

Teacher Guide

Grades 9–12

Romeo and Juliet

William Shakespeare



**NEW WAYS TO TEACH READING,
WRITING, & CRITICAL THINKING**



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ROMEO AND JULIET

by
William Shakespeare

Teacher Guide

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Note

The text used to prepare this guide was the Pelican Shakespeare softcover edition published by Penguin Books, © 1960, 1970. Since references are made by act, scene and line number, most editions may be used, but line numbers may differ somewhat.

Please note: Please assess the appropriateness of this play for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading and discussing it with your class.

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INTERACTIVE BULLETIN BOARD IDEA

Use a large picture of the Globe Theatre in the center of the board. (An artistic student might draw one as an extra-credit project). Surround the picture with small strips of paper, each bearing the title of a different Shakespearean play. Have the students arrange the plays into groups for the comedies, tragedies, and histories.

Act I

Pre-Reading Activity

Before beginning to read, have the students create character charts. As new characters are introduced in the play, students should add their name and descriptions. Part of a completed chart appears below.

Character	Introduced	Relationship	Personality
Sampson	Act I, sc. i	Capulet servant	loyal; likes to fight
Gregory	Act I, sc. i	Capulet servant	loyal; funny
Abram	Act I, sc. i	Montague servant	loyal; likes to fight
Tybalt	Act I, sc. i	Juliet's cousin	hot-headed
Romeo	Act I, sc. i	Son of the Montagues	moody, a romantic
Benvolio	Act I, sc. i	Romeo's cousin	peace-maker; good friend

Scene i

Comment

Scene one is important because it establishes the tone of the play. Students should read the scene aloud. Assign readers for Sampson, Gregory, Abram, Tybalt, Benvolio, two students for citizens, officer, Lord Capulet, Lady Capulet, Lord Montague, Lady Montague, Prince Escalus, and Romeo.

Students will meet Tybalt and Benvolio as they are walking the street. They will also hear Prince Escalus' declaration of death to anyone who disrupts the peace again. In a brief dialogue between the Montagues and Benvolio, they will learn of Romeo's distant behavior. Characterization of Romeo begins as he reveals that he is hopelessly in love with Rosaline.

Discussion Questions

1. Benvolio is the peacemaker in the play. His name comes from the Latin words "bene," which means "good," and "volo," which means "I wish." Find a line that shows Benvolio's personality. (Lines 65-66: "I do but keep the peace. Put up thy sword,/ Or manage it to part these men with me.")
2. How is Tybalt's personality different from Benvolio's? (He is hot-headed and loves to fight.) Find a line that suggests he wants the feud between the families to continue. (Lines 67-68: "What, drawn, and talk of peace? I hate the word /as I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee.")
3. Who is Prince Escalus? (The ruler of Verona) What lines indicate his feelings about the feuding? (Lines 81-91: "If ever you disturb our streets again/ Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace.")
4. Benvolio and the Montagues are concerned about Romeo. Explain why. (Benvolio relates that when he recently approached Romeo, his friend stole into the woods, pretending not to see him. The Montague adds that he has seen Romeo crying, and that he often slays himself up in his room.) What information is Benvolio able to get from Romeo? (Romeo is sad because he is in love with someone who does not return his love and has taken a vow of chastity.)
6. Find lines that show Romeo is a romantic young man. (Lines 188-192: "Love is a smoke made with the fume of sighs.")
7. What advice does Benvolio give Romeo? (Do not forget the woman he claims to love and look around for someone else who is more available) What is Romeo's reaction? (He assures Benvolio that he will not be able to love again.)
8. What kind of friend is Benvolio? How do you know? (He is a loyal and good friend and is truly concerned about him. He pledges to help Romeo, or else die in debt.")

Suggestion For Writing

Benvolio does his best to cheer Romeo out of his despondent mood. Describe how a family member or friend tries to cheer you up when you feel unhappy or discouraged.

Scene ii

Comment

In Scene Two we see the first example of foreshadowing when Capulet's illiterate servant asks Romeo to read the guest list for the banquet party, which lets him know that the object of his love, Rosaline, will attend. Students should be able to identify other coincidental events like these as the play progresses.

3. How does Nurse seem to feel about the marriage? (She thinks Romeo is very handsome, and is happy for Juliet.)

Scene vi

Romeo and Juliet are married by Friar Laurence. The Friar cautions Romeo that “violent delights have violent ends,” but the only thing that matters to Romeo is to be with Juliet. She arrives, and the wedding proceeds.

Discussion Questions

1. Find a line that expresses a feeling of foreboding.
(Line 9: “These violent delights have violent ends.”)
2. What advice does the Friar give Romeo about love? Cite the lines.
(Lines 14-15: “Therefore love moderately; long love do so;/ Too swift arrives as tardy
as slow.”)
3. How soon after meeting one another were Romeo and Juliet married? (one day)
4. What do you think would have happened if Friar Laurence had told Lord Capulet as soon as he learned that Romeo wanted to marry Juliet?

Suggestions for Writing

- Romeo and Juliet fell in love “at first sight” and rushed into their marriage. Would this be a good decision to make in real life? What problems might result?
- Juliet says that her love for Romeo has made her feel that she has more wealth than even the richest people. Use a bubble map like the one below to list your non-material wealth. Then write a paragraph using your notes.

