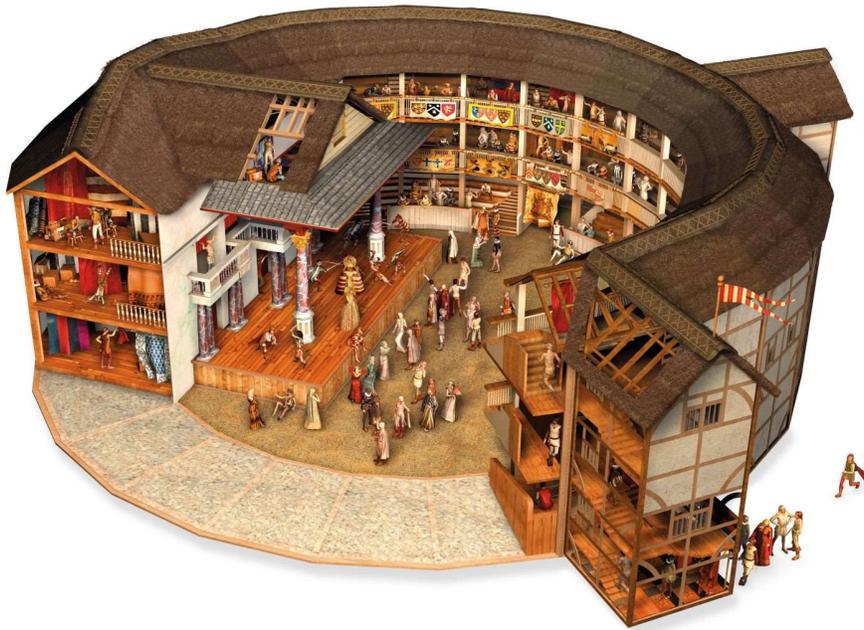
Act V, Sc 3

The story of Romeo  
and Juliet



**Elizabethan Theater**

# Elizabethan Theater



Note that there is no roof over the middle of the theater and a thatched roof over balconies on the sides. It was referred to as the “Wooden O.” The theater building was open air.

The apron stage was thrust in to the middle of the yard and was covered with a ceiling, painted with sun, moon and stars.

At the base of the stage was an area called the pit, where people could stand for a penny to watch the play; today those are among the most expensive seats in a theater. The balconies rose three stories high, where the more expensive seats were located.

Performances started at 2:00 P.M. to make the most of daylight, since there were no electric lights.

The stage was usually bare. Special effects and scenery did not play a big part in theater. Musicians provided sound effects and actors wore showy costumes. Audience members were expected to use their imaginations to supply the rest.

Elizabethan theaters held 1500-3000 people who were often rowdy.

Theaters were built outside the walls of the city to avoid control by city authorities, who claimed that plays had a bad effect on people’s morals.

Women did not act on stage until after 1660. Before that time, boys played women’s roles.

When Shakespeare moved to London, he met with actor/manager Richard Burbage and became a prompter, then an actor, and later he became Burbage’s star writer.

Richard and Cuthbert Burbage opened “The Globe Theatre” in 1599.

Shakespeare produced most of his plays in The Globe and eventually became part owner.

Queen Elizabeth (1558-1603) loved theater. In 1603 James I became king and also supported theater.



# Shakespeare's Language

# Shakespeare's Language

Shakespeare's language made him one of the most important writers in the world. He could express powerful emotions and reveal his characters with unique phrases that are still used today.

Writers often use literary devices such as **figures of speech** to express complex ideas or describe something in a memorable way. Shakespeare was a master of imagery, using metaphors and similes.

A **simile** is a comparison of one thing with another, using the words "like" and "as."  
 'It seems she hangs on the cheek of night  
 Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear.'

A **metaphor** describes something as if it were something else.  
 'But soft! What light through yonder breaks?  
 It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.'

