

# ROMEO AND JULIET (20% of whole English Lit GCSE)

## Key themes

## Stretch yourself

<b>Duelling and the concept of honour:</b> Maintaining the honour of your family name was hugely important at the time. If you were challenged to a duel and you refused, you would be deemed a coward, thus damaging your honour and the status of your family. Most Elizabethan gentlemen carried swords in public and many did fight in the streets.
<b>Courtly Love &amp; cures for lovesickness:</b> common in medieval literature where a knight was consumed with passion for an unattainable noblewoman; Romeo fits this perfectly. Elizabethan doctors saw unrequited love or desire as a disease, a type of melancholy sometimes called lovesickness. They tried various cures and sometimes sent patients to church to confess to a priest. They believed that if lovesickness was left untreated, it could lead to madness.
<b>Role of women in a patriarchal society:</b> Elizabethan England was a society controlled by men. Women were seen as the weaker sex & were expected to be meek & mild, and most importantly, obedient to their fathers & later their husbands.
<b>Arranged marriages:</b> Marriages amongst the wealthy were arranged by parents in order to match or improve social standing. However, in practice, parents did try to choose someone their child liked and was happy to marry. Secret marriages such as that between the young Romeo and Juliet would have been both illegal and shocking.
<b>The Italian setting of the play:</b> The play is set in Italy, which was known for its warring states. It is also a Catholic country; religion was extremely important and marriage vows were seen as sacred – once made, they could not be broken.

<b>CONFLICT:</b> Conflict is one of the key driving forces in the play and it occurs between a range of characters: between warring households; within families; within friendship groups; and between members of the communities. This conflict results in violence; violence opens the play in scene one and it also concludes the play with the deaths of the two lovers. It is worth noting that the motif of light vs dark is also linked to many of these themes.	<input type="checkbox"/> violence & hate <input type="checkbox"/> death, <input type="checkbox"/> secrecy <input type="checkbox"/> family <input type="checkbox"/> youth vs age <input type="checkbox"/> individual vs society/religion <input type="checkbox"/> order vs chaos <input type="checkbox"/> appearance vs reality
<b>LOVE:</b> The love Romeo and Juliet share is beautiful, passionate, exhilarating, transformative and they are willing to give everything for it. But it is also chaotic and destructive, bringing death to friends, family and to themselves. It is worth noting that the motif of light vs dark is also linked to many of these themes.	<input type="checkbox"/> conflict <input type="checkbox"/> courtly love <input type="checkbox"/> marriage <input type="checkbox"/> sex <input type="checkbox"/> youth.
<b>FATE:</b> No matter how much they love each other or what plans they make, their struggles against fate only help fulfil it. But defeating or escaping fate is not the point. No one escapes fate. It is Romeo and Juliet's determination to struggle against fate in order to be together, whether in life or death, that shows the fiery passion of their love and which makes that love eternal.	

<p>➤ Whilst analysing the extract, quickly refer out to other parts of the play.</p> <p>➤ Watch <u>different</u> performances of key scenes to provide you with 'ammunition' when discussing form.</p>
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## Significant characters

<b>Romeo</b>	A young Montague. Not interested in violence, only love. He's passionate and sensitive yet also impulsive.
<b>Juliet</b>	A young Capulet. Naïve and sheltered at the beginning, develops into a strong character. Grounded.
<b>Friar Lawrence</b>	Friend to both Romeo and Juliet. Civic-minded. Also expert with potions & herbs.
<b>Nurse</b>	Like a mother to Juliet / confidante. Earthy/sexual. Often says inappropriate things.
<b>Capulet</b>	Juliet's father. Prudent and caring but can fly into rage if respect is lacking.
<b>Mercutio</b>	Romeo's close friend. Witty, bawdy, cynical and a hot-headed character.
<b>Benvolio</b>	Romeo's cousin. Tries to keep the peace and keep Romeo's mind off of Rosaline.
<b>Prince</b>	Leader of Verona, concerned with keeping order between the warring families.
<b>Tybalt</b>	Juliet's cousin. Obsessed by family honour; quick to draw his sword. Hates Montagues.

