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| **English Literature Compendium Paper 1, Section A**‘Romeo and Juliet’ William Shakespeare (1595)30 marks + up to 4 SPaGSpend 45-50 minutes on this question |
| **Plot: Core plot knowledge** |  |
| Act One | In Verona, Italy two noble families have a long standing feud. The play begins with Sampson and Gregory, (Capulets lower class) and Abraham and Balthasar, (Montagues lower class) start a brawl, which is joined by Benvolio (who tries to break up the fight) and Tybalt (who escalates it). The Prince of Verona declares a death penalty for further feuding between the families. Romeo is lovesick; Rosaline does not return his love. Benvolio tells Romeo to attend the Capulet ball in order to see other prettier girls. Meanwhile Capulet is keen for Paris to marry Juliet and intends to use his ball as a meeting place for them. Romeo and friends decide to turn up uninvited; Romeo hoping to see Rosaline. Lady Capulet discusses the idea of marriage to Paris with Juliet. Mercutio attempts to cheer a lovesick Romeo up, telling him to be rough with love. At the Capulet's party, Romeo, who is disguised, falls in love with Juliet. Capulet stops Tybalt from attacking Romeo, telling him there will be other opportunities. Both Romeo and Juliet learn that they are enemies of the other's family.**Plot highlights: the brawl, the Capulet ball.** |
| **STOP CHECK!**Without looking at the sheet, can you answer the following questions?1. Where is the play set?
2. Which four servants does the play begin with? Challenge: can you match them to their household?
3. What does the Prince say will be the penalty for anymore brawling in the street?
4. What is the name of the character who Romeo believes he is in love with?
5. What advice does Benvolio give Romeo?
6. What advice does Mercutio give Romeo?
7. What does Capulet stop Tybalt from doing at the party/ball?
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| Act Two | At the end of the ball, Romeo leaves his friends and scales Capulet's wall to be near Juliet. Unnoticed in Juliet's orchard, Romeo learns of Juliet's love for him. After declaring their feelings for each other, the two decide to marry. Juliet will send Romeo a messenger to make plans for their wedding. Early the next day, we meet Friar Laurence. He wonders how Romeo can forget Rosaline so quickly but agrees to marry the two since he hopes this marriage will end the feud. Romeo catches up with Mercutio and Benvolio. Juliet's messenger, the Nurse, arrives and the wedding is set for later that day. The Nurse brings Romeo "cords" (a rope ladder) which will allow Romeo to climb into Juliet's bedchamber. This Act ends with Romeo and Juliet's marriage.**Plot highlights: The balcony scene, Romeo and Juliet’s wedding** |
| **STOP CHECK!**Without looking at the sheet, can you answer the following questions?1. What do Romeo and Juliet decide to do that evening?
2. Why does Friar Lawrence agree to marry Romeo and Juliet?
3. At what time and day is the wedding arranged?
4. What does the Nurse give to Romeo?
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| Act Three | On a hot day in the street Benvolio and Mercutio are talking about Romeo and Tybalt. They discuss how Tybalt has sent a letter to Romeo’s house challenging him to a duel. Tybalt enters and he and Mercutio exchange verbal word play. Romeo enters, having just married Juliet and is therefore now related to Tybalt. Tybalt attempts to provoke Romeo into fighting. Mercutio fights Tybalt in order to protect his Romeo’s honour and is killed. Romeo, in a fit of fury, then kills Tybalt. The Prince of Verona banishes Romeo threatening death should he ever return. Juliet learns of Romeo killing Tybalt and despite being torn between her loyalties, mourns her husband's banishment. Romeo realises he will not be able to see Juliet again. Friar Laurence suggests Romeo go to Juliet's bed chamber to comfort her. Capulet decides that the marriage of Juliet to Paris must now proceed, bidding his wife to make Juliet aware. The day of the marriage will be Thursday. Romeo has spent the night with Juliet. Juliet tries to fight her father's wishes, failing to dissuade him. Juliet decides to commit suicide if all else fails.**Plot highlights: The fight and deaths of Mercutio and Tybalt. Lord Capulet’s rage at Juliet. The Nurse abandons Juliet when she needs her the most.** |
| **STOP CHECK!**Without looking at the sheet, can you answer the following questions?1. What has Tybalt sent Romeo? Why?
2. Why does Mercutio feel he has to fight Tybalt?
3. What does the Prince do after Romeo has killed Tybalt?
4. What does Capulet decide to do?

Super challengeWhy would we describe Mercutio, Tybalt, Romeo and Lord Capulet as rash in Act three? |
| Act Four | After the argument with her father, Juliet goes to church. Once there, she meets Paris who is eager to talk to his future bride. However Juliet is cold to Paris. Juliet is desperate and threatens to kill herself. Friar Laurence concocts a plan and tells Juliet to take a potion simulating death, allowing Romeo to take her away to Mantua since everyone will think she is dead. He intends to send a letter to Romeo in which he explains the plan. Capulet makes plans for Juliet's wedding. Juliet, who has decided to drink Friar Laurence's potion, no longer opposes the wedding, delighting Capulet, who is keen to have Juliet marry Paris and decides to move the wedding forward. Juliet succeeds in taking the potion in privacy. Juliet worries about the Friar's intentions before the potion takes effect. She is also afraid that she won’t wake again. She falls asleep. In the morning Capulet tells the Nurse to wake Juliet. The Capulets learn that their daughter is dead. The preparations are changed to a funeral.**Plot highlights: Friar Lawrence’s plan, the letter, Juliet’s courage when taking the potion.** |
| **STOP CHECK!**Without looking at the sheet, can you complete the following tasks?Friar Lawrence’s plan- can you copy and then fill in the missing words?1. Juliet to take a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_simulating death
2. This will allow \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to take her away to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
3. FL will send a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to Romeo explaining the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What are Juliet’s 2 main worries about taking the potion? |
| Act Five | Romeo learns of Juliet's death from his servant Balthasar and decides to return to Verona to see Juliet one last time. Romeo buys poison from a local Apothecary. Friar John explains to Friar Laurence that his letter did not reach Romeo. Friar Laurence tries again to inform Romeo of his plan and heads off to the Capulet burial chamber. Paris mourns his bride that never was. Romeo arrives, opening Juliet's coffin to look at her one last time. Paris fights Romeo for desecrating Juliet's grave. Paris dies, Romeo placing him beside Juliet. Romeo takes his poison, kisses Juliet and dies. Friar Laurence arrives too late. Juliet now awakens, asking for Romeo. Friar Laurence tries to persuade Juliet to leave but unable to, he leaves Juliet alone. Juliet kisses Romeo and stabs herself. The Prince, Capulets, and Montagues arrive, Friar Laurence explaining all. Prince Escalus scolds the two families who finally end their feud. **Plot highlights: The deaths of Romeo and Juliet** |
| **STOP CHECK!**Without looking at the sheet, can you complete the following tasks?1. Which character tells Romeo of Juliet’s ‘death’?
