

|                    |                                                                                       |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Soliloquy          | An act of speaking one's thoughts aloud when by oneself or regardless of any hearers  |
| Dramatic monologue | A long speech by one actor in a play or film - usually delivered to other characters. |
| Hubris             | Excessive pride / arrogance                                                           |
| Authority          | The power or right to give orders, make decisions, and enforce obedience.             |
| Mercurial          | Subject to sudden or unpredictable changes of mood.                                   |
| Justice            | The quality of being fair and reasonable.                                             |
| Injustice          | Lack of fairness or justice                                                           |
| Morality           | the distinction between right and wrong                                               |
| Idealism           | striving for perfection or a higher standard.                                         |

### Plot

In Verona, two feuding families, the Montagues and Capulets, are locked in a bitter rivalry. Romeo, a Montague, and Juliet, a Capulet, meet at a party and instantly fall deeply in love. They secretly marry with the help of Friar Laurence. However, a street brawl leads to Romeo killing Juliet's cousin, Tybalt, and Romeo is banished. To avoid being forced to marry another man, Juliet fakes her death with a potion from the Friar. The message about the plan fails to reach Romeo, who believes Juliet is truly dead. He returns to her tomb, takes poison, and dies. Juliet then awakens, finds Romeo dead, and stabs herself. Their tragic deaths finally reconcile the two warring families.

### Shakespeare

William Shakespeare, born in 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon, rose from humble beginnings to become the most celebrated playwright in the English language. He worked as an actor and writer in London, eventually becoming a part-owner of the Globe Theatre. Over his career, he penned around 39 plays, including tragedies like Hamlet and Romeo and Juliet, and comedies such as A Midsummer Night's Dream. His 154 sonnets also remain widely studied. Shakespeare retired to his hometown and died in 1616.

### Key Quotes

A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life." - **The Prologue**

"Peace! I hate the word, / As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee." - **Tybalt (A1,S1)**

"My only love sprung from my only hate!" **Juliet (A1,S5)**

"It is the East, and Juliet is the sun!" **Romeo (A2,S2)**

"O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo? / Deny thy father and refuse thy name;" **Juliet (A2,S2)**

"These violent delights have violent ends / And in their triumph die, like fire and powder, / Which, as they kiss, consume." **Friar Lawrence (A2,S6)**

"A plague o' both your houses!" **Mercutio (A3,S1)**

"O, I am fortune's fool!" **Romeo (A3,S1)**

"For never was a story of more woe / Than this of Juliet and her Romeo." **Prince Escalus (A5,S3)**

## Context



**Shakespeare's Time** – Shakespeare wrote his plays at the time of two monarchs: Queen Elizabeth I and James I. Romeo and Juliet was written relatively early in Shakespeare's career.



**Religion** – The heavy religious presence is evident across several parts of Romeo and Juliet. This is reflective of a society across Europe that was deeply religious (predominantly catholic or protestant).



**Astrology** - At the time of Shakespeare, the belief in both astronomy and the supernatural was far more preeminent than in society today.

The reference to 'star-cross'd lovers' demonstrates the large role of horoscopes and planet positions in being used to predict fate



**Patriarchal Society** – Society throughout the Middle Age and at Shakespeare's time was patriarchal – women were considered inferior to men. This was also the case in much of Europe, including Italy. Women belonged to their fathers (or brothers if their fathers had died) and then their husbands, so Juliet would be expected to obey her father. Women were not permitted to own land or enter most professions. They were instead expected to bear children, be gentle and womanly.

## How to structure a paragraph

**Point: What** is your impression of the character?

**Evidence:** Pick a quotation from the book that shows that.

**Explain: How** does that quotation create the impression?

**Analyse:** Can you pick out a specific word that creates that impression? Or a technique? **Why** do you think the writer wants us to feel that way?

**Link:** Could you explore an alternative interpretation or link to the context of the book? Or to the intentions of the author?

## Key Themes

Love



Conflict

Fate



Death

|                |                                                            |
|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Romeo          | Protagonist/ tragic hero / sensitive & impulsive           |
| Juliet         | Protagonist / tragic hero / decisive & headstrong          |
| Benvolio       | Romeo's cousin/ sensible & peacekeeper                     |
| Mercutio       | Romeo's best friend/ loyal & devoted                       |
| Tybalt         | Juliet's cousin/ strong-willed & argumentative             |
| Lord Capulet   | Head of the Capulet household / dominant & aggressive      |
| The Nurse      | Juliet's nurse/ loving, mother figure to Juliet            |
| Friar Lawrence | A priest/ religious man in Verona /moral/ kind/ optimistic |