

DramaWorks Teacher's Guide
for
Romeo and Juliet
the play by William Shakespeare

Guide by
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Authors' Dedication

This guide is gratefully dedicated
to all the classroom teachers
without whom we would not be
the lifelong students we are today.

We thank you.

--Marion & Bill

Publisher's Dedication

Marion Hoffman was my teacher and friend
who had a passion for learning and teaching
and a tremendous love of literature and life.

Her spirited enthusiasm for teaching
and her classroom experience combined with
Bill's equally passionate love for and experience
with the world of theater combined to make
these DramaWorks guides invaluable resources.

I dedicate these updated editions to
Marion and Bill.

--Mary Collins, Founder of Teacher's Pet Publications

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Romeo and Juliet*

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Introduction to the DramaWorks Guide

What DramaWorks Is

DramaWorks has been created to meet the needs of classroom teachers. We have found that many teachers want resource materials directly related to presenting dramatic literature in their classrooms. They want information for themselves about specific plays, help in teaching the plays in the classroom, a large selection of in- and out-of-class activities geared to students working at different learning levels, and some practical guidance in putting all of that material together as quickly and as effortlessly as possible for applied use.

In response to those needs, we have created DramaWorks. It is designed, in a single guide, to give teachers a working understanding of a play, in this instance *Romeo and Juliet*, a high level of comfort in making an interesting and informative presentation of the play to their students, and numerous activities of varying kinds that can be done in class or at home. All activities come with information for the teacher as well as directions for the students. The directions are so flexible that the teacher can copy them and hand them out to the students, can give them out orally, or can adapt them to a variety of different purposes.

The activities include vocabulary exercises that focus on application of the words; classroom presentations; close examination of specially chosen parts of the text; acting exercises; writing assignments for the personal, interview, and research paper; and improvisations.

There are, in addition, many suggested extra activities that allow students to practice skills in gathering and thinking about information, presenting information verbally, working with various media, and writing information in a variety of forms. Students also are encouraged to try to learn new skills such as the elements of acting.

Accompanying those materials are very practical suggestions for ways to allot classroom time for direct teaching, interactive discussions, and assigned activities, as well as ways to use out-of-class activities to the best advantage in furthering students' understanding and enjoyment of the play. Everything is presented in ways that conserve the teacher's time and at the same time capitalize on every opportunity to make the classroom interesting and dynamic. Many opportunities are given to actually "act out" parts of the play in class.

What is unique about DramaWorks is that it places emphasis on classroom teaching, discussion, and activity. We hope it gives teachers the confidence to create a dynamic, interactive classroom environment. We know it will help them to introduce *Romeo and Juliet* to their students with minimal preparation but maximal results.

Because DramaWorks actually teaches users about the play while coaching them in teaching their students, it requires relatively little additional preparation time. There is no need to put hours and hours into creating lengthy lesson plans from scratch. Teachers can simply pick and choose from among many pre-designed activities without having to create new ones or devise lengthy instructions for their students.

Who The DramaWorks Guide Is For

DramaWorks can be used by any busy teacher who wants to introduce drama into the classroom. The most obvious users are probably teaching English, although they might be in another of the humanities or in some area of language arts. Our teachers enjoy teaching and being with young people. They are likely to be relatively new teachers looking for some support while they gain experience, although they could easily be ten- or fifteen-year veterans looking for help in preparing to teach a new play or one they haven't taught for a while.

What we know for sure is that this guide will be used by teachers who believe it will enhance their teaching of *Romeo and Juliet* while saving them some much-needed time in preparation.

We hope our teachers see great value in teaching drama dramatically. Though they probably are teaching drama as part of an overall curriculum, we hope they want to go beyond acquainting students with the play in the same way that they would "read" a novel, poem, or short story. Good teachers know through experience that the only true way to understand drama is to see at least some of it acted out before our eyes. They know that hearing actors' voices, watching characters move, seeing costumes, and looking at sets--even in the imagination--will make more of an impression on students than a million words on a page.

Our teachers also want to introduce theatre into the classroom to acquaint their students with great works of drama and help them to understand their plots, language, characters, and ideas. Our teachers want to make their classroom presentations interesting. They want to keep the attention of their students and impress upon them some of the pleasure of learning that brought the teachers into the classroom in the first place. They know there is no better way to capture and keep students' attention than through the natural dynamics of drama.

