

**Reflections:**

*A Student Response Journal for...*

# *Romeo and Juliet*

*by William Shakespeare*

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## **Act I, Scene I**

1. Sampson describes women as being “the weaker vessels.” Consider the role that women play in society today. Do you feel that the Women’s Liberation Movement made a positive or negative effect on women’s role in society? Explain your answer.
2. Gregory chastises Sampson for having poor manners and a crude tongue. Write a paragraph about a character from a book, movie, or real life that you consider rude. Why do you consider this character’s behavior impolite?
3. Prince Escalus is tired of the warring between the Capulets and Montagues. In order to curb the violence, the prince threatens death to anyone caught fighting. Compose a diary entry in which you give your opinion of the death penalty. When, if ever, do you feel the death penalty is justified?
4. The Capulets and Montagues are involved in an age-old conflict. Write an article for your school newspaper about a quarrel or feud that exists between two groups today. Be sure to include how the conflict began and if it seems likely for the two sides to be at peace with each other.
5. Romeo’s family and friends are concerned about his moodiness. He remains aloof by taking long walks and avoiding company. Describe whether you ever felt the need to be alone for any reason. What did you do when you felt this way?

## **Act I, Scene II**

6. Capulet is unsure about Juliet marrying at a young age but Paris assures him, “Younger than she are happy mothers made.” Write a newspaper editorial about young teenage girls who become pregnant.
  
7. Teenage pregnancy is a problem in the United States. What suggestions can you give to help stop this problem? Make a list.
  
8. Capulet gives his servant a list of names to invite to his dinner party. The servant, however, can't read the list because he is illiterate. Compose a letter to the President of the United States concerning the quality of education in this country. Do you feel it is adequate? If not, how might conditions be improved?
  
9. Benvolio tells Romeo, “One pain is lessen'd by another's anguish. Write a paragraph discussing why you think some people feel better after hearing another person's problem.

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### **Act I, Scene III**

10. Juliet's mother and nurse expect her to get married when she turns fourteen. Write a letter to Juliet discussing what you feel is a good age to get married, and give your reasons. What are the advantages and disadvantages of getting married at a young age?
11. The nurse fondly tells a funny story about Juliet's childhood. Describe a funny story from either your childhood or someone you know.
12. Juliet's parents want Juliet to marry Paris, and they begin to setup the union. Write a paragraph in which you give your opinion of arranged marriages. What advantages and disadvantages do you see in them? If you find them positive, write to Lord Montague. If negative, write to Lord Capulet.

### **Act I, Scene IV**

13. Mercutio is worried about Romeo's moodiness, and he tries to cheer his friend up by teasing him. Describe a scenario from a book, movie, or real life in which someone tries to cheer up a depressed friend. What method was used to cheer up the friend, and did it work?
14. Mercutio refers to dreams as "the children of an idle brain, begot of nothing but vain fantasy." Create a journal entry about how seriously you take your dreams.

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*Response Journal*

15. Relate a dream you had recently.
  
16. Romeo has a premonition that something is about to begin which will lead to his death. Some people believe in extrasensory perception (ESP). Have you or someone you know ever experienced an occurrence of ESP? Explain this in a letter to a psychic.

## **Act I, Scene V**

17. Romeo's frame of mind quickly changes when he sees Juliet. He immediately forgets about Rosaline, and Juliet becomes the center of his attention. Write a gossip column for a newspaper in which you discuss Romeo's fickle behavior. Direct the letter to Romeo. You might begin like this:

Dear Romeo,

You claim to love Rosaline totally and completely, yet...

18. Capulet keeps the peace when he prevents a quarrel from starting at his party. Think about someone from history whom you consider a peace-keeper, and compose an epitaph for this person's tombstone.
  
19. Write a paragraph explaining your thoughts about love at first sight.

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## **Act II, Scene I**

20. Benvolio thinks his cousin, Romeo, is still in love with Rosaline. He is unaware that Romeo has fallen in love with Juliet, an enemy of the Montague family. Imagine you have a relative who falls in love with a family enemy. Write a letter to your relative giving your advice about the relationship. What advantages and disadvantages can you foresee?
  
21. While discussing Romeo's lovesickness, Mercutio and Benvolio mention the notion that love is blind. Write a paragraph about your opinion of the phrase "love is blind," as if you were talking to your child. What does this phrase mean to you, and do you believe it is true?

## **Act II, Scene II**

22. Romeo woos Juliet with poetry and compliments. Suppose you are in love with someone as passionately as Romeo is with Juliet. Compose a poem for this person in which you declare your love.
  
23. Juliet struggles between loving and hating Romeo. She pleads with him, "Deny thy father and refuse thy name; / Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love, / And I'll no longer be a Capulet." Compose a letter to Juliet about whether you think she should choose to be with her family or with Romeo. In your opinion, where does her loyalty belong? Explain the reasoning behind your response.