**Alliteration** repeats the same sound at the beginning of words that are close to each other to emphasize them.  
 'Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds,  
 Toward Phoebus' lodging; such a waggoner  
 As Phaeton would whip you to the west.'

**Hyperbole** means exaggerating.  
**Romeo says that '[t]he brightness of [Juliet's] cheek would shame those stars,  
 As daylight doth a lamp; her eyes in heaven  
 Would through the airy region stream so bright  
 That birds would sing and think it were not night'**

**Assonance** is the repeated use of the same vowel sound in words that are close together.  
 'Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks'

**Allusion** is a brief reference to some person, place or thing in history, in other literature, or in actuality. In this play he makes references to Greek and Roman mythology, referring to the goddess of the hunt Diana and the god Cupid.

## Puns

### Objective:

- Students will explore the use of puns as a literary device.
- Students will learn about the Elizabethan fondness for wordplay.

### Fact:

In the time of Queen Elizabeth I, verbal eloquence was honored above all other accomplishments. The Elizabethans were amused and fascinated by language and puns. They also loved insults.

A **pun** is a play on words based on the similarity of sound between two different words with different meanings. Look to Mercutio's speech, especially, for a source of puns.

Give me a torch. I am not for this ambling./Being but **heavy**(sad, weighing much) I will bear the **light** (brightness, weighing little). (I,iv,1-2)

Not I, believe me You have dancing shoes /With nimble **soles**. I have a **soul** of lead/So stakes me to the ground I cannot move. (I,iv,4-6)

...What dost thou make us minstrels? An thou makes mistrels of us, look to hear nothing but **discords** (off-key notes/disagreements). (III, i, 34-35)

We see the **ground** (earth/reason) whereon these woes do lie,/But the true ground of all these piteous woes/We cannot without circumstance descry. (V,iii,179-181)

...ask for me to-morrow, and you shall find me a **grave** man. [Grave meaning "serious", but in this case, dead.] (III, i, 65)

### Paradox and Oxymoron

#### Objective:

- Students will identify and trace the themes of love and hate in the play
- Students will explore the use of **paradox** and **oxymoron** as literary devices
- Students will do a close reading of Romeo's speech

#### Romeo:

O me! What fray was here?  
Here's much to do with hate, but more with love:  
Why then, o **brawling love**, O **loving hate**.  
O **any thing of nothing** first create!  
O **heavy lightness**, **serious vanity**,  
**Feather of lead**, **bright smoke**, **cold fire**, **sick health**,  
**Still waking sleep**, that is not what it is!  
This love feel I, that feel no love in this. (I, i,106ff)

A **paradox** is a statement or situation containing apparently contradictory or incompatible elements, a figure of speech in which an apparently self-contradictory statement is nevertheless found to be true.

An **oxymoron** is a literary device employing **paradox**, a seeming contradiction reduced to two words, usually an adjective-noun ("plastic silverware") or adverb-adjective ("breathhtakingly dull"). It is used for effect, complexity, emphasis or wit. Oxymorons are used when things have gone contrary to expectation, belief, desire or assertion, or when your position is opposite to another's which you are discussing.

Other oxymorons, as more or less true paradoxes, show the complexity of a situation where two apparently opposite things are true simultaneously, as in the above passage from *Romeo and Juliet*. Shakespeare combines opposites and paradoxes in longer phrases. In Act III, Scene 2, Juliet describes Romeo saying, "O serpent heart hid with flow'ring face...."

Because the relationship between love and hate is a central theme, you may wish to explore paradoxes further.

Many of Shakespeare's expressions have become part of the English language. Because there were no dictionaries in Shakespeare's time, people could spell words however they wished. Over 2,000 of the words Shakespeare used had not been recorded before, so that he may have made them up.