Our teachers also know that drama is one way to open students' eyes to an understanding of real life. If students understand the motivations of a play's characters, they will be better armed to see the motivations of people they meet in their own lives. If they see models of both trustworthy and untrustworthy behavior, they will be able to make more informed decisions about how they view the behavior of others and about how they themselves behave. If they understand more about language and other historical periods and have discussed some new ideas, students will perhaps be just a little more prepared to live their lives in ways that will give them satisfaction.

What The DramaWorks Guide Contains

The DramaWorks guide contains several sections.

The first section is **About the Playwright and His Art**, which contains a brief write-up on the life and art of William Shakespeare.

Next is **A Synopsis of *Romeo and Juliet*** that both teachers and students may use to gain a quick and easy understanding of the overall plot of the play. Although some teachers may object to giving students notes on the plot of the play because doing so seems somehow like “cheating,” we believe that it is very helpful to students to refer to. But, as with all of the parts of the Guide, teachers get to make the decision as to which parts to use and which not.

In the section entitled **Learning and Teaching**, really the heart of the Guide, teachers will learn about *Romeo and Juliet* at the same time that they gain techniques for teaching the play to their students. There is information on choosing a good text, reading the play for enjoyment and for teaching preparation, considerable information about the play’s characters, plot, thematic ideas, costuming, props, and set, and interesting and informative ways to present those aspects of drama to students. Throughout this section, we talk with teachers and share our thoughts on each part of *Romeo and Juliet*.

Also included in **Learning and Teaching** are ways to act out parts of the play in the classroom using the sketchiest of props, sets, and costumes or no props, sets, or costumes at all. If teachers want to use the acting portions of the Guide, then the ideas in props, sets, and costumes will be very beneficial.

Throughout the **Learning and Teaching** section, teachers will find many casual suggestions for activities that can be used with students at varying learning levels.

What **Learning and Teaching** really is is a section of coaching for the teacher. As educators with many years of experience in a variety of settings with lots of different students, we try to give teachers as many ideas as possible for ways to learn about the play and to pass that learning along to their students in as dynamic and informative a way as possible. By combining their own ideas and methodology with ours, teachers will create a vast assortment of ideas, approaches, and teaching techniques.

And that brings us to an important note: we don’t propose that our suggestions are the **only** way(s) to teach this or any other play. As teachers approach *Romeo and Juliet* and other dramas, they will no doubt add notes, thoughts, and activities that will change their teaching over the years. What **Learning and Teaching** represents is a beginning, a variety of ways to approach *Romeo and Juliet* that we believe will be successful in many classrooms.

Following the **Learning and Teaching** section are a series of more formally presented activities. Some may be done with students at varying learning levels while others require substantially capable and interested students.

Vocabulary Words from the Text is designed to make students more familiar with the meanings of over 60 words from the play's text. Each word is quoted as it is used in *Romeo and Juliet* and is accompanied by a clear dictionary definition. Students apply the words in interesting ways to assist them in understanding and becoming more familiar with them. Some of these activities may be done individually at home and some may be done in pairs and small groups in class.

The section called **Scenes for Modern Rewrites** is intended primarily to combat the accessibility problems presented by language that is over 400 years old. But what teachers will find about the **Rewrites** section is that focusing so narrowly on individual scenes will open ways for teachers and students to discuss the play's characters, plot, and major ideas. The **Rewrites** lend themselves to either individual or group work and should be approached as a fun activity, if at all possible.

The Written Word is included for teachers who are most comfortable with evaluating students through traditional writing assignments. There are multiple suggestions for writing based on personal experience, writing that evolves from investigation and research, and writing based on interviews. The writing itself is an individualized activity done by students either in or outside of the classroom, but in the interest of time, we assume that most of the writing will be completed at home.

The Exercises are of three types. Some ask for investigation followed by a classroom presentation. And because we are learning about drama, other exercises involve creating theatrical improvisations and presenting them in class while still others give students the opportunity to act out parts of the play in class with or without costumes, props, and sets. Some of the exercises can be done individually while some are group activities. The section was created to give teachers a wide choice of each type of activity.

