
















| Plot Summary | Key Characters | Context |
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| <p>Act 1: <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> begins as the Chorus introduces two feuding families of Verona: the Capulets and the Montagues. On a hot summer's day, the young men of each faction fight until the Prince of Verona intercedes and threatens to banish them. Soon after, the head of the Capulet family plans a feast. His goal is to introduce his daughter Juliet to a Count named Paris who seeks to marry Juliet. Montague's son Romeo and his friends (Benvolio and Mercutio) hear of the party and resolve to go in disguise. Romeo hopes to see his beloved Rosaline at the party. Instead, while there, he meets Juliet and falls instantly in love with her. Juliet's cousin Tybalt recognises the Montague boys and forces them to leave just as Romeo and Juliet discover one another.</p> <p>Act2: Romeo lingers near the Capulet house to talk with Juliet when she appears in her window. The pair declare their love for one another and intend to marry the next day. With the help of Juliet's Nurse, the lovers arrange to marry when Juliet goes for confession at the cell of Friar Laurence. There, they are secretly married (talk about a short engagement).</p> <p>Act 3: Following the secret marriage, Juliet's cousin Tybalt sends a challenge to Romeo. Romeo refuses to fight, which angers his friend Mercutio who then fights with Tybalt. Mercutio is accidentally killed as Romeo intervenes to stop the fight. In anger, Romeo pursues Tybalt, kills him, and is banished by the Prince. Juliet is anxious when Romeo is late to meet her and learns of the brawl, Tybalt's death, and Romeo's banishment. Friar Laurence arranges for Romeo to spend the night with Juliet before he leaves for Mantua. Meanwhile, the Capulet family grieves for Tybalt, so Lord Capulet moves Juliet's marriage to Paris to the next day. Juliet's parents are angry when Juliet doesn't want to marry Paris, but they don't know about her secret marriage to Romeo.</p> <p>Act 4: Friar Laurence helps Juliet by providing a sleeping potion that will make her seem dead. When the wedding party arrives to greet Juliet the next day, they believe she is dead. The Friar sends a messenger to warn Romeo of Juliet's plan and</p> | <p> Romeo – Son of the Montague family, who is: Impulsive – he falls immediately in love with Juliet and forgets Rosaline. Loyal – when his best friend Mercutio is killed by Tybalt, Romeo is so enraged that he kills Tybalt. Passionate – he kills himself in order to be with Juliet.</p> <p> Juliet – Daughter of the Capulet family who is: Obedient –She agrees to look at Paris at the party as a potential husband. Passionate – she falls instantly in love with Romeo. Courageous – she disobeys her parents and arranges to marry Romeo in secret. She later kills herself for love.</p> <p> Mercutio – Romeo's best friend and kinsman Prince Escalus. He is bawdy, talkative and loyal.</p> <p> Tybalt – Juliet's cousin and a member of the Capulet family. He is violent and hot-tempered, with a strong sense of honour.</p> <p> Benvolio – Romeo's cousin and member of the Montague family. He is a peacemaker who attempts to keep peace between Tybalt and Mercutio.</p> <p> Friar Laurence - Romeo's confessor, who advises and marries Romeo and Juliet. He also helps Juliet plan her fake death.</p> <p> Capulet & Lady Capulet – Juliet's mother and father who want her to marry Paris and are quick tempered.</p> <p> Montague & Lady Montague – Romeo's mother and father who are more concerned by his melancholy/secretive behaviour</p> <p> Prince Escalus – The Prince of Verona and symbol of law.</p> <p> Paris – Kinsman to the Prince and wants to marry Juliet.</p> | <p>William Shakespeare – William Shakespeare was a renowned English poet, playwright, and actor born in 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon and died in 1616. He was a prolific writer during the Elizabethan and Jacobean ages of British theatre.</p>  <p>During his life, after losing two older siblings, William became the eldest child of his family. John Shakespeare, his father, worked as a glove-maker but he also fulfilled civic positions. His elevated status meant that he was more likely to have sent William to the local grammar school.</p> <p>When Shakespeare was eighteen, he married Anne Hathaway, who was twenty-six. They had three children: Susanna, born six months after the wedding, and later followed by twins Hamnet and Judith. Hamnet died when he was just 11 years old.</p> <p>During his time in London, Shakespeare's first printed works were published. He also became a founding member of The Lord Chamberlain's Men, a company of actors. Shakespeare was the company's regular dramatist, producing on average two plays a year, for almost twenty years. Altogether Shakespeare's works include 38 plays, 2 narrative poems, 154 sonnets, and a variety of other poems. No original manuscripts of Shakespeare's plays are known to exist today.</p> <p>Background information - It is generally believed that the play is based on a real Italian love story from the 3rd Century. The 'real families' are the Capeletti and the Montecchi families. Shakespeare wrote his version of the feuding families (Montagues and Capulets) and the love story between Romeo and Juliet in 1594 which was based on Arthur Brooke's poem of 1562. This period was 'The Elizabethan Era' which was also known as 'The Renaissance': a time of significant change in the fields of religion, politics, science, language and the arts.</p> |



| Plot Summary Continued | Themes and Elizabethan England | Which SBB English skills will I need to develop? |