**Verse/Prose**

Some of what Shakespeare wrote in *Romeo and Juliet* is in verse. Some of the verse is in Iambic Pentameter. **Pentameter** is a line of poetry having five metrical feet (“penta’ means five); an **iamb** is a metrical foot having two syllables, the first one short, the second long. Iambic Pentameter feels like a heartbeat: Short, **Long**; Short, **Long**; Short, **Long**; Short, **Long**; Short, **Long**.

The following example of Romeo’s speech describing Juliet demonstrates Iambic Pentameter—

But **soft**, what **light** through **yonder window breaks**?  
 It **is** the **east**, and **Juliet is** the **sun**.  
**Arise**, fair **sun**, and **kill** the **envious moon**.  
 Who **is** already **sick** and **pale** with **grief**  
 That **thou** her **maid** art **far** more **fair** than **she**.  
 Be **not** her **maid**, since **she** is **envious**;  
 Her **vestal livery is** but **sick** and **green**  
 And **none** but **fools** do **wear** it. **Cast it off**.

Some of the verse is in **Rhyming Couplets**, pairs of lines of Iambic Pentameter that rhyme. The rhyming couplet was often used at the end of scenes to indicate to the audience, the other actors and the crew, that the scene is over.

Shakespeare also used **Prose**; prose is common language that does not necessarily have an underlying rhythmical sound to it. Usually servants or lower classes speak prose in Shakespeare’s plays. If a character speaks in both Verse and Prose, there is a reason for it. Look at the death of Mercutio, for example.

Mercutio:  
 I am hurt.  
 A plague o’ both your houses! I am sped.  
 Is he gone, and hath nothing?

Benvolio:  
 What, art thou hurt?

Mercutio:  
 Ay, ay, a scratch, a scratch; marry, ‘tis enough.  
 Where is my page? Go, villain, fetch a surgeon.

Romeo:  
 Courage, man, the hurt cannot be much.

Mercutio:  
 No, ‘tis not so deep as well, nor so wide as a church door, but ‘tis enough, ‘twill serve. Ask for me tomorrow, and you shall find me a grave man. I am peppered, I warrant, for this world. A plague o’ both your houses! Zounds, a dog, a rat, a mouse, a cat, to scratch a man to death! A braggart, a rogue, a villain, that fights by the book of arithmetic! Why the devil came you between us? I was hurt under your arm.

Romeo:  
 I thought all for the best.

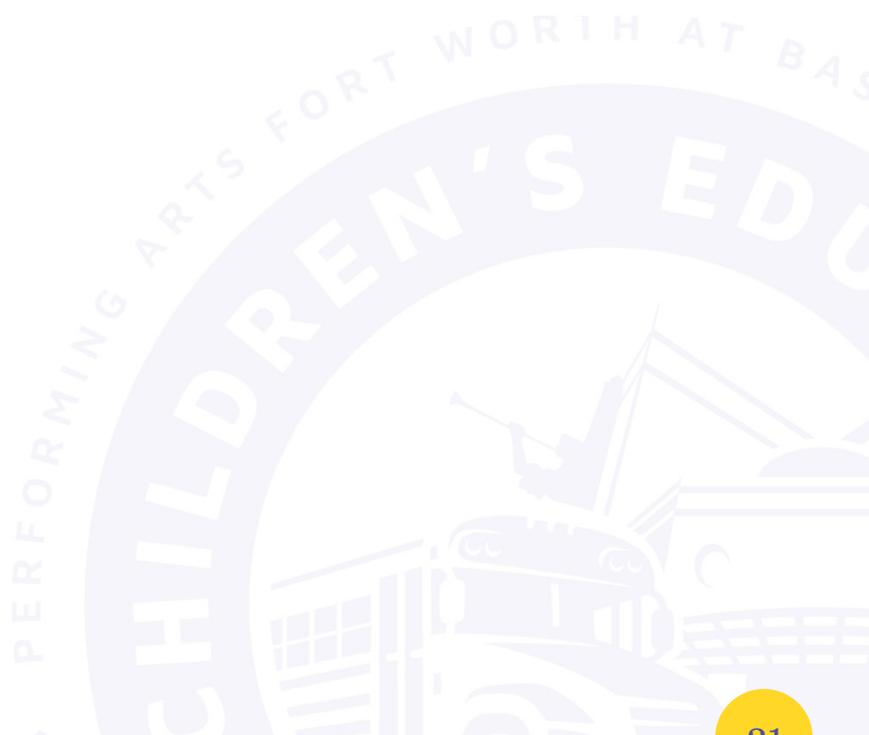
Mercutio:  
 Help me into some house, Benvolio,  
 Or I shall faint. A plague o’ both your houses!  
 They have made worm’s meat of me. I have it,  
 And soundly too. Your houses!