Exercises is a section that can be used in its entirety, in part, or not at all. Although we hope that teachers will use some of the activities in the section, it is entirely possible to teach *Romeo and Juliet* interestingly and successfully without doing the exercises at all. Regardless of how they are used, it is unlikely that any classroom teacher will have the luxury of enough class periods to use the entire **Exercises** section.

One of the last sections is called **More and More Activities**, which includes a list of extra activities that teachers might want to consider. There are fifty activities listed. Many of them have multiple parts. All told, there probably are more than seventy-five activities in the section.

We conclude with **The Epilogue** and a note on the text.

Every activity section contains **Suggestions For The Teacher** which—depending on the type of activity--gives teachers ideas about how to work with the activities, information about why we chose the particular activity, what we hope it will accomplish with students, and things for teachers to think about as they assign the work. Although we make practical suggestions on ways to teach the activities, we always leave all final decisions to teachers because they know their particular students, classrooms, and schools better than anyone else can.

For every series of activities and most individual activities, we offer **Directions For The Students**, which gives guidance about how to complete the activity, how to approach it, and what we hope will be learned from it. We have tried to assure that the directions are very informative but always supportive of teachers. Our desire is that our directions never encroach upon teachers' freedom to use the activities in any way that they please.

As teachers give directions for an activity, they will give students whatever information they think is needed. If they think in some cases that just giving students our directions and letting them get started on the activity is appropriate, that is fine. Students often will be able to do the work by just referring to Directions for Students. When teachers want additional information in making assignments, they will find the basis for it in the Suggestions for the Teacher sections.

How To Use The DramaWorks Guide

We want teachers to feel free to use the DramaWorks Guide however they choose. But we also understand that teachers are busy people who don't always have time to wade through pages of information and then make hundreds of choices about how to present the material to their students.

We suggest, then, that teachers spend as much time as possible reading the play and the Guide. Then, if they want some practical applications of the material, they will find those under **Teaching Organizers**. In that section are a variety of ways to organize the actual teaching of *Romeo and Juliet*. In the **Organizers**, we break the teaching of the play into relevant parts and suggest pedagogical methods.

All five methods require that the teacher start by giving an overview of what will be taught during the whole unit and how the teaching will be done. Generally, too, teachers will want to be sure that students understand their expectations. We suggest that copies of the synopsis of *Romeo and Juliet* be given to students prior to the first class. Our pedagogical methods are all based on fifteen class periods of approximately 50 minutes each. If teachers have more or fewer than fifteen class periods to devote to the play, they will necessarily need to adapt the **Organizers** to their own purposes.

Teachers may find these **Organizers** helpful time savers, especially if they are preparing to teach *Romeo and Juliet* for the first time. Some users of the Guide may even be teaching their first play ever. But if teachers know ways that help them to present the material more effectively, then they should do it in whatever way seems best to them. The **Organizers** are presented as a way to save the teachers time. They are meant to help teachers, not dictate to them.

What is special about the DramaWorks Guide is that it has been created to be used by a variety of teachers in a variety of ways. We assume that all teachers and all classes and all classrooms are different. We invite teachers to use all or parts of the Guide exactly as we present them. But we also urge teachers to modify the Guide in any way that they please whenever they see the need.

Every step we have taken in creating the DramaWorks Guide was chosen to make teachers' professional and personal lives easier. It's not, after all, as though teachers can't present dramatic literature without our help. But if we do some of the work for them, they will have more time to think about presenting information to their students, working with them in groups and individually, and seeing that the classroom experience is as valuable as possible for everyone.

What The DramaWorks Guide Is Not

We are not trying to give a synopsis of everything that has ever been written about *Romeo and Juliet*. There is no way that anyone could do that. We are not writing an academic critique of the play. There are lots of journals available if that's what teachers want and need.

We aren't trying to compile the latest literary criticism on the play. Again, that information is readily available. We're not trying to make teachers instant experts on either *Romeo and Juliet* or William Shakespeare. If teachers choose to spend a lot of time researching Shakespeare and his plays, there is sufficient information for them to choose from.

The DramaWorks Guide is not intended to be the final word on any aspect of *Romeo and Juliet*. It is intended to provide help for teachers and their students. We hope it is viewed as a useful resource supportive of an informative, enjoyable, and enlightened teaching process. We hope that teachers enjoy using it as much as we enjoyed writing it.