## Key quotations

Theme/reason:	Quotation:	Suggested points for further analysis
Conflict, family, social order	"What, drawn and talk of <u>peace</u> ? I <u>hate</u> the word, As I <u>hate</u> hell, all Montagues, and thee." 1.1	Tybalt's first appearance in the play – establishes motive and character to justify his later actions. 'hell' → religious connotations
Love, family	"She's the <u>hopeful</u> lady of my <u>earth</u> " 1.2	Lord Capulet places all his hopes and ambition into his daughter 'earth' reinforcing how central she is to his life, 'lady' showing respect
Love	"Did my heart <u>love</u> till <u>now</u> ?" 1.5	Despite Romeo's melancholy in 1.1 he falls in love instantly with Juliet and questions/invalidates his feelings for Rosaline in doing so. Was it lust?
Love, religion	" <u>palm</u> to palm is holy <u>palmer's</u> <u>kiss</u> " 1.5	R&J first meeting – part of their shared sonnet and use of religious imagery
Love, elevated status of Juliet, use of light and celestial imagery	"Juliet is the <u>sun</u> " "the <u>brightness</u> of her cheek would shame those <u>stars</u> " 2.2	Juliet often referred to using imagery link to light and ethereal connotations. She is elevated above all others and illuminates the lives of those she is around like Romeo
Juxtaposition of foreboding with their declarations of love	"It is <u>too</u> rash, <u>too</u> unadvised, <u>too</u> sudden, / <u>Too</u> like the <u>lightning</u> ." 2.2	Juliet, despite having just admitted her love for Romeo, senses the sudden nature of it. 'too' x4 rather than x3 = excess. Imagery here is foreboding of her death and the conflict between Tybalt and co.
Society, companionship	" <u>Now</u> art thou <u>sociable</u> , now art thou <u>Romeo</u> " 2.4	Mercutio represents social expectations within society – friendship was held to be more important than love and relationships
Excess, love & conflict	"These <u>violent</u> <u>delights</u> have <u>violent</u> <u>ends</u> " 2.6	Friar Lawrence observes that excess breeds excess and highlights key themes of the play – love and conflict
Tension, anger, conflict	"For now, these <u>hot</u> days, is the <u>mad</u> blood stirring." 3.1	Opening of Act 3 marks a shift in the play and signals the beginning of the Tragedy. The use of pathetic fallacy creates tension and foreshadows the deaths that occur in this scene

## Key Terms

	Oxymoron	Thought/feeling	Potential links
		Melancholy	Romeo's isolating and miserable behaviour after Rosaline's rejection 1.1
Tragedy	Iambic pentameter	Unrequited love	Romeo's feelings for Rosaline are not returned 1.1
		Loyalty/honour	The underlying feud between the Montagues and Capulets has continued because of the importance of upholding family honour
Protagonist	Prose	Desperation	R&J to be together
Antagonist	Religious imagery		Romeo and Juliet's spontaneous decisions
Prologue	Metaphor	Ignorance	Romeo and Juliet rush their marriage despite the advice of Friar Lawrence
Monologue	Simile	Impatience of youth	Lord Capulet is unable to believe that Juliet would disobey his orders when she refuses to marry Paris 3.5
Soliloquy	Plosives	Disgust	Lord Capulet's reaction to Juliet's refusal to marry Paris
Sonnet form	Sibilance	Betrayal	Capulets discovering Juliet's 'death'
Dramatic irony	Pun	Devastation	Juliet towards her parents in Act 3
Foreshadowing	Bawdy humour	Deception	Tybalt's reactions throughout the play are extreme, mirrored in his drastic threats and subsequent actions
Juxtaposition	Patriarchy	Fury	

Key quotations		
Theme/reason:	Quotation:	Suggested points for further analysis
Conflict, honour	"A <u>plague</u> a'both your houses" 3.1	In