---

There are two prominent **Sonnets** in *Romeo and Juliet*—one in the Prologue and one at Romeo and Juliet's first meeting. A sonnet is often a poetic exaggeration of love with a strict form and rhyme scheme. It is most often in Iambic Pentameter and the rhyme scheme is

***abab, cdcd, efef, gg.***

It is, therefore, comprised of three groups of 4 lines (quatrains), followed by two concluding lines (couplet).





# Lesson Overview

# The Sonnet

From [www.Folger.edu/education/lesson](http://www.Folger.edu/education/lesson)

Students will analyze Petrarchan conventions within the three sonnets in *Romeo and Juliet*. Students will evaluate whether Juliet adheres to or rejects these conventions.

*Romeo and Juliet* [sonnet](#): 1.5.104-18

## What to Do

### Day One

Activate prior knowledge through a review of structure and Petrarchan conventions.

Pass out the text of [1.5.104-23](#) from *Romeo and Juliet*. Divide the students into two groups: “Romeo” and “Juliet.” Assign the Nurse’s line to one person.

Read the passage chorally. “Nurse” reads line 123. Ask students to circle unfamiliar words.

Ask students if they recognize the form used. What’s unusual about it? Note that in lines [115-23](#), Romeo and Juliet appear to be starting a second sonnet, perhaps even a sonnet sequence, but are interrupted by the Nurse. How is this symbolic?

Discuss the meanings of any words that students have circled. You may want to have a whole class copy of annotations on chart paper or on the board.

Read the lines again, chorally.

Ask students to describe the ways in which this passage is “Petrarchan.” (Religious imagery, love at first sight, the lady approached as holy, the lover begging her favor, a threat of despair, and elaborate metaphors, among others.) Have students note lines that show these conventions.

Assign two “actors” to be Romeo and Juliet who will act out the lines silently as the rest of the class reads them. The kiss can be faked.

Ask the rest of the class to act as directors and suggest ways Romeo and Juliet might move or gesture at key points. There will be a lot of stopping and starting. Encourage the class to look at the actors, not the script.

### Day 2

Have choral readers, the Nurse, and the silent actors from yesterday go through the passage one more time, employing the directions given to them by the rest of the class.

After Romeo and Juliet return to their seats, ask students what they noticed about Juliet’s behavior. In what way is it “anti-Petrarchan”? Students will have probably picked up that Juliet is neither passive nor inaccessible but rather a bold and witty heroine.

Students can continue with their annotations of the scene and add to the class annotation copy. They may want to complete a Venn diagram (or similar graphic organizer) to note differences.

**Assessment:** Have students respond to the following question in their journals: Has Juliet become a more significant rebel than she was before she met Romeo? Use textual evidence to support your answer.



**Names**

# Names

*An exercise that might be of use to prompt students to understand a major theme of the play--*

## Objective:

Students will investigate the power of names  
Students will do a close reading of a section of *Romeo and Juliet*  
Students will investigate their first name

## Exercise:

Give students copies of the selection from *Romeo and Juliet* below. How many references to names are there in the selection? Ask two students to read the scene aloud. When they come to the words referring to names, the rest of the class should echo the word.