The Characters in the Play

[CCSS: RL.9-10.1, RL.9-10.3, RL.9-10.9, SL.9-10.1 | RL.11-12.1, RL.11-12.10, SL.11-12.1

The notes below will help you discuss the characters in *Romeo and Juliet* with your class. There is a lot of information and there are several suggestions as to ways to get your students to understand the characters through discussions and exercises. Choose the timing and methods you feel are most appropriate for your own students.]

Learning about the characters in any work of literature is always fun. It's like meeting new people. And people are always interesting, sometimes even fascinating. What reading allows us to do is to meet even more people through fiction.

There are many ways to examine and get acquainted with the characters in *Romeo and Juliet* and to use them to better understand the play.

Sometimes it's useful to begin a study of the characters through an activity sure to interest students. For example, one enjoyable way to get students involved in thinking about the characters in *Romeo and Juliet* is to rename them after modernday characters. Students could choose from the worlds of music, film, television, politics, history, literature—it doesn't matter as long as the names they choose represent people who share personality and behavioral traits with the characters in the play.

There is nothing especially academic about such an activity, but it may serve to get students to think critically about the characters. The object is to do anything we can to make the play's characters understandable and interesting to the students.

Another way to understand characters better is to look closely at the way the playwright presents them. It is easy to examine Shakespeare's two major characters, Romeo and Juliet, because the playwright deliberately sets them apart from other people. He presents them as young people who have minds of their own. They are different from their friends and at various times throughout the play are either physically or psychologically removed from their friends and family.

Look at Romeo. Notice that he is not a part of the first street scene and is spoken of by his mother before we ever see him. She asks Benvolio if he has seen Romeo and says she is glad that her son wasn't involved in the street fighting. Benvolio says that he saw Romeo that morning during a walk but that Romeo fled from him. It emerges that Romeo is love stricken and often removes himself physically from other people.

Immediately, then, Romeo is drawn as a character apart from the others. When he does join his friends, he is teased because he has fallen in love with Rosaline. He doesn't know what time it is because he has been pining away the hours. His love, though strong on his side, is unrequited. He says that even though he appears to be with his friends, that is merely appearance. "This is not Romeo," he says. "He's some other where."

Text between the previous page and this page has been omitted for the sample.

What kind of people are Romeo and Juliet? Both are cherished by their families, both have strong support systems, and yet both turn their backs on the people who mean the most to them so that they can be together. Is that strength of character or is it willfulness? How did they get the way they are? Ask students if they think that being strong is a trait that people are born with or is something that they acquire. Is it possible for strong people to become weak and weak people to become strong? Under what circumstances might this happen?

Another way to examine the play's characters is simply to look at the way they behave. Old Capulet, for example, is revealed in the play as a likeable but rather foolish old man who wants his own way. He has continued his family's involvement in the feud beyond the point that it served any purpose. Then he is determined to force Juliet to marry Paris against her wishes. It is clear that Capulet dotes on his daughter—"the hopeful lady of my earth"—but he allows the feud to continue until it costs her life.

Get students to look at Capulet's behavior and think about the kind of person he is. Do they find him foolish? Do they think that he has redeeming qualities? Is he to be forgiven his faults because he is old? Should he have pushed Juliet into a marriage that she didn't want, or should he have continued his earlier stance of allowing her to choose? Would students want Capulet as their father? What, in short, do they think of Capulet as a person?

Tybalt behaves consistently in ways that bring about his own demise. He is witty and articulate, but he can't stop himself from fighting. First he engages in a street duel with Benvolio, despite the latter's telling him that he wanted only to keep the peace. Then at the Capulet party, realizing that Romeo is in attendance, Tybalt tries to get Old Capulet to agree to his fighting Romeo. And finally, of course, Tybalt's slaying of Mercutio leads to the play's swift and dramatic conclusions.

Do students know people like Tybalt? Is he a "type"? Could anyone have stepped in and reasoned with Tybalt and perhaps saved lives? Would your students want to have Tybalt as a friend? Would he be good company? Would he be a good person to have on hand if trouble arose? What do the students think Tybalt is like as a person?

To learn more about characters, get students to look at possible contrasts in the way characters view themselves and are viewed by others. Tybalt is a good character to look at in this way. Always hot headed and ready to draw his sword, Tybalt views himself as a protector of the family honor and a courageous fighter.

