



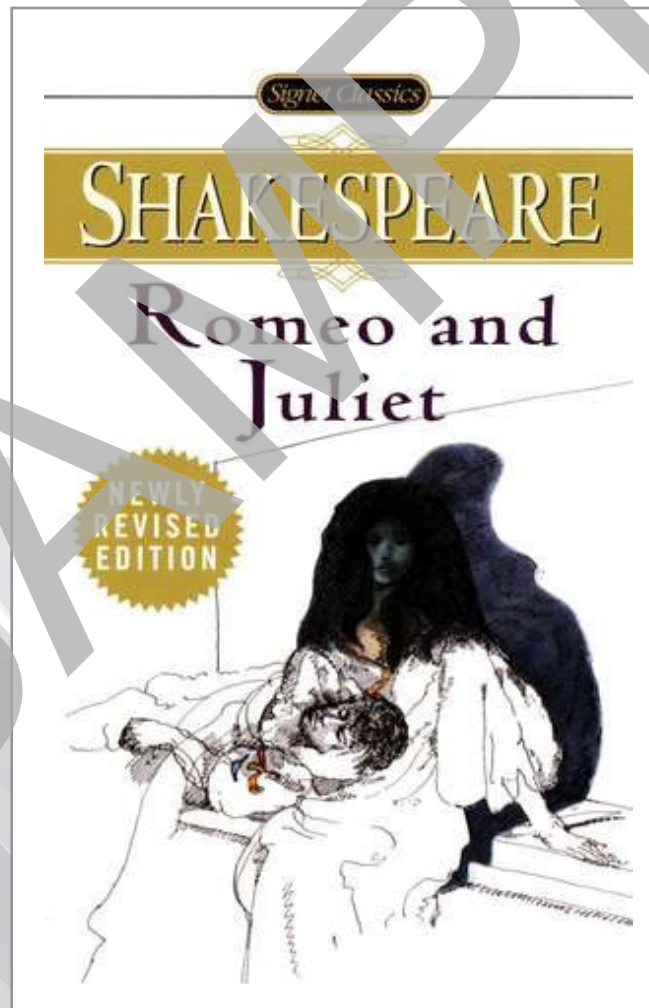
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 9-12

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Romeo and Juliet

William Shakespeare



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Romeo and Juliet

William Shakespeare

TEACHER GUIDE

NOTE:

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

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Introduction

To the Teacher: The background information on William Shakespeare and on the Globe Theatre is given to use as you choose—either as lecture notes or as supplemental material after students have completed the suggested Cooperative Research Project on page 5. If this is your students' first experience with Shakespeare, you may want to show the following filmstrips as well:

- *Introduction to William Shakespeare* (McGraw-Hill)
- *Life in Elizabethan Times* (McGraw-Hill)
- *Shakespeare's Theatre* (Encyclopedia Britannica)

William Shakespeare

One of the great mysteries of English drama is that so little is known for sure about one of its most famous playwrights. Fact became mingled with legend in the 100 years after Shakespeare's death, and it was not until then that any biographical information was recorded.

Shakespeare's exact birth date is unknown, but he was baptized on April 26, 1564, in Stratford-on-Avon, England. His father, John, was a prosperous wool, leather, and grain merchant as well as a town official. His mother, Mary, was the daughter of a gentleman farmer. It is known that young William attended school and studied Latin and literature. In 1582, he married Anne Hathaway, a woman eight years his senior. They had three children: a daughter, Susanna, and twins Hamnet and Judeth.

In 1586, Shakespeare left Stratford to become the stage manager of The Theatre in London, so named because it was the only theatre in town. He soon joined the acting company of The Theatre, and with Richard Burbage and William Kemp he performed at court in many plays.

Shakespeare's earliest works were produced in 1591-92, including several of the histories and *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and *Comedy of Errors*. In 1592, he wrote *Romeo and Juliet*. It was followed in quick succession by *The Merchant of Venice*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

Shakespeare made an important business move in 1599 when he joined Richard Burbage and several other actors and built the Globe Theatre. He was a shareholder in the Globe and a part-owner of a company of actors called Lord Chamberlain's Company, later known as The King's Men.

Many of Shakespeare's plays were produced at the Globe, where he had both financial security and a first-rate acting company to produce his plays. This was his greatest writing period. In 1599-1600 he wrote *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night*. Between 1600 and 1611, he wrote the tragedies for which he is so well remembered: *Julius Caesar*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*, among others. During this time he also wrote 154 sonnets which were published in 1609. Late in 1608 or 1609, Shakespeare and his partners purchased the Blackfriars Theatre to use as a winter location for play production.

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 names 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 and romantic
Benvolio	Act I, sc. i	Romeo's cousin	a peacemaker; 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 quarrel in 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 94-95: “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. Lord Montague adds that he has seen Romeo crying, and that he often shuts himself up in his room.)
5. 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...”)
7. What advice does Benvolio give Romeo? (to 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 Romeo. He pledges to help Romeo forget, “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 coincidence when Capulet’s illiterate servant asks Romeo to read the guest list for the Capulet 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.

Students will discover that Lord Capulet plans for Juliet to marry County Paris, and that he is inviting many guests to a feast at his house. Ask the students to observe Capulet as you read the scene and decide if he seems sincere in his concern for his daughter's happiness. The interaction between Capulet's servant and Romeo provides humor and leads us into the action that follows.

Discussion Questions

1. How does Lord Capulet feel about the feud at this time of his life? (He is getting tired of the feuding: Lines 1-3, "But Montague is bound as well as I/ In penalty alike: and 'tis not hard, I think/ For men as old as we to keep the peace.")
2. Why has Paris come to see Lord Capulet? (He wants to marry Juliet.)
3. How old is Juliet? (not quite 14)
4. What is Capulet's reply to Paris? (He feels Juliet is still too young to marry and wants Paris to wait two years. He also wants to be sure Juliet consents to marry Paris—"My will to her consent is but a part." He tells Paris to woo Juliet and "get her heart.")
5. Why does Benvolio want Romeo to attend Capulet's party? (to meet other women) Why does Romeo agree to go? (He knows Rosaline will be there and only wants to see her.)

Scene iii

Comment

Tell the students to pay careful attention to the characterization of Lady Capulet, Nurse, and Juliet. Juliet relates differently to each of the older women. A board activity follows the discussion questions.

In this scene, Juliet learns that she will be meeting her suitor, Paris, at the feast. Juliet obediently promises her mother that she will meet Paris with an open mind and try to like him, although she is not thinking about marriage yet.

Discussion Questions

1. What happened to Nurse's daughter? (She died. "Susan is with God.")
2. What purpose do Nurse's ramblings about Juliet serve? (Helps to characterize Nurse as a loving "second mother" to Juliet.)
3. How does Juliet feel about getting married? (She's not enthusiastic: "It is an honor that I dream not of.")
4. Would it be a compliment to be called "a man of wax"? (yes)

Activity

In whole-class discussion, complete the Venn diagram comparing and contrasting Lady Capulet and Nurse. Under the diagram, next to the arrows, show how Juliet behaves toward each of the older women.