2. What does Friar Lawrence learn Romeo didn’t receive? Challenge: why is this important?
3. What does Friar Lawrence try to persuade Juliet to do?
4. What is the outcome of Romeo and Juliet’s deaths?
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| **Scene by scene detailed analysis: developing in-depth knowledge of the plot line.****\*\*\* Key scene** |
| **Act** | **Scene** | **Key characters** | **Key plot** |
| Prologue |  | Told by the Chorus | The Chorus tells us that the story we are about to see shows the tragic love affair of two young people from different feuding families. The feud will only end with their deaths. The wealth of the two families is described and how they are equal in standing. The form of the Prologue is a sonnet. |
| Act 1 Day: morning | 1\*\*\* | BenvolioTybaltPrinceRomeo | The play begins with a dramatic fight scene between lower class male servants. The opening of the play presents Verona as operating under a Patriarch class system. Benvolio Montague arrives and tries to stop the fight but Tybalt Capulet escalates the situation. Lord and Lady Capulet and Montague arrive. The Lords develop the fight even further despite their wives trying to prevent them.Prince Escalus warns both families and tells them any more public disorder will result in death.The scene then switches to Romeo who is lovesick over Rosaline. Lord and Lady Montague and Benvolio are discussing their concerns for Romeo. Romeo’s parents are presented as loving and caring. Benvolio is also presented as a good friend and cousin to Romeo, acting as someone who guides him and gives him advice. Romeo is melancholy and over dramatic in his crush for Rosaline |
| Day: morning | 2 | CapuletParis | Capulet and Paris discuss Juliet. Paris is keen to marry Juliet but, at this point, Capulet says she is too young and he would like her to wait another 2 years. Capulet presents himself as a loving and caring father. He invites Paris to his ball so Juliet can meet him. The opening of the scene shows the Patriarchal system and how it was the father’s role and responsibility to arrange a suitable match for their daughter.Benvolio and Romeo hear about the ball. Benvolio convinces Romeo to attend. |
| Day/ early evening | 3 | Lady CapuletNurseJuliet | Conversation between Juliet, her mother and the Nurse.Lady Capulet is very abrupt and direct when discussing the marriage. She believes that Juliet should be considering marriage now in order to achieve a good match in terms of wealth and status. The Nurse is excited by the marriage talk and it gives her a chance to reminisce about Juliet as a baby and young child. The Nurse’s language us informal, rambling and full of rude jokes. This directly contrasts to Lady Capulet’s formal style. |
| Evening | 4 | Introduction to Mercutio | Romeo and his friends make their way to the ball. Romeo is still melancholy and uses imagery to describe his depressed feelings. We are introduced to Mercutio for the first time. He is wild, volatile and impulsive. Mercutio dismisses the notion of romantic love. He has a much more vulgar and down to earth view which resolves around physical passion. He uses the symbol of Queen Mab in order to represent his views about sexual love and desire.Romeo has a premonition of his own death. He feels that by attending the ball he is about to set off a chain of events which he will be unable to control. This creates an ominous/ foreboding atmosphere. |
| Evening | 5 \*\*\* | Further introduction to Tybalt.Romeo and Juliet | The Capulet’s ball.Romeo falls instantly in love with Juliet. He uses vivid imagery to describe Juliet’s beauty. They share their first conversation and first kiss.Tybalt is angry and volatile. He wants to duel with Romeo but Lord Capulet refuses to allow him to do this. Tybalt vows to get his revenge. |
| **STOP CHECK!**Copy and complete the following questions. The questions are in chronological order.1. What will cause the feud to end?
2. How are Romeo’s parents presented?
3. What 2 reasons does Lord Capulet give for not agreeing to Paris’ proposal of marriage to Juliet?
4. Explain how the Nurse and Lady Capulet are different to each other.
5. What impression do we get of Mercutio from our first meeting of him?
6. Why does Romeo feel concerned about attending the ball?
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| **Act 2** | **Scene** | **Key characters** | **Key plot** |
| Chorus |  | Told by the Chorus | The Chorus state that despite being from families who are enemies, their passion and love for each other will enable them to meet in upcoming scenes. The Chorus also reminds the audience of the events which have previously happened. |
| 2Late evening | 1 | BenvolioMercutio- use of sexual language | The ball has ended. Mercutio and Benvolio look for Romeo as they make their way home. Romeo hides from them so they go home without them. Mercutio continues to talk in a sexual manner, believing that Romeo is with Rosaline. He talks about the human body in a crude and bawdy manner.  |
| 2Late evening | 2 \*\*\*Balcony Scene | RomeoJuliet | Juliet is standing on her balcony reflecting on her love for Romeo and that the only obstacle is that he is from the family which is her enemy. Romeo watches her and describes her as the sun, an angel and the stars. Juliet overhears him and they talk about their love. In contrast to Romeo, Juliet is concerned that their relationship is moving too quickly. They are interrupted by the Nurse.This scene helps to emphasise the pointlessness of the feud. |
| 2Early morning day 2 | 3 | Introduction to Friar Lawrence | Friar Lawrence agrees to marry the young lovers to bring about unity ‘For this alliance may so happy prove/ To turn your household’s rancour to pure love.’ He uses the power provided to him through his role in the church to marry Romeo and Juliet. There is the suggestion of religion to heal. |
| 2Morning day 2 | 4(A street in Verona) | Mercutio- use of language, throughout the scene+ description of Tybalt | Tybalt has sent a letter proposing a duel to Romeo. This is so Tybalt can prove his masculinity which he feels Romeo has insulted by attending the ball.The Nurse meets with Romeo but has to first deal with Mercutio who makes fun of her and calls her a prostitute and ugly. Mercutio’s behaviour demonstrates a vulgar side to some of the younger male characters’ behaviour.The Nurse warns Romeo not to lead Juliet astray if he is not sincere. Romeo tells the Nurse to tell Juliet to meet him at church in the afternoon where they will marry. |
| 2Late morning day 2 | 5(Capulet’s mansion) | Nurse and Juliet conversation | The Nurse teases Juliet by withholding the information about Romeo that she so desperately wants. This shows the closeness of their relationship. The Nurse passes on the marriage plans and talks about Romeo’s physical attributes (which contrasts to Lady Capulet Act 1, Sc3) |
| 2Afternoon day 2 | 6Friar Lawrence’s cell | Friar Lawrence, Romeo and Juliet | Friar Lawrence is both worried about the speed of their relationship but also hopeful that Romeo and Juliet’s marriage may bring an end to the feud. They are married. |
| **STOP CHECK!**Copy and complete the following questions. The questions are in chronological order.1. In which scene do we see further evidence of Mercutio’s view of love as a physical act?