### Juliet

O **Romeo, Romeo**, wherefore art thou **Romeo**?  
Deny thy father and refuse thy **name**;  
Or if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,  
And I'll no longer be a **Capulet**.

### Romeo (Aside)

Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

### Juliet

'Tis but thy **name** that is my enemy;  
Thou art thyself, though not a **Montague**.  
What's **Montague**? It is nor hand, nor foot,  
Nor arm nor face, nor any other part  
Belonging to a man. O, be some other **name**!  
What's in a **name**? That which we call a rose  
By any other **name** would smell as sweet;  
Romeo, doff thy **name**,  
And for that **name**, which is no part of thee,  
Take all myself.

### Romeo

I take thee at thy word:  
Call me but love, and I'll be new **baptized**;  
Henceforth I never will be **Romeo**.

### Juliet

What **man** art thou that thus bescreend in night  
So stumblest on my counsel?

### Romeo

By a **name**

I know not how to tell thee who I am.  
My **name**, dear saint, is hateful to myself,  
Because it is an enemy to thee;  
Had I it written, I would tear the word.

### Juliet

My ears have not yet drunk a hundred words  
Of that tongue's uttering, yet I know the sound.  
Art thou not **Romeo**, and a **Montague**?

### Romeo

Neither, fair maid, if either thee dislike.

## Exercise:

Why do we call a rose a rose? Ask the students, in teams of three or four, to create a scene showing what would happen if everyone started calling things different names (for example, try calling "school" "restaurant", or "breakfast" "Kleenex"—"Wheaties, the Kleenex of Champions"?). Have the small groups work together for 5 minutes, and then present the scenes to the class. How important is a name in establishing an identity? How are product names chosen and why? Does the class agree or disagree with Juliet when she says: "That which we call a rose/ By any other name would smell as sweet."

*From—Love, Shakespeare  
The Acting Company  
By Paul Michael Fontana  
Director of Education*



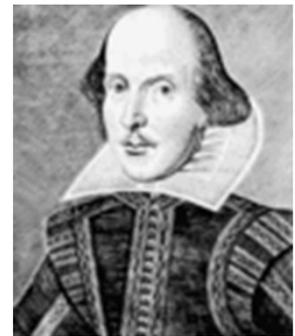
# Timeline of Renaissance Age

# Timeline of Renaissance Age

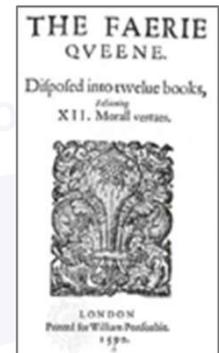
- 1558 Reign of Elizabeth I begins
- 1561 Francis Bacon born
- 1564 William Shakespeare born  
April 23 in Stratford  
Galileo born  
Christopher Marlowe, Shakespeare's rival, born
- 1568 John Shakespeare (William's father) becomes Bailiff (mayor)
- 1571 William attends grammar school
- 1572 Famous authors John Donne and Ben Jonson born
- 1577 Sir Francis Drake sets sail around the world
- 1582 Shakespeare marries Anne Hathaway
- 1583 Shakespeare's daughter, Susanna, is born
- 1587 Mary Queen of Scots is executed
- 1589 Shakespeare moves to London, leaving his family behind *Henry VI*—all 3 parts—are produced
- 1590 Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* is published
- 1593 Christopher Marlowe dies
- 1594 Lord Chamberlain's Men theater group founded ***Romeo and Juliet*** first performed
- 1595 *A Midsummer Night's Dream, Richard II*
- 1596 *The Merchant of Venice*
- 1597 Shakespeare buys new home in Stratford  
*Henry IV, parts 1 and 2*
- 1599 First Globe Theatre opens  
*Julius Caesar, As You Like It, Twelfth Night Hamlet, Merry Wives of Windsor*
- 1603 Queen Elizabeth dies; James I crowned
- 1605 *Macbeth, King Lear*
- 1611 King James Version of Bible
- 1612 Returns to Stratford for family
- 1613 Globe Theatre burns down
- 1616 William Shakespeare dies
- 1620 Pilgrims reach Plymouth



Elizabeth I



William Shakespeare



King James I



First Globe Theater



# Themes

# Themes

In many of Shakespeare's plays, the themes of light, time and fate play a significant role. They are found in *Romeo and Juliet*, too. There are also other themes found in this play.