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| <p>bids him to come to the Capulet family monument to rescue his sleeping wife.</p> <p>Act 5: The vital message to Romeo doesn't arrive in time because the plague is in town (so the messenger cannot leave Verona). Hearing from his servant that Juliet is dead, Romeo buys poison from an Apothecary in Mantua. He returns to Verona and goes to the tomb where he surprises and kills the mourning Paris. Romeo takes his poison and dies, while Juliet awakens from her drugged coma. She learns what has happened from Friar Laurence, but she refuses to leave the tomb and stabs herself. The Friar returns with the Prince, the Capulets, and Romeo's lately widowed father. The deaths of their children lead the families to make peace, and they promise to erect a monument in Romeo and Juliet's memory.</p> | <p>Love and Relationships - Love is presented as an extremely overpowering force that supersedes all other values, emotions, and loyalties. Through their love, Romeo and Juliet conspire to go against the forces of their entire social world. </p> <p>Violence – Extreme violence takes place sporadically throughout the play. The feud between the two families is so bitter that the mere sight of each other can be the cause of a fight to the death. </p> <p>Family - The father was the head of the household in this patriarchal society. Women had no rights or authority in law: they could not own property or money but could influence their husbands. Children were regarded as property and could be given in marriage to a suitable partner. This was often a political or financial transaction to secure and retain wealth. It was not unusual to be married very young. In high society, children were often raised by a 'wet nurse' and did not have a strong bond with their parents.</p> <p>Religion - Romeo and Juliet was set during a time of religious and political turmoil. Europe was a traditionally Catholic society with a strong belief in damnation for mortal sin. Suicide and bigamy were both considered to be mortal sins. Shakespeare was writing following 'The Reformation' and this was when England became a Protestant nation, having broken away from the control of the Catholic Church. In this Protestant society, life became more open and less oppressed.</p> <p>Honour - Family and masculine honour was important to the Elizabethans. There was a strong belief that the slightest wrong or insults must be avenged as a matter of personal pride or to protect reputation.</p> <p>Fate and Destiny - Most Elizabethans believed in the ideas of fate and astrology; rich people often paid for horoscopes for their children, and before major decisions such as marriage or travel, one would often consult an astrologer to see if the stars favoured it. Many people believed that they had no free will: that they had no choice to change their destiny because everything was already 'predestined'.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowing how language, vocabulary, grammar, structure and organisational features affect meaning. Making references to context. 2. Students appreciate texts from a range of genres and eras. 3. Using inference to decode a range of vocabulary, including archaisms. Utilising more complex vocabulary in a clear and concise manner. 4. Using inference to decode a range of vocabulary, including archaisms. Utilising more complex vocabulary in a clear and concise manner. 5. Students perform basic drama activities and contribute to formal debate. 6. Students can empathise with characters and writers from the past and other cultures, relating their moral lessons to life in our country, town and school. |
| <p>Key Terminology</p> | | |
| <p>Tragedy - a play dealing with tragic events and having an unhappy ending, especially one concerning the downfall of the main character.</p> <p>Denouement - the conclusion of a play, where the strands of the story come together.</p> <p>Anagnorisis - a moment where a character makes a critical discovery.</p> <p>Peripeteia - a sudden reversal in fortune or change in circumstances</p> <p>Hubris - Excessive pride, arrogance or carelessness.</p> <p>Hamartia - a flaw or problem with someone's personality which leads to their downfall.</p> <p>Tragic Hero - a good person with a personality flaw (hamartia).</p> <p>Foreshadow - be a warning or indication of (a future event).</p> <p>Metaphor – Comparing one thing to another by stating they share the same qualities. It states that the thing "is" something else.</p> <p>Dramatic Irony - the full significance of a character's words or actions is clear to the audience or reader although unknown to the character.</p> <p>Soliloquy - an act of speaking one's thoughts aloud when by oneself or regardless of any listeners.</p> | | <p>Key vocabulary</p> <p>Courtly love - an over-exaggerated form of talking and acting, where people compete to show the extremes of their love. It was very superficial.</p> <p>Honour - high respect; great esteem.</p> <p>Fate - the development of events outside a person's control, regarded as predetermined by a supernatural power.</p> <p>Destiny - the events that will necessarily happen to a particular person or thing in the future.</p> <p>Conflict - a serious disagreement or argument, typically a protracted one.</p> <p>Internal conflict - the struggle occurring within a character's mind.</p> <p>Patriarchy – patriarchal societies are ones where men are dominant, and have control over women e.g. by choosing who they would marry.</p> <p>Wet Nurses – employed by wealthy families to feed and care for their children.</p> <p>Bubonic Plague/Black Death – a plague that killed many people. Sufferers were quarantined in their houses, with a red 'X' painted on the door, and left to die.</p> |