



## Romeo and Juliet Knowledge Organiser

### English Literature, Paper 1

Plot	
ACT 1	In Italy, two noble families (the Montagues & Capulets) are feuding yet again. Romeo is in love with Rosaline, who rejects his love. As a result, he is depressed. To cure Romeo of his lovesickness, Benvolio persuades him to attend a masked ball at the Capulets, where he might see prettier girls and therefore forget about Rosaline. Romeo meets Juliet and they instantly fall in love with one another. Tybalt hears Romeo's voice at the ball and is furious that a Montague has dared to attend.
ACT 2	Romeo stands beneath Juliet's balcony. He sees Juliet leaning over the railing, hears her calling out his name & wishes that he wasn't a Montague. He reveals his presence & they resolve, after a passionate exchange, to be married secretly.
ACT 3	Romeo returns from his recent marriage to Juliet and encounters Tybalt, who challenges Romeo to a duel. Unbeknownst to all present, Tybalt is now Romeo's kinsman by marriage so Romeo refuses. Mercutio is livid with Romeo's refusal and fights with Tybalt who underhandedly kills Mercutio. Furious by the death of his friend, Romeo kills Tybalt and takes shelter in the Friar's cell. The Prince exiles Romeo for his part in the fray.
ACT 4	In despair, Juliet seeks Friar Lawrence's advice. He gives her a sleeping potion, which for a time will cause her to appear dead. Thus, on the day of her supposed marriage to Paris, she will be carried to the family vault. By the time she awakens, Romeo will be summoned to the vault and take her away to Mantua.
ACT 5	The Friar's letter fails to reach Romeo. When he hears of Juliet's death, Romeo procures a deadly poison from an apothecary and secretly returns to Verona to say his last farewell to his deceased wife and die by her side. When Juliet awakens from her deep sleep, she realises Romeo's error and kills herself with his dagger. The Capulets and Montague decide to reconcile as a result of the deaths of their children.

#### Dramatic Devices

**Foreshadowing** - Friar Laurence: *'These violent delights have violent ends'* A2 S6

**Dramatic Irony** - Mercutio and Benvolio think Romeo is still pining over Rosaline, but the audience knows he has moved on to Juliet. A2 S1

**Soliloquy** - Juliet's opening speech in A3 S2 in which she pours her heart out over her love for Romeo.

**Aside** - Juliet secretly hopes for the 'villain' Romeo: *'Villain and he be many miles asunder God pardon him!'* A3 S5.

#### Scene by Scene key quote

Prologue	The Chorus speaks of an ancient grudge between two households, from which two 'star-crossed lovers' appear. 'From forth the fatal loins of these two foes A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life. . . '
Act 1 Scene 1	'To old Free-town, our common judgment-place./Once more, on pain of death, all men depart.'
Act 1 Scene 2	'One fairer than my love? The all-seeing sun/Ne'er saw her match since first the world begun.'
Act 1 Scene 3	'I'll look to like if looking liking move/ But no more deep will I endart mine eye/ Than your consent gives strength to make it fly.'
Act 1 Scene 4	'O, then I see Queen Mab has been with you. . . .She is the fairies' midwife. . . .'
Act 1 Scene 5	'If I profane with my unworshieth 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.'
Act 2 Prologue	'But passion lends them power, time means, to meet'
Act 2 Scene 1	'Go then, for 'tis in vain/To seek him here that means not to be found.'
Act 2 Scene 2	'If that thy bent of love be honourable/Thy purpose marriage, send me word tomorrow,/By one that I'll procure to come to thee,'
Act 2 Scene 3	'Thy love did read by rote that could not spell./But come, young waverer, come go with me'
Act 2 Scene 4	'Bid her devise/ Some means to come to shrift this afternoon./And there she shall at Friar Lawrence' cell/Be shrived and married.'
Act 2 Scene 5-6	'But come what sorrow can,/ It cannot countervail the exchange of joy/ That one short minute gives me in her sight.'
Act 3 Scene 1	'A plague o' both your houses' 'Ask for me tomorrow, and / you shall find me a grave man'
Act 3 Scene 2	'O nature, what hadst thou to do in hell/ When thou didst bower the spirit of a fiend/ In moral paradise of such sweet flesh?'
Act 3 Scene 3-4	'There is no world without Verona walls/But purgatory, torture, hell itself./Hence "banished" is banished from the world'
Act 3 Scene 5	'Hang thee, young baggage! Disobedient wretch!/I tell thee what: get thee to church o' Thursday'
Act 4 Scene 1-2	'Take thou this vial, being then in bed,/And this distilled liquor drink thou off'
Act 4 Scene 3	'Romeo, Romeo, Romeo! Here's drink. I drink to thee'
Act 4 Scene 4-5	'O me, O me! My child, my only life,/Revive, look up, or I will die with thee!'
Act 5 Scene 1	'Well, Juliet, I will lie with thee tonight. /Let's see for means. O mischief, thou art swift'
Act 5 Scene 2	'Unhappy fortune! By my brotherhood, /The letter was not nice but full of charge'
Act 5 Scene 3	'For never was a story of more woe/Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.'