## THE FORCEFULNESS OF LOVE

*Romeo and Juliet* is the ultimate love story. Love, portrayed as intense **passion**, is the play's dominant theme. In *Romeo and Juliet*, love is a **violent, ecstatic, overpowering force** that surpasses all other values and loyalties.

The young lovers

- **defy their entire social world: families** ("Deny thy father and refuse thy name," Juliet asks, "Or if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love, / And I'll no longer be a Capulet");
- **desert friends** (Romeo abandons Mercutio and Benvolio after the feast in order to go to Juliet's garden); and
- **defy their ruler** (Romeo returns to Verona for Juliet's sake after being exiled by the Prince on pain of death in 2.1.76–78).

The **power** of love can be seen in the way it is described. At times love is described in the terms of

- **religion**, as in the fourteen lines when Romeo and Juliet first meet.
- **magic**: "Alike bewitchèd by the charm of looks" (2.Prologue.6).
- **chaos** and **passion** of being in love, combining images of
- **love+violence+death+religion+ family= play's tragic conclusion**

## LOVE AS A CAUSE OF VIOLENCE

The themes of **death** and **violence** infuse *Romeo and Juliet*, and they are always **passionate**, whether it is love or hate. The connection between hate, violence, and death seems obvious. But there is the connection between love and violence, too.

Love, in *Romeo and Juliet*, is a **grand passion**, and it is blinding; it can overwhelm a person as powerfully and completely as hate can. The passionate love between Romeo and Juliet is linked from the beginning with death: Tybalt notices that Romeo has crashed the feast and determines to kill him just as Romeo catches sight of Juliet and falls instantly in love with her. From that point on, love seems to push the lovers to both love and violence. **Romeo and Juliet are plagued with thoughts of suicide.** This theme continues until its inevitable conclusion: double suicide. The question is perhaps, however, whether it is Infatuation: Love at First Sight, or Love. They act rashly, deciding to marry after knowing each other for an hour. Is it Lust or Love?

## THE INDIVIDUAL VERSUS SOCIETY

Much of *Romeo and Juliet* involves **the lovers' struggles against public and social institutions** that oppose their love.

Those institutions are—

- **families** and the placement of power in the father; loyalty to kin. Juliet must obey her father's rule
- **law** and the desire for **public order**;
- **religion**; they wait until marriage before consummating their love, even though their suicide is a sin in the eyes of the church
- **importance** placed on **masculine honor**. These institutions often conflict with each other: The importance of 'honor' results in brawls that disturb the public peace. Romeo's desire for honor forces him to commit actions he would prefer to avoid. But the social emphasis placed on masculine honor is so profound that Romeo cannot ignore them.

*Romeo and Juliet* can be viewed as a battle between the responsibilities and actions demanded by social institutions and those demanded by the private desires. Romeo and Juliet's appreciation of night, with its privacy, and their renunciation of their names, with its attendant loss of obligation, make sense in the context of individuals who wish to escape the public world. But the lovers cannot stop the night from becoming day. And Romeo cannot cease being a Montague simply because he wants to; the rest of the world will not let him. The lovers' suicides can be understood as the ultimate night, the ultimate privacy.

## LIGHT—DARK

Light is not always good and Dark is not always evil, contrary to common belief. In Romeo's meditation on the sun and moon on the Balcony, Juliet is the sun, which banishes the envious moon, transforming night to day. In the early morning hours when Romeo must leave Juliet, he tries to pretend it is still night. Romeo says, "More light and light, more dark and dark our woes." III, Sc 5

Normally light is a symbol of natural beauty of young love. Romeo and Juliet see each other as a source of Light.