But in actuality, Tybalt is a spoiler. Try to get students to see how pompous he is. When he comes upon Benvolio breaking up the fight between the servants of the two houses, Tybalt immediately becomes hyperbolic: "Turn thee, Benvolio," he cries. "look upon thy death!" And when he tries to get Capulet to deal violently with Romeo and his friends, Tybalt forces Capulet into sarcasm:

You'll make a mutiny among my guests,
You will set cock-a-hoop, you'll be the man!

Some Thematic Ideas for Discussion

CCSS: RL.9-10.1, RL.9-10.2, RL.9-10.3, RL.9-10.10, SL.9-10.1
RL.11-12.1, RL.11-12.2, RL.11-12.5, RL.11-12.10, SL.11-12.1

One of the best ways to learn about an idea is to discuss it with others. Thus we encourage you to stimulate classroom discussions as often as possible. We have tried to give you suggestions throughout the Guide that will encourage the type of discussions that you might like to have in class. We continue that process now with some specific thematic ideas for discussion.

As is always the case with Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet* presents many ideas, some major and some minor ones. Together they help us to understand the play. These are just some of the play's ideas that we think might prove most fruitful for classroom discussion.

Love at First Sight

Romeo and Juliet fall in love at first sight without knowing a thing about each other. When he observes her beauty at a short distance, he is stunned by her it:

...Forswear it, sight,
For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night.

After a brief interlude, they dance. Notice that the words "hand" and "hands" are quickly joined by talk of "lips," "a tender kiss," and "holy palmers' kiss." Thereafter, they exchange talk centering on lips:

ROMEO

Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too?

JULIET

Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer.

ROMEO

O, then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do.
They pray; grant thou, lest faith turn to despair.

JULIET

Saints do not move, though grant for prayers' sake.

ROMEO

Then move not while my prayer's effect I take.

Within a moment or two, then, Romeo and Juliet move from attraction to talk of holy love. He kisses her—twice—and they profess undying love for each other. Within moments of meeting, they are quite literally willing to die for each other.

Try asking students to talk about whether love at first sight exists in real life. Could someone fall in love with another person immediately after seeing that person—or after one dance? Is love so powerful and so blind that one can fall in love at first sight?

Star-Crossed Lovers

Romeo and Juliet are the prototypical star-crossed lovers. They fall in love with each other despite their families' long-time feud. Somehow the astrological aspects were askew from the start. One school of thought is that no matter what the lovers might do, they would be doomed by the stars.

Do students believe that there are such things as star-crossed lovers today? What of lovers of different ethnic or cultural backgrounds or different religions? What about the woman from an ambitious family who falls in love with a man who seems to have little or no ambition? What about the man to whom family and roots mean everything who falls for a woman who wants to live far from their families and move about the world frequently?

Ask students to discuss relationships that seem fated not to be permanent. Try to get them talking about love relationships they have personally known about that somehow were fated.

Whenever possible during discussion times, steer students back to *Romeo and Juliet* and its characters and relationships. Try to use their personal responses to your questions to enhance their understanding of the play.

Premonition

Often in *Romeo and Juliet*, characters have premonitions, kind of advance warnings, that bad things are going to happen to them. Frequently these premonitions turn out to be true. Romeo tells Mercutio that he has had a dream:

...my mind misgives
Some consequence yet hanging in the stars
Shall bitterly begin his fearful date
With this night's revels, and expire the term
Of a despised life closed in my breast
By some vile forfeit of untimely death.

Romeo is, of course, correct that the revels of that night will ultimately end in his own untimely death.

Tybalt's statements at the Capulet party presage the violence that will ensue. When Capulet forces him to be quiet, Tybalt replies,

I will withdraw, but this intrusion shall,
Now seeming sweet, convert to bitt' rest gall.

Scenes for Modern Rewrites

Activity #1

Suggestions for the Teacher

You may want to use this first rewrite as a group classroom activity. Divide the class into groups of perhaps six students each.

We chose this early scene in the play because it clearly establishes the kind of recklessness and quick violence that mark the quarreling between the Houses of Capulet and Montague. At this point, the feud has spread to the whole citizenry and is disrupting life in Verona.

Here is Tybalt of the Capulet household in the street. He has encountered Benvolio of the Montague household as Benvolio tries to break up a fight between servants of the two houses. But even though Benvolio urges peace, Tybalt is a hotheaded young man who is not able to back away from a fight.