2. What three things does Romeo compare Juliet to?
3. Who interrupts Romeo and Juliet’s conversation?
4. Why does Friar Lawrence agree to marry them?
5. What 2 things does Mercutio call the Nurse? What does his behaviour demonstrate about some of the younger male characters?
6. How does the Nurse’s behaviour show the closeness between her and Juliet?
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| **Act 3** | **Scene** | **Key characters** | **Key plot** |
| Late afternoon, day 2 | 1 \*\*\*Verona | MercutioTybaltRomeo | The scene begins with Mercutio, Benvolio and other Montagues talking in the street. Benvolio fears the hot temperature will cause more violence to break out. (A clear reference to the civil disorder in the play). Tybalt arrives with other Capulets. He is in search of Romeo in order to duel with him. Mercutio and Tybalt begin to argue through word play and verbal duelling. Romeo arrives and Tybalt quickly switches his attention to him. Tybalt insults Romeo by calling him a ‘villain’ and a ‘boy’. Romeo (now married to Juliet and therefore related to Tybalt) refuses to fight and tries to appease (make peace with) Tybalt. Mercutio is disgusted by what he sees as Romeo’s cowardly behaviour and therefore steps in to defend Romeo’s honour. Tybalt and Mercutio fight. Benvolio and Romeo try to break it up and in doing so, Romeo indirectly allows Tybalt the chance to stab Mercutio when he is unable to defend himself. Tybalt runs away from the scene.Mercutio continues to use word play in his dying moments and curses both families.Romeo blames his love for Juliet as making him effeminate (meaning he has become ‘weak’ and lacking masculine qualities) and when Tybalt re-enters the scene, he flies into a rage. Romeo kills Tybalt and only then realises that his rash actions have led him to making it impossible for him and Juliet to be together. Prince banishes Romeo from Verona |
| Late afternoon,day 2 | 2Juliet’s house/ bedroom | Juliet | Juliet is waiting for night to fall and for Romeo to arrive. The Nurse enters and informs Juliet that Romeo has murdered Tybalt. At first, Juliet’s emotions are in such disarray that she uses oxymorons to describe Romeo as she is so horrified by what he has done. However, she then sees reason and lists the reasons why Tybalt would have murdered Romeo if he had the chance. Juliet is more upset by the banishment of Romeo than the death of her cousin. This reflects the strength of the two young lovers love for each other and shows how the feud damages the community as a whole, not just those who indulge in fighting. The Nurse tells Juliet she will bring Romeo to her room tonight. |
| Early evening, day 2 | 3Friar Lawrence’s cell | Friar Lawrence and Romeo | Friar Lawrence tells Romeo (who is hiding at his church) about his banishment to Mantua. Romeo, as his usual rash self, declares he would rather be dead than be banished. Friar Lawrence criticises Romeo for his despair. The Nurse arrives and describes Juliet’s grief. FL tells Romeo to go to Juliet and comfort her. FL is reassuring and calming and tells Romeo he will devise a plan to let him escape Verona and then return later when he has explained about the marriage to their parents. Romeo is reassured by FL’s calming speech. |
| Evening, day 2 | 4Capulet mansion | CapuletLady CapuletParis | Capulet has invited Paris to speak to him about his forthcoming marriage to Juliet. For no clear reason, aside from appeasing Juliet’s grief over her cousin Tybalt, Lord Capulet brings forward the marriage and states it will happen in three days. Additional tension is created in the scene through dramatic irony. The audience know that Romeo and Juliet are spending their wedding night together but her parents don’t. There are several times that the possibility of speaking to Juliet is brought up but in the end it is agreed not to disturb her. |
| Evening and early morning, day 3 | 5 \*\*\*Juliet’s bedroom | RomeoJulietLord CapuletNurse | The lovers’ last conversation is full of ominous references to death. Shakespeare uses an aubade to show the strong feelings of love between the pair.Lady Capulet comes to Juliet’s chamber to introduce the idea of the marriage to Paris being brought forward and Juliet refuses. Then Capulet enters and on hearing Juliet’s refusal flies into a rage of anger. The Nurse tries to defend her but makes the situation worse.After Lord and Lady Capulet have left, the Nurse tells Juliet to marry Paris. The Nurse is concerned about her own position in the household and knows she will be in serious trouble if her involvement in the marriage is discovered. |
| **STOP CHECK!**Copy and complete the following questions. The questions are in chronological order.1. When Tybalt sees Romeo what 2 names does he call him?
2. Why does Mercutio feel he has to step in to fight in Romeo’s place?
3. How does Tybalt kill Mercutio?
4. How does Romeo accidentally ‘help’ Tybalt to hurt Mercutio?
5. What does Romeo blame his lack of masculinity upon?
6. When the Nurse tells Juliet about Romeo’s murder of Tybalt, how does she react?
7. How does Friar Lawrence prevent Romeo from making any more rash decisions?
8. On Romeo and Juliet’s wedding night, who are Juliet’s parents speaking to and why?
9. What kind of conversation (form) is Romeo and Juliet’s final conversation?
10. How does Lord Capulet react to Juliet’s refusal to marry Paris?
11. What is the Nurse’s advice?
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| **Act** | **Scene** | **Key characters** | **Key plot** |
| 4Day 3 | 1Friar Lawrence’s cell | FLParisJuliet | Paris is at church explaining to Friar Lawrence that his marriage to Juliet is to be brought forward under Lord Capulet’s instructions. Juliet arrives and Paris talks gently and considerately to her. Juliet is self-possessed and cool towards him.Friar Lawrence devises a plan that he tells Juliet will require her to be courageous. She has to drink a potion which will make her appear dead and she will wake up later. Friar Lawrence will write to Romeo to tell him the plan and Romeo and Juliet will be reunited. As Juliet is desperate, she agrees. |
| 4Day 3- afternoon | 2Capulet’s mansion | CapuletJuliet | The Capulet household is busy with wedding preparationsJuliet enters and begs forgiveness from Lord Capulet. She promises to obey in future.Capulet moves the wedding day forward and thus speeds up the tragedy. This is another example of fate seeming to control events and thwarting every plan Romeo and Juliet make. |
| 4Day 3- evening | 3 \*\*\*Juliet’s bedroom | Juliet | The Nurse and Lady Capulet are with Juliet in her room. Lady Capulet wants the Nurse to stay with Juliet but Juliet refuses this. For the rest of the scene, Juliet speaks alone in a soliloquy and dramatic monologue. She discusses her fears about the plan and the potion she must drink. She finally drinks the potion in order to avoid the marriage. She also has a dagger in case the potion doesn’t work. |
| 4Early morning day 4 | 4A room in Capulet’s mansion | CapuletLady Capulet | It is extremely early in the morning (3a.m). Capulet and Lady Capulet are awake and completing final preparations for the wedding. The Nurse is sent to wake up Juliet as Paris has arrived. |
| 4Day 4 morning | 5Juliet’s bedroom | NurseCapuletLady CapuletFLParis | The Nurse is the first to discover that Juliet is dead. The Nurse, Lord and Lady Capulet and Paris are overwhelmed by grief. Friar Lawrence and takes charge of the funeral arrangements. |
| **STOP CHECK!**Copy and complete the following questions. The questions are in chronological order.1. How does Paris treat Juliet when he sees her at church?