Romeo says Juliet is, as we have said, the sun. She is also brighter than a torch, a jewel sparkling in the night, and a bright angel among dark clouds. Even in the tomb, her beauty makes the vault a feasting presence full of light.

Juliet says that Romeo is day in night and whiter than snow upon a raven's back. Romeo and Juliet's love can be seen as light in the midst of the hate (darkness) around them, although all their activity is done in darkness, where it is safe. Ironically, all the feuding and turmoil is done in daylight.

**ALTERNATE WAYS TO SEE THINGS**

Mercutio see things differently than everyone else--

- Romeo is blind, so that he robs him of himself
- Tybalt's devotion to honor is stupid
- He is a critic with delusions of righteousness and grandeur
- Mercutio's death erases the sense of optimism and moves the play on its downward spiral
- Mercutio uses words as weapons

**YOUTH—AGE**

There is a deep divide between the young and old. In the play, cynicism comes with age. It is the quarrels and feuds of their parents—their stupidity, which causes the tragic deaths of so many. Romeo and Juliet are the innocent victims of such stupidity.

**ORDER—DISORDER**

In Romeo and Juliet's first speech, it is a shared **sonnet**, an ordered form.

In Juliet's soliloquy, she says a person is more than his label.

The Night is calm; the Day brings complications.

Juliet asks Romeo not to swear by the moon, but be true to self. She also believes the power of their love can change the world.

**ROLE OF FATE vs. FREE WILL**

While there are many coincidences throughout the play, is the ultimate consequence of a double suicide due to Fate or Poor Decisions? Are Romeo and Juliet too rash in their choices? Do the characters have the ability to choose what they do, or are they simply destined to participate in death and destruction? They seem to run headlong throughout, not choosing wisely or with any guidance. That is a classic discussion among Shakespeare scholars: what role does fate have and what role does poor choice and lack of communication have in these 'star-crossed' lovers' ultimate destinies?

The action of the play takes place over 5 days—

Day 1: Romeo meets Juliet

Day 2: Balcony Scene  
Romeo visits Friar Laurence  
They are married  
Romeo kills Tybalt and is banished  
Romeo and Juliet spend the night together  
Capulet decides Juliet will marry Paris

Day 3: Romeo leaves Juliet at dawn  
Juliet is informed of impending marriage to Paris  
Juliet runs to Friar Laurence  
Juliet drinks potion

Day 4: Juliet is found “dead”  
Romeo hears of news  
Romeo buys poison  
Romeo kills Paris  
Romeo drinks poison  
Juliet awakes, finds Romeo, stabs self

Day 5: Montague and Capulets learn of secret marriage  
Discover double suicide  
End feud

### **LOVE—HATE**

As many writers point out, for a play about Love, there is a great deal of Hate. There is

The feud  
Tybalt seems to personify hate  
Tybalt hates Romeo  
Mercutio hates Tybalt

Love and Hate are closely connected.





# Imagery

# Imagery



**Juliet and her Nurse**  
Henry Perronet Briggs



**The Balcony Scene**  
Frank Dicksee



**Romeo and Juliet Leaving  
Each Other**  
Benjamin West



**Discovery of Juliet**  
Frederick Leighton



**Reconciliation of Montagues and Capulets**  
Frederick Leighton

*While all of these paintings are lyrical and beautiful, they may not represent to many a “real” experience of life and love today. Present them to students and ask if this is the way they see Romeo and Juliet and their struggle. How would they represent them? What would they wear? What posture would they each have?*



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"I strongly recommend that you show your students this PBS 12-minute video by John Green. It is clever, quick-witted introduction to Bill Shakespeare's play and world. Your students will like it. There is a lot of information here."

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# Angels In The Wings

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