#### Characters

- **Romeo Montague** – he's not interested in violence, only love. He's passionate, sensitive & impulsive.
- **Juliet Capulet** – Naïve and sheltered at the beginning, develops into a strong character. Grounded.
- **Mercutio** - Romeo's close friend. Witty, bawdy, cynical and a hot-headed character.
- **Tybalt** - Juliet's cousin. Obsessed by family honour; quick to draw his sword. Hates Montagues.
- **Friar Laurence** – friend to both Romeo and Juliet. Civic-minded. Also expert with potions & herbs.
- **Montague and Capulet** - the patriarchs of the Montague and Capulet families, who have held a long and violent feud with one another from some time before the play begins.
- **The nurse** - like a mother to Juliet / confidante. Earthy/sexual. Often says inappropriate things.
- **Benvolio** - Romeo's cousin. Tries to keep the peace and keep Romeo's mind off Rosaline.

#### Key Vocab

Iambic	Tragedy	Soliloquy	Patriarchy
Pentameter	Motifs	Foreshadowing	Imagery
Passionate	Hyperbolic	Protagonist	Society
		Deceit	Honour

#### Context

- **Duelling and the concept of honour:** Maintaining the honour of your family name was hugely important at the time. If you were challenged to a duel and you refused, you would be deemed a coward, thus damaging your honour and the status of your family. Most Elizabethan gentlemen carried swords in public and many did fight in the streets.
- **Courtly Love & cures for lovesickness:** common in medieval literature where a knight was consumed with passion for an unattainable noblewoman; Romeo fits this perfectly. Elizabethan doctors saw unrequited love or desire as a disease, a type of melancholy sometimes called lovesickness. They tried various cures and sometimes sent patients to church to confess to a priest. They believed that if lovesickness was left untreated, it could lead to madness.
- **Role of women in a patriarchal society:** Elizabethan England was a society controlled by men. Women were seen as the weaker sex & were expected to be meek & mild, and most importantly, obedient to their fathers & later their husbands.
- **Arranged marriages:** Marriages amongst the wealthy were arranged by parents in order to match or improve social standing. However, in practice, parents did try to choose someone their child liked and was happy to marry. Secret marriages such as that between the young Romeo and Juliet would have been both illegal and shocking
- **The Italian setting of the play:** The play is set in Italy, which was known for its warring states. It is also a Catholic country; religion was extremely important and marriage vows were seen as sacred – once made, they could not be broken.

#### Themes

1. **Love** is an extremely overpowering force that supersedes all other values, emotions, and loyalties. Through their love, Romeo and Juliet conspire to go against the forces of their entire social world. Romeo returns to visit Juliet at points, even though he is well aware of the threat of death. At times, love is presented as fickle (Mercutio's speeches, Romeo + Rosaline).
2. **Individual V society** Romeo and Juliet are forced to undermine the oppressive rules of society at the time. For example, rules of the patriarchal family force Juliet to be subservient to her parents, rules of religion mean that they must marry in haste, and rules of masculinity force Romeo into conflict with Tybalt.
3. **Violence and hate** Extreme violence takes place sporadically throughout the play. The feud between the two families is so bitter that the mere sight of each other can be the cause of a fight to the death. Unchecked violence is personified through the character of Tybalt. The violence culminates in Act 3 Scene 1, in which both Mercutio and Tybalt are murdered.
4. **Fate** In the first address to the audience, the Chorus states that Romeo and Juliet are 'star-cross'd' lovers, meaning that fate had intended for their paths to cross, and that fate controls their actions. A series of unfortunate accidents towards the end of the play thwart Friar Laurence's plan and eventually manifest in both Romeo and Juliet committing

#### Tragedy features

- Tragic hero:** the main character cursed by fate and possessed of a tragic flaw (Romeo, and to an extent Juliet)
- Hamartia:** the fatal character flaw of the tragic hero (his passion and impulsiveness).
- Catharsis:** the release of the audience's emotions through empathy with the characters.
- Internal Conflict:** the struggle the hero engages in with his/her fatal flaw.