2. When Juliet returns from church, what does she ask Lord Capulet to do?
3. What does Juliet have incase the potion doesn’t work?
4. How do the Nurse, Lord and Lady Capulet and Paris react when they find Juliet?
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| **Act** | **Scene** | **Key characters** | **Key plot** |
| 5Day 4 morning | 1Romeo in Mantua | RomeoBalthasar | The scene begins with a soliloquy from Romeo about a dream he has had in which Juliet found him dead. He speaks positively about the dream because in it, Juliet revives him (brings him back to life) with a kiss. However, the dream is another example of foreshadowing, in this case, Romeo’s death.Balthasar (Romeo’s servant) arrives and tells Romeo that Juliet is dead. (Balthasar does not know the truth of the matter).Romeo decides to kill himself and visits the apothecary (nowadays a pharmacist) for poison. |
| Day 4 | 2Friar Lawrence’s cell | Friar LawrenceFriar John | FL finds out the FJ hasn’t been able to deliver the letter to Romeo.FL leaves to break into Juliet’s tomb to be there when she wakes up. |
| Day 4 | 3 \*\*\*A churchyard, outside the tomb of the Capulets | ParisRomeo+ servants | Paris visits Juliet’s tomb to mourn her death.Romeo and Balthasar arrive. Romeo sends Balthasar away with a letter to take to his father Lord Montague.Romeo tries to force open the tomb. Paris tries to arrest him but Romeo kills him. On realising who Paris is, Romeo puts Paris’s body next to Juliet as part of his dying wish.Romeo sees that Juliet is dead and drinks the poison and dies.Friar Lawrence arrives and sees R + P dead.FL tries to persuade J to leave but she refuses and kills herself after FL has left.The watch enters.C, LC, P, M etc all arrive. FL explains what has happened. The feud is ended because of Romeo and Juliet’s death (Linking directly back to the prologue). |
| **STOP CHECK!**Copy and complete the following questions. The questions are in chronological order.1. At the start of Act 5, scene 1, what is the form of Romeo’s speech?
2. How is foreshadowing used in Act 5, scene 1?
3. What does Romeo decide to do after hearing Balthasar’s news?
4. Where does Friar Lawrence go after finding out that Friar John hasn’t deliver his letter?
5. Why is Paris at Juliet’s tomb?
6. How does the ending of the play link directly to the Prologue?
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| **Character** | **Description** |
| **Romeo** | Sixteen year old Montague. He is a passionate and intense character who is quite often driven by impulse. At the start of the play he is a Petrarchan and courtly lover. He is not interested in the feud and tries to keep the peace. He is viewed as a victim of fate. |
| **Act & scene** | **Key quotations** | **Key techniques** |
| Act 1, Scene 1 | ‘O brawling love, O loving hate...Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health!’ | OxymoronExclamatory sentence |
| Act 1, Scene 5 | ‘So shows a snowy dove trooping with crows…Did my heart love till now? Forswear it, sight!For I ne’er saw true beauty till this night’‘If I profane with my unworthiest handThis holy shrine, the gentle sin is this,My lips, two blushing pilgrims…’ | MetaphorRhetorical questionRhyming coupletSoliloquySuperlativeMetaphorMetaphor |
| Act 3, Scene 1 | ‘Tybalt, the reason that I have to love theeDoth much excuse the appertaining rageTo such a greeting’ | Dramatic irony |
| Act 5, Scene 3 | ‘O my love! My wife!Death, that hath sucked the honey of thy breath,Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty.’ | Exclamatory sentencesPersonificationDramatic irony |
| **Juliet** | Thirteen year old Capulet. At the beginning of the play, she is naïve and sheltered. After meeting Romeo, she develops into a young woman of remarkable strength and resolve in pursuing what she wants. She is more grounded than Romeo. |
| **Act & scene** | **Key quotations** | **Key techniques** |
| Act 1, Scene 3 | ‘I’ll look to like, if looking liking move,But no more deep will I endart mine eyeThan your consent gives strength to make it fly.’ | Rhyming couplet |
| Act 1, Scene 5 | ‘Saints do not move, though grant for prayer’s sake’‘Then have my lips the sin that they have took’ | Metaphor |
| Act 2, Scene 2 | **‘**What’s in a name? That which we call a rose/By any other word would smell as sweet;’ | Rhetorical questionMetaphorSoliloquy |
| Act 3, Scene 5 | ‘Methinks I see thee now, thou art so low, as are dead in the bottom of the tomb’‘Not proud you have, but thankful that you have:Proud can I never be of what I hate’ | ForeshadowingRepetition |
| Act 5, Scene 3 | ‘Drunk all, and left no friendly drop/ to help me after?I will kiss thy lips…’ | Personification Rhetorical questionEchoes back to Act 5, Sc1 Romeo’s dream |
| **Mercutio** | Not a Montague or Capulet. He is a kinsmen of the Prince. A close friend of Romeo’s. Bawdy, witty, cynical and quick tempered. Skilled sword fighter and wordsmith. His name is linked to the God of Mercury. His views on love are in antithesis to Romeo’s. |
| **Act & scene** | **Key quotations** | **Key techniques** |
| Act 1, scene 4 | ‘If love be rough with you, be rough with love.Prick love for pricking, and you beat love down.’ | Repetition, parallelismPlosive, innuendo  |
| Act 3, scene 1 | ‘O calm, vile dishonourable submission!’ | Adjectives & exclamatory sentence |
| Act 3, scene 1 | ‘No, tis not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a Church-door, but ‘tis enough, ‘twill serve. Ask for metomorrow, and you shall find me a grave man.’ | SimilesPun |
| **Tybalt** | Upper class and Juliet’s cousin. He is a reckless, rash and volatile young man. He is consumed by the concept of family honour and masculinity. He hates the Montague family. Skilled swordsman. He is a symbol of hate in the play. |
| **Act & scene** | **Key quotations** | **Key techniques** |
| Act 1, scene 1 | ‘What, drawn, and talk of peace! I hate the word, as I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee’ | Exclamatory sentenceRepetition |
| Act 1, scene 5 | ‘Uncle, this is a Montague, our foe:A villain that is hither come in spite,To scorn at our solemnity this night.’ | Proper noun & pronounThe noun villain is used by Tybalt 3 times in the play to describe Romeo.Verb, rhyming couplet |
| Act 3, scene 1 | ‘Boy, this shall not excuse the injuries that thou hast done me. Therefore turn and draw.’ | NounImperative |
| **The Nurse** | Lower class servant. She nursed and raised Juliet. She is like a mother to Juliet and her confidante. She is similar to Mercutio in her views of love. She often says inappropriate and/or quite vulgar comments. |
| **Act & scene** | **Key quotations** | **Key techniques** |
| Act 1, scene 3 | ‘Thou wast the prettiest babe that e’er I nursed’‘No less, nay, bigger. Women grow by men.’ | SuperlativeInnuendo  |
| Act 3, scene 5 | ‘O, he’s [Paris] a lovely gentleman!Romeo’s a dishclout to him.’ | Exclamatory sentenceMetaphor |