The scene demonstrates the way that the feud continues despite the efforts of some people to stop it. There always will be someone like Tybalt to stir things up, to keep the enmity alive. In fact, it is Tybalt's killing Mercutio, Romeo's friend, that turns the tragedy toward its fateful end. Once Tybalt has taken that course, no amount of pleading could have saved the families from their grief.

The scene also focuses clearly on the character of Tybalt. Notice the way that he calls Benvolio names and challenges him to a duel to the death. The first thing he says to Benvolio is basically, "Look at you, drawing your sword among these cowardly servants!" And then immediately he orders Benvolio to turn around and "look upon thy death."

For Tybalt, there is no middle ground. Though Benvolio pleads with him to be calm, Tybalt is determined to fight. He says he hates the word "peace." Not only does he hate the word "peace," but he hates all Montagues and Benvolio himself.

Rewriting this scene should be very easy for your students. As much as you can, we urge you to allow them to use colloquial language, even slang if they choose.

This scene will also help students to realize that not all Shakespearean prose is difficult to understand. The language here is rather simplistic. Most of the sentences are short. The words are not difficult to understand.

If you like, you can use this first rewrite to get a discussion going about character. Most students should be able to contribute to a discussion featuring such clearly drawn characters.

Scenes for Modern Rewrites Activity #1

Directions for Students

This is a group activity that you most likely will do in class with other students. Your teacher will assign the groups. The point of this assignment is to become more familiar with Shakespeare's language by rewriting his words into modern-day speech. As you focus carefully on just a small part of the play, you will also learn to understand its plot, characters, and thematic ideas better.

You may use as much "ordinary" language as necessary. That is, when you are done, the characters in your scene should be speaking like people you know. Someone your age should have no difficulty understanding what the characters are saying.

Working with your group, read your scene over as many times as is necessary to understand it fully. You may find it helpful to read the words out loud in order to grasp the meaning more easily. If you are sitting very close to other students in your classroom, you and your group members will have to do this as quietly as possible so as not to disturb the work of others.

After you all feel that you understand the words and the scene as well as you possibly can, try your hands at rewriting the lines into modern twentieth-century language. Choose one member of your group to write as you all revise. When you have agreed upon the finished product, choose someone in your group who can read both the original and the rewrite to the whole class.

Time will be limited to accomplish the rewrite, so try to get to work as quickly as possible and work as efficiently as you can. Your teacher may add additional directions to this assignment.

Scenes for Modern Rewrites Activity #1

Act 1, Scene 1

[Servants from the houses of Capulet and Montague have been quarreling with each other in the street. Benvolio has just tried to break up their fight when Tybalt arrives, starts to call Benvolio names, and threatens to kill him.]

Enter Tybalt, drawing his sword

TYBALT

What, art thou drawn among these heartless hinds?
Turn thee, Benvolio; look upon thy death.

BENVOLIO

I do but keep the peace. Put up thy sword,
Or manage it to part these men with me.

TYBALT

What, drawn and talk of peace? I hate the word
As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee.
Have at thee, coward! [They fight.]

Enter three or four Citizens with clubs or partisans.

CITIZENS

Clubs, bills, and partisans! Strike! Beat them down!
Down with the Capulets! Down with the Montagues!

Writing from Research (Directions and Topic Choices)

Directions for Students

For this assignment, you will have to do some research.

Your writing should have at the very least a clear point and strong supporting information to explain that point. Be sure that your writing is clearly organized. Be sure, too, that you are not simply repeating what your sources say. Instead, read about the topic and then form your own point of view. It is that point of view that you will be writing about and supporting.

Your teacher may choose to give you additional directions for this assignment.

Research Topic #1

Many of Shakespeare's plays portray conflicts between parents and their children. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, for example, Egeus wants to dictate who his daughter Hermia will marry and she wishes to choose her own spouse. In *King Lear*, the king wants to give away his power and yet still control his kingdom and his daughters. He even wants to dictate to them how much they should love him. In *The First Part of Henry IV*, Prince Hal is at odds with his father, the king.

Read one Shakespearean play other than *Romeo and Juliet* in which there is a parent/child conflict. Then read at least two articles in an encyclopedia, a scholarly journal, a book, or from a reliable source on the Internet that deals with Shakespeare's treatment of the relationship between parents and children. Use your knowledge of *Romeo*, your reading of the new play, and your research to write a paper on the ways that Shakespeare pursued this theme in at least two of his plays.

