

Individual Learning Packet

**Teaching Unit**

**Romeo and Juliet**

by William Shakespeare

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## Objectives

*By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to*

1. define “courtly love” and “true love” and indicate what role each plays in this drama.
2. understand and explain the term “star-crossed lover” and its significance in this play.
3. explain how Romeo and Juliet’s love is different from both courtly love and vulgar love.
4. write a character sketch of Romeo illustrating how he grows and matures throughout the play.
5. explain how both the Nurse and the Friar function as confidantes.
6. identify major themes that are developed throughout the play.
7. comment on the role Fate plays in this drama.
8. define “comic relief” and identify specific examples.
9. identify those features that characterize the language of the common people in a Shakespearean play.
10. identify couplets and their use throughout the play.
11. interpret major lines with ease and appreciation.
12. correctly identify Shakespeare’s prose style.
13. understand and explain the function of the prologue

### Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. Fate is involved in the play over and over again. How does fate bring about the death of the lovers? Mention and discuss at least four incidents.
2. Some critics believe that Romeo and Juliet change and mature over the course of the play. Do you agree or disagree? Use specific examples in the play to support your opinion.
3. What view of love do both Mercutio and the Nurse represent? What view of love does Romeo's love for Rosaline represent? What view of love do Romeo and Juliet share? Provide support for each answer.
4. What does the Prince represent, and why must he bear some of the responsibility for the tragic deaths?
5. Point out the ways in which this play presents a clash of generations.
6. What role does Paris play in the drama, and why is his persona important for the action in the play?
7. While the Nurse is Juliet's confidante, the Friar is Romeo's. Compare and contrast these two as counselors.
8. Write a character sketch of Romeo pointing out how he is similar to and different from Mercutio and Benvolio.
9. Point out the language patterns of the common people and identify at least three instances where these characters function as comic relief.
10. Some see fate and Divine Providence as the same thing—a power or outside force determines the course of our lives. While Divine Providence assumes that God is the higher power, the force or power behind fate is left undefined. Write a paper in which you state your thoughts on this topic. Do you think that some invisible force or power governs the unfolding of our lives, or do our lives just unfold randomly? If you believe our lives are guided, do you believe it is God or some other force that is directing them?
11. Write a paragraph explaining your opinion on whether it is right or wrong for fourteen-year-old girls to get married during the historical time in which this play takes place.
12. Given the time, place, and circumstances in this play, do you think Friar Laurence is wrong in marrying Romeo and Juliet without first informing their parents?
13. By referring to comments and incidents in the play, support or refute the following statement: "One theme in this play is the need for strong authority figures to take necessary actions to prevent feuds and disorder from creating disturbances in society."
14. Discuss the role of the apothecary including your opinion of his decision.

# Romeo and Juliet

## The Prologue

### VOCABULARY

**mutiny** – strife, rivalry  
**piteous** – passionate

1. In the prologue, Shakespeare tells his audience what they are to expect in the play. Why do you suppose Shakespeare chooses to use this technique?

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2. Where is the play set?

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3. Put the following lines into your own words:

“From forth the fatal loins of these two foes  
A pair of star-cross’d lovers take their life;”

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**Act I, Scene III – A room in Capulet's house.**

## VOCABULARY

**dug** – nipple, breast  
**endart** – take flight and puncture like an arrow  
**lineament** – aspect, characteristic  
**margent** – the margin  
**perilous** – dangerous, hazardous  
**rood** – a crucifix  
**tetchy** – touchy, oversensitive, irritable  
**trow** – say

1. Juliet will turn 14 on Lammas–eve. What is the Lammas–tide the women speak of?

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2. The Nurse quotes the vulgar remark that her husband made to young Juliet, and then, repeats it. What do the Nurse's indecent remarks in front of the family indicate about their relationship?

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3. What does Lady Capulet tell Juliet? What is Juliet's response?

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**Act II, Scene IV – A street.**

## VOCABULARY

**apace** – swiftly, rapidly  
**bawd** – a prostitute  
**cleft** – split  
**convoy** – a carriage; transportation  
**dowdy** – a prostitute  
**ell** – a measurement of forty-five inches  
**fantasticoes** – cavaliers, suitors  
**fishified** – changed to a fish  
**hams** – knees  
**lenten** – pie made during Lent  
**lieve** – rather, “just as soon”  
**mar** – hurt  
**prating** – gossiping, babbling  
**roe** – fish eggs  
**shrived** – forgiven, pardoned  
**troth** – loyalty, devotion  
**vexed** – disturbed, troubled

1. Once again, Mercutio yammers on and on at the beginning of this scene. Both Mercutio and Benvolio believe that Romeo is still pining over Rosaline. Once Romeo enters, Mercutio, in one passage, makes several allusions. List the allusions then, do a little research to explain what the allusions mean and how they fit in the context of this scene.

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2. “Without his roe, like a dried herring: O flesh, flesh, how are thou fishified!” What is the pun Mercutio is making here? What type of pun is this?

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3. As Romeo enters, Mercutio and Benvolio are discussing Romeo’s longing for Rosaline and Tybalt’s challenge to Romeo. What change in Romeo’s behavior does Mercutio comment on? What is the essence of the dialogue until Pete and the Nurse enter?

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4. Why is the Friar unable, according to Romeo, to truly understand Romeo's feelings about Juliet and being banished?

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5. The Nurse arrives and informs the Friar and Romeo that Juliet, too, is crying just as Romeo is. Hearing of Juliet's unhappiness and the hatred he supposes she feels toward him, he draws his knife to kill himself. What does the Friar accuse him of?

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6. For what things does the Friar say Romeo should be happy about?

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7. What does the Friar then tell him to do? What instructions does the Friar give Romeo?

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**Act IV, Scene IV – Hall in Capulet's house.**

VOCABULARY

**quinces** – fruits  
**trim** – decorate, beautify, adorn

1. During the interchange between the Nurse, Lord Capulet, and Lady Capulet, what has his wife accused him of?

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2. What does all the action in the house indicate?

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