| Act 4, scene 5 | **‘**She’s dead, deceased, she’s dead- alack the day!’ | Alliteration (Parallelism with Lady Capulet’s line which follows after). |
| **Benvolio** | Upper class and Romeo’s cousin. He tries to maintain the peace and acts as a confidante for Romeo. He is level-headed, wise and cautious. He is also tactful and diplomatic. He is a loyal friend to Romeo and Mercutio. The translation of his Italian name means ‘good will’. |
| **Act & scene** | **Key quotations** | **Key techniques** |
| Act 1, scene 1 | ‘I do but keep the peace. Put up thy sword,Or manage it to part these men with me.’ | Imperative |
| Act 1, scene 2 | ‘Go thither, and with unattainted eye,Compare her face with some that I shall show,And I will make thee think thy swan a crow.’ | Metaphor & rhyming couplet |
| Act 3, scene 1 | ‘The day is hot, the Capels are abroad,And if we meet we shall not scape a brawl,For now, these hot days, is the mad blood stirring’ | Metaphor |
| **Friar Lawrence** | A priest and monk. He is a friend to Romeo and Juliet. He preaches moderation in order to promote peace through avoiding intense emotions. He gets caught up, entangled in hope, when he believes he can help to end the feud. His actions show him to be a schemer. Being a Catholic Friar who meddles with herbs may have been considered untrustworthy and sinister by an Elizabethan audience. |
| **Act & scene** | **Key quotations** | **Key techniques** |
| Act 2, scene 3 | ‘For this alliance may so happy proveTo turn your households’ rancour to pure love.’ | Modal verbAdjective |
| Act 3, scene 3 | ‘The law that threatened death becomes thy friend,And turns it to exile; there art thou happy’ | Personification |
| Act 4, scene 1 | ‘Then it is likely thou wilt undertakeA thing like death to chide away this shame,That cop’st with Death himself to scape from it;And if thou dar’st, I’ll give thee remedy.’ | Personification |
| **Paris** | A kinsman of Prince Escalus who wants to marry Juliet. He would have been viewed as a good match for Juliet. He is wealthy, honest and upper class. He is not as romantic or passionate as Romeo but is devout, loyal and caring. He can be viewed as an example of the traditions of upper class and patriarchal society. |
| **Act & scene** | **Key quotations** | **Key techniques** |
| Act 1, scene 2 | ‘Younger than she are happy mothers made’ | Comparative & adjective |
| Act 4, scene 1 | ‘That ‘may be’ must be, love, on Thursday next’ | Modal verb changed to imperative verb |
| Act 5, scene 3 | ‘Condemned villain, I do apprehend thee.’ | Adjective, noun, verb |
| **Lord Capulet** | Juliet’s father and Tybalt’s uncle. On first appearances he appears to be thoughtful, courteous and hospitable. When in a good mood, he is genial. However as the play progresses and he is angered we see a different side. He quickly flies into rages (pugnacious) and uses the power he has to control others and make horrific threats (such as threatening to throw Juliet out onto the streets and give her to one of his older friends. Lord Capulet is 60 years old). |
| **Act & scene** | **Key quotations** | **Key techniques** |
| Act 1, scene 1 | ‘Old Montague is come,And flourishes his blade in spite of me.’ | Adjective, proper nounVerbs |
| Act 1, scene 2 | ‘Let two more summers wither in their pride,Ere we may think her ripe to be a bride’‘She is the hopeful lady of my earth.But woo her…get her heart,My will to her consent is but a part’ | Rhyming coupletConnotations of ‘ripe’MetaphorRhyming couplet |
| Act 3, scene 5 | ‘But fettle your fine joints ‘gainst Thursday next,To go with Paris…Or I will drag thee on a hurdle thither.Out, you green-sickness carrion!’ | ImperativeVerbInsult |
| **Lady Capulet** | Juliet’s mother. She married Lord Capulet when she was only 13 years old. She in an ineffectual mother and has to rely upon the Nurse for support. The relationship between Lady Capulet and Juliet is formal and distant. Lady Capulet is not nurturing or protective of her daughter. This is seen when she fails to support Juliet in Act 3, scene 5. Instead she is unfeeling and callous. She is also selfish. She is mainly concerned with running the household and achieving a good match for Juliet. However, she is overcome with grief at the news of the death of Juliet. |
| **Act & scene** | **Key quotations** | **Key techniques** |
| Act 1, scene 3 | ‘This precious book of love, this unbound lover,To beautify him, only lacks a cover’ | MetaphorRhyming couplet |
| Act 3, scene 5 | **‘**Do as thou wilt, for I have done with thee’ | Verb |
| Act 4, scene 5 | ‘O me, O me! My child, my only life,Revive, look up, or I will die with thee!’ | Pronoun, metaphorExclamatory sentence |
| **Lord Montague** | Although he has a minor role, he is portrayed as a caring father. At the start of the play, he is concerned about Romeo’s mood and later in the play, he speaks up to the Prince on behalf of Romeo. At the end of the play, he is overcome with grief at the death of Romeo. He is wealthy, upper class, and a patriarch. |
| **Act & scene** | **Key quotations** | **Key techniques** |
| Act 1, scene 1 | **‘**Thou villain Capulet! Hold me not, let me go.’ | Exclamatory sentence & imperative sentence |
| Act 1, scene 1 | **‘**Could we but learn from whence his sorrows grow,We would as willingly give cure as know.’ | Plural pronounAdverb & rhyming couplet |
| Act 5, scene 3 | ‘But I can give thee more,For I will raise her statue in pure gold’ | Adjective |
| **Lady Montague** | She has a minor role in the play. She cares deeply for his son Romeo and dies from grief when he is banished from Verona. She is displayed as protective and caring. |
| **Act & scene** | **Key quotations** | **Key techniques** |
| Act 1, scene 1 | **‘**Thou shalt not stir one foot to seek a foe.’ | Imperative & sibilance |
| Act 1, scene 1 | ‘O where is Romeo? Saw you him today?’ | Interrogatives/ questions |
| **Prince Escalus** | Leader of Verona and most concerned with keeping order between the warring families in order to maintain peace in society. He is a voice of authority and symbol of peace. |
| **Act & scene** | **Key quotations** | **Key techniques** |
| Act 1, scene 1 | ‘Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace,Profaners of this neighbour- stained steel-Will they not hear? What ho! You men, you beasts!’ | AdjectiveSibilanceInsults |
| Act 3, scene 1 | **‘**My blood for your rude brawls doth lie a-bleeding;But I’ll amerce you with so strong a fineThat you shall all repent the loss of mine.’ | PronounVerbRhyming couplet |
| **STOP CHECK!**1. Complete the character Quizlet set using the following link: <https://quizlet.com/_52mlj5>2. Copy the quotations for each character. Annotate with the following:\*Who is saying the quotation?\*What are they saying? (Write in your own words)\*Why are they saying what they are saying?3. Copy the quotations for each character. Label the key techniques. Then explain why they are used.4. Copy and learn the quotations for each character. |