You may find, for example, that a line or two in one or both of the articles will give you an idea for a thesis for your paper. Be sure that you make your point clearly and strongly and that you support it thoroughly with details from the plays themselves.

Research Topic #2

Shakespeare reportedly based his version of the Romeo and Juliet story on Arthur Brooke's 1562 work, *Tragicall Historye of Romeus and Juliet*. Find at least two modern articles or one book that address Shakespeare's use of this source for *Romeo and Juliet*. Tell how Shakespeare relied on this earlier story and how he altered it for his own uses. Try to pick perhaps three instances of similarities and three of differences for your paper.

You will need to be very specific in explaining to the reader. If you feel it will enhance your paper, you might like to speculate briefly on why Shakespeare either kept the source the same or changed it for his own play.

Improvisation #2

Characters and Circumstances

Kelly

Tyrone

Ron

It is hoped that you will be reminded of the Capulet/Tybalt/Romeo triangle here. Although they are **not** completely like the characters in *Romeo and Juliet*, Kelly, Tyrone, and Ron will have many of the same motivations and a lot of the same personality traits. Students involved in the improvisation will learn a lot about Capulet, Tybalt, and Romeo through acting as Kelly, Tyrone, and Ron.

Kelly is the manager of an automobile repair shop. Tyrone is his assistant manager. Neither Kelly nor Tyrone is college educated but both have a lot of professional training and experience in automobile repair. Over the few years that they have worked together, they have kidded about college boys who think they want to repair cars but really are too elitist to do so well.

Kelly has just hired Ron, who is enrolled in the local community college at night. Ron works hard and is a good mechanic. He has worked at a variety of shops prior to enrolling in college part time.

Ron and Tyrone knew each other in high school, where they had a bitter but unresolved rivalry. Now, every time he sees Ron, Tyrone feels intense anger toward him. Tyrone has recently been trying to get Kelly to fire Ron. The day before, Ron made a small mistake at work. Although it was easily corrected and Ron apologized and said it wouldn't happen again, Tyrone is trying to encourage Kelly to let Ron go now.

The situation for the improvisation is that Kelly and Tyrone are having lunch together and are discussing Ron's employment. Tyrone's goal is to have Ron fired. Kelly is a good manager who just wants to do what is right for the shop and to stay within the law.

More and More Activities

What follows is basically a resource list of activities for you, the teacher. Some of them are simple, and some are very difficult. Some require no special skills, but some require especially talented and dedicated students. How you wish to use them is necessarily entirely up to you. They are presented in the sincere hope that somewhere in this grab bag of activities there is a project that appeals to every student and every teacher.

Although there are only 50 numbered activities, many of them actually are multiple assignments. There are fifteen major characters in *Romeo and Juliet*. When an activity calls for choosing a character on which to base an assignment, the students actually have a fifteen different choices. And in the case of some other assignments, there are even more possible combinations.

The suggested activities are presented in no special order and are attached to only the barest of suggestions for their use. They are what they are—more and more activities.

1. Students could look at videos of both *Romeo and Juliet* and *West SideStory* and then write a comparison/contrast paper on the two works. Remind them that they shouldn't just talk about the two films but should make a clear point and support it with ample details.
2. Ask students to consider starting a new company. They must hire all staff from the cast of characters of *Romeo and Juliet*. They could present their decisions to the whole class. Remind them that they should tell what the business is and what positions they have filled with whom and why.
3. Have students plan a memorial service for one of the characters who die suddenly in *Romeo and Juliet*. Ask the students to write a eulogy that could be delivered by one of the other characters in the play.
4. Students could make posters and fliers advertising that *Romeo and Juliet* is soon going to be performed somewhere in the community. You would probably need to provide whatever supplies the students require. Remind the students that they need to make the posters and fliers attractive enough to draw audience members to the performance.
5. Ask students to pretend that someone from outer space has been deposited into the middle of the action presented in *Romeo and Juliet*. The students could pretend to be the alien and write a letter back to their planet describing the new world that they are observing. These letters could just be turned in to you or could be read for the whole class' enjoyment. Or you could have them handed in and then choose the best three or four for reading.