| **General terms** |
| **Term** | **Definition** |
| Hierarchy | A system in which members of an organisation or society are ranked according to relative status or authority/ power. |
| Patriarchy  | Male dominated or powered society. |
| Tragedy | A tragedy is a drama which traces the career and downfall of an individual. The ingredients of tragedy are:\*The tragic hero should be of high, but not perfect, worth or standing.\*A tragic flaw, weakness or excess of arrogant ambition (hubris) leads to downfall.\*The effect of this, the catastrophe, on the spectators is the cleansing (catharsis) of the emotions of pity and terror through what the audience have witnessed.‘Romeo and Juliet’ is viewed as a tragedy because it is generally accepted that responsibility for their downfall lies outside the characters- in the workings of so-called Fate. It is the family feud rather than any moral weakness that leads to the deaths of the lovers.In a wider sense, the play may be viewed as a dramatic representation of the perpetual conflict between love and hatred which enmeshes a pair of unfortunate lovers. Their deaths are the inevitable outcome, so the play is a tragedy in a looser sense than a strict interpretation of Aristotle’s critique of Greek drama. |
| Hamartia | Flaw in the protagonist that leads to death. Romeo’s flaw could be viewed as his rash decision- making and his inability to control his emotions. |
| Catharsis | The idea that by watching bad things, the audience’s emotions are cleansed. |
| **STOP CHECK!**Complete the general terms Quizlet set using the following link: https://quizlet.com/\_52mq93 |
| **Dramatic devices and structure** |
| **Term** | **Definition** |
| Aside | Character's remark heard by audience but not others. |
| Soliloquy | Character's extended speech showing inner thoughts. |
| Iambic pentameter | 10 beats per line - 5x unstressed and stressed. It allows actors to place stress on key words in order to heighten meaning. |
| Blank Verse | Two or more lines of Iambic Pentameter. It is usually spoken by the upper classes. |
| Prose | Lines which are not written in Iambic Pentameter. It is usually spoken by the lower classes. (For example by the servants at the start of Act 1, scene 1). |
| Stressed words | Words at end of each line are stressed in rhythm. |
| End-stopped line | Use of full stop, colon, or semi-colon at the end of a line. |
| Caesura | Sudden full stop or semi-colon in middle of line for impact. |
| Rhyming couplet | 2 lines next to each other ending in rhyme |
| Motif | Repeated or pervading (strong/ memorable) image |
| Greek Chorus | In the play, the chorus gives the background information to the plotline/ story |
| Sonnet | A poem of 14 lines with a strict rhyme scheme, usually associated with love and romance in conflict. |
| Aubade | A poem about dawn; a morning love song; or a poem about the parting of lovers at dawn |
| Timeframe | The play begins on a Sunday morning at 9a.m. and ends just before day break the following Thursday, creating a rapid whirlwind pace of action. It follows chronological order. |
| Time | **Time** is another major topic. Even the Chorus at the start tells us the play will last for two hours. There are many other references to time, too, such as in Act 3, Scene 2 with Juliet is waiting for the night and the arrival of Romeo. Moreover, the whole play covers just a few days, and the pace changes frequently.Time is also crucial to the plot: the plans for Juliet's marriage are brought forward, the sleeping potion only lasts a certain time, and Romeo kills himself just before Juliet wakes up. Even her death is related to time - she says she will 'be brief'. The audience might well feel the two lovers are racing to their deaths and there is nothing anyone can do to stop this. |
| Foreshadowing | Hints of future events throughout the play. |
| Foreboding | A feeling/sense or atmosphere of dread, fear or something bad that is going to happen. |
| Dramatic irony | When information is revealed to the audience (and sometime some characters) before other characters know. |
| **STOP CHECK!**Complete the dramatic devices and structure Quizlet set using the following link https://quizlet.com/\_52mqho |
| **Language Techniques** |
| **Term** | **Definition** |
| Hyperbole | Over-the-top, exaggerated statement. |
| Melodramatic words | Over-the-top emotional words. |
| Oxymoron | Juxtaposition of opposite or contradictory ideas together. |
| Innuendo  | (The making of) a remark or remarks that suggest something sexual or something unpleasant but do not refer to it directly. |
| Language and word play | Romeo and Juliet constantly play with language. They pun, rhyme, and use innuendos. All these word games may seem like mere fun, and they are fun. The characters that pun and play with language have fun doing it. But word play in Romeo and Juliet has a deeper purpose: rebellion. Romeo and Juliet play with language to escape the world. They claim they are not a Montague and a Capulet; they use words to try to transform day, for a moment, into night; they hide their love even while secretly admitting it. Other characters play with language too. In particular, Mercutio and the Nurse make constant sexual puns implying that while everyone is running around talking about high ideals like honour and love, sex and other base desires are at the root of human existence. So language in *Romeo and Juliet* serves two opposing purposes. It allows some characters to escape the world into intense love, while it allows other characters to reveal that the world of love, honour, and high ideals are just masks people use to cover their animal instincts. |
| Pun | Word with double-meaning, often for humour. |
| Zoomorphism | Giving animal characteristics to a human character. In the play Tybalt is described as ‘Good King of Cats’ by Mercutio who threatens to take his nine lives. The Prince describes the Montague and Capulet males as beasts. |
| Celestial imagery | Astrology was an integral part of English society – every noble family in Italy had horoscopes drawn for their children upon birth, and most governments employed astrologers to advise them. Many people believed that the stars dictated the outcome of your life.  |
| Religious imagery | Words and phrases linked to religion. In the play it is used to show the purity of Romeo and Juliet’s love. It also shows how the instantly connect to each other. |
| **STOP CHECK!**Complete the language techniques Quizlet set using the following link https://quizlet.com/\_52nf0i |
| **Context** |
| Feuds | The feud: Life in Elizabethan England was very violent, and feuds were happening all the time. Shakespeare probably simply took the feud from Luigi da Porto, who called the rival families Montecchi and Capuleti – actual feuding families of thirteenth century Verona.  |
| Gender/ role of women | Elizabethan England was a society controlled by men. Women were seen as the weaker sex and were expected to be meek and mild, and most importantly, obedient to their fathers and later their husbands. |
| The Catholic Church (and the 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.  |
| 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 love sickness | 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. |
| 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. |
| **STOP-CHECK!**Create spider diagrams of each specific aspect of context. |
| **Themes** |
| **Theme** | **Definition** |
| Love | The play explores different types of love. In all cases, the uniting idea is of the power and force of love.Unrequited love- Romeo and RosalineCourtly Love – Love that isn’t reciprocatedLove at first sight, romantic idealistic love between Romeo and Juliet Familial love- love for your family, including a sense of duty and obedience (Lord Capulet’s view)Chaotic and destructive love- Tybalt’s love for his family; Romeo and Juliet’s love for each otherSexual/physical love or lust- The Nurse and Mercutio speak frequently about the physical pleasures of love.Love as religion- Romeo and Juliet’s first conversationLove as death- It is only through death that they can preserve their love, and their love is so profound that they are willing to end their lives in its defence. In the play, love emerges as an amoral thing, leading as much to destruction as to happiness.Friendship as love- The love and loyalty of friendship presents itself more predominantly with the male characters of the plat; trust and allegiance is key to upholding rules of honour. |
| ***Act & scene*** | ***Key quotations*** |
| *Act 1, Sc 1* | *Romeo: ‘Love is a smoke raised with the fume of sighs,**Being purged, a fire sparkling in lovers’ eyes’* |
| *Act 1, Sc 2* | *Paris: ‘Younger than she are happy mothers made.’**Capulet: ‘She [Juliet] is the hopeful lady of my earth.’* |
| *Act 1, Sc 4* | *Mercutio: ‘Is love a tender thing?/It is too rough,/Too rude, too/ boist’rous, and it/ pricks like a thorn.’* |
| *Act 1, Sc 5* | *Tybalt: ‘Now by the stock and honour of my kin,* *To strike him dead I hold it not a sin.’* |
| War, conflict and hate | There are different types of war and conflict presented in the play.The civil war between the two families. No reason is given for the long-standing grudge and the audience have to accept it as an undeniable aspect of the world of the play.Feuds in the streets between the two families. There is a conflict between the Prince’s desire to maintain peace and order which clashes directly with the male characters’ need to prove their masculinity and loyalty to their family name.Duels- For characters such as Tybalt the feud has a personal significance and he feels it would be dishonourable not to challenge Romeo to a duel for attending the Capulet ball. However, the concept of honour is in direct conflict against the cowardly way Tybalt kills Mercutio and then flees from the scene. |
| ***Act & scene*** | ***Key quotations*** |
| *Prologue* | *The Chorus: ‘From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,**Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.’* |
| *Act 1, Sc 1* | *Sampson: ‘Draw, if you be men. Gregory, remember thy washing blow.’**They fight.* |
| *Act 1, Sc 1* | *Prince Escales: ‘If you ever disturb our streets again,* *Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace.’* |
| *Act 5, Sc 3* | *Capulet: ‘O brother Montague, give me thy hand.’* |
| Death | Death is another pervading theme in the play. There are many physical deaths which go against natural order as many of the younger characters die (Mercutio, Tybalt, Paris, Romeo and Juliet). Death also functions as a symbol in the play.  |
| ***Act & Scene*** | ***Key quotations*** |
| *Act 3, Sc 1* | *Mercutio to Tybalt: ‘Good King of Cats, nothing but one of your nine lives that I mean to make bold withal, and as you shall use me hereafter, dry-beat the rest of the eight.’* |
| *Act 3, Sc 1* | *Mercutio: ‘A plague a’both houses! I am sped.’* |
| *Act 4, Sc 5* | *Capulet’s words to Paris about finding her ‘dead’.**‘O son, the night before thy wedding day/ Hath Death lain with thy wife. There she lies,/ Flower as she was, deflowered by him./ Death is my son-in-law, Death is my heir.’* |
| *Act 5, Sc 3* | *Romeo: ‘Death, that hath/ sucked the honey of/ thy breath,/Hath had no power/ yet upon thy beauty;’* |
| Religion  | Religion is another powerful organisation in the play. Friar Lawrence uses his power to marry Romeo and Juliet against the knowledge of the two families. He does this in order to bring an end to the feud. Romeo and Juliet also link their love to religion. The use of religious imagery is used to show the purity of Romeo’s feelings for Juliet.  |
| ***Act & scene*** | ***Key quotations*** |
| *Act 1, Sc 5* | *Romeo and Juliet’s first conversation.**Romeo: ‘If I profane with my unworthiest hand/ This holy shrine, the gentle sin is this,/ My lips, two blushing pilgrims…’* |
| *Act 2, Sc 3* | *Friar Lawrence: ‘For this alliance may so happy prove* *To turn your households’ rancour to pure love.’* |
| Fate  | Fate is a theme which permeates the play which both the audience and characters have full awareness. The Chorus describes Romeo and Juliet as ‘star crossed lovers’ meaning that their destiny is controlled by a greater force. Throughout the play Romeo and Juliet frequently see or have omens of their impending doom. The mechanism of fate works in all of the events surrounding the lovers: the feud between their families (it is worth noting that this hatred is never explained; rather, the reader must accept it as an undeniable aspect of the world of the play); the horrible series of accidents that ruin Friar Lawrence’s seemingly well-intentioned plans at the end of the play; and the tragic timing of Romeo’s suicide and Juliet’s awakening. These events are not mere coincidences, but rather manifestations of fate that help bring about the unavoidable outcome of the young lovers’ deaths. |
| ***Act & Scene*** | ***Key quotations*** |
| *Prologue* | *The Chorus: ‘A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life;’* |
| *Act 1, Sc 4* | *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…’* |
| *Act 2, Sc 6* | *Friar Lawrence: ‘These violent/ delights have violent/ ends/ And in their triumph/ die like fire and powder,/ Which as they kiss/ consume.’* |
| *Act 3, Sc 1* | *Romeo: ‘O, I am fortune’s fool.’* |
| **STOP-CHECK!**1. Create spider diagrams of each specific theme.2. Quotation work- work on each theme and its group of related quotations. Complete the following tasks: learn the quotations, identify and explain how the specific theme is being shown in each quotation and identify and explain how key techniques have been used in each quotation. |
| **Symbols/ Symbolism/ Motifs** |
| Light and darkness | One of the most often repeated image patterns in the play involves the interplay of light and darkness. The integration of the language indicates an important motif overall. Romeo compares Juliet to light throughout the play. Upon first sight of her, Romeo exclaims that she teaches "the torches to burn bright“. She is also "the sun" who can "kill the envious moon", and later in this scene, Shakespeare says that her eyes are like "[t]wo of the fairest stars in all the heaven". But hers is a light that shows best against the darkness; she "hangs upon the cheek of night / As a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear".Romeo is also compared with a light that illuminates the darkness; if Juliet dies, she wants Romeo cut "in little stars/And he will make the face of heaven so fine/That all the world will be in love with night/? And pay no worship to the garish sun“. This quote reminds us that their light shines most brightly in the dark — that it is a muted glow associated primarily with stars, torches, and the dawn, rather than with sunlight, which is almost obscenely bright.Like their love, darkness is associated with mystery, emotion, and imagination. In fact, the day works against them. At the end of their honeymoon night, Romeo says, "More light and light: more dark and dark our woes"; they must part before the light arrived so that he is not caught and killed.Romeo also refers to Juliet in the balcony scene in Act 2 as the sun meaning that she is his life force and he cannot live without her. This is another ominous sign of their impending death. |
| Day and night | The combination of light and dark makes an interesting motif in Romeo and Juliet. But for our young lovers, the night-time itself is an important motif as well. The evening hours holds all of the significant moments for Romeo and Juliet. They meet; they pledge their love; they elope; they commit suicide.Night-time represents a time when a person can let go of their inhibitions. The same hold true for our title characters. They have a boldness at night that doesn't always show up in the day; this is especially true for Romeo. The night provides privacy and place away from the public's prying eyes, where Romeo and Juliet's love can blossom. |
| Poison | Poison, both sleep inducing and lethal, is the instrument of Romeo and Juliet's deaths. (Technically Juliet stabbed herself, but that never would have happened if not for the sleeping potion.) While poison has a literal purpose in the play, it's also a symbol. The poison symbolizes the Capulet and Montague feud. Not only is the feud deadly in itself, — recall Mercutio's death — it's also the catalyst for Romeo and Juliet's double suicide. |
| Nature/ plants/ flowers | The use of natural imagery (usually linked to plants and flowers) is used in the play quite frequently. When Lady Capulet talks about Paris to Juliet in Act One she says ‘Summertime in Verona has no flower as fine as him.’ Linking to the idea that she sees him as an ideal match for Juliet and physically he is handsome. Friar Lawrence links the properties of plants and flowers to people in general, suggesting that they can heal or cause ill. Juliet describes Romeo as a rose in the balcony scene in Act 2. The reference is often used to imply that the names of things do not affect what they really are. |
| Queen Mab | In Act 1, scene 4, Mercutio delivers a dazzling speech about the fairy Queen Mab, who rides through the night on her tiny wagon bringing dreams to sleepers. One of the most noteworthy aspects of Queen Mab’s ride is that the dreams she brings generally do not bring out the best sides of the dreamers, but instead serve to confirm them in whatever vices they are addicted to—for example, greed, violence, or lust. Another important aspect of Mercutio’s description of Queen Mab is that it is complete nonsense, albeit vivid and highly colorful. Nobody believes in a fairy pulled about by “a small grey-coated gnat” whipped with a cricket’s bone (1.4.65). Finally, it is worth noting that the description of Mab and her carriage goes to extravagant lengths to emphasize how tiny and insubstantial she and her accoutrements are. Queen Mab and her carriage do not merely symbolize the dreams of sleepers, they also symbolize the power of waking fantasies, daydreams, and desires. Through the Queen Mab imagery, Mercutio suggests that all desires and fantasies are as nonsensical and fragile as Mab, and that they are basically corrupting. This point of view contrasts starkly with that of Romeo and Juliet, who see their love as real and ennobling. |
| Thumb-biting | In Act 1, scene 1, the buffoonish Samson begins a brawl between the Montagues and Capulets by flicking his thumbnail from behind his upper teeth, an insulting gesture known as biting the thumb. The thumb-biting, as an essentially meaningless gesture, represents the foolishness of the entire Capulet/Montague feud and the stupidity of violence in general. |
| **STOP-CHECK!**Create spider diagrams of each specific motif and/or symbol. |
| **Useful You Tube videos** |
| The NTS English teachers recommend Mr Bruff’s ‘Romeo and Juliet’ playlist. There’s 54 videos in total; you should select ones which you feel would be useful to gain a different perspective and/or develop your knowledge further.https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TSE04T8fcts&list=PLqGFsWf-P-cB7YAoARj6iAFCglAfy9aN2 |
| **Example Exam Question** |
| Read the following extract from Act 1 Scene 2 of *Romeo and Juliet* and then answer the question that follows. At this point in the play, Romeo and Benvolio are discussing attending Capulet’s party.**BENVOLIO** At this same ancient feast of Capulet's Sups the fair Rosaline whom thou so loves, With all the admired beauties of Verona.Go thither; and, with unattainted eyeCompare her face with some that I shall show, And I will make thee think thy swan a crow. **ROMEO** When the devout religion of mine eye Maintains such falsehood, then turn tears to fires,And these, who often drowned, could never die, Transparent heretics, be burnt for liars! One fairer than my love? The all-seeing sunNe'er saw her match since first the world begun. **BENVOLIO** Tut, you saw her fair, none else being by,Herself poised with herself in either eye.But in that crystal scales let there be weighed Your lady's love against some other maid That I will show you shining at this feast, And she shall scant show well that now shows best. **ROMEO** I'll go along, no such sight to be shown, But to rejoice in splendor of mine own.Starting with this extract, explore how Shakespeare presents attitudes towards love in *Romeo and Juliet*. Write about: * how Shakespeare presents attitudes towards love in this extract
* how Shakespeare presents attitudes towards love in the play as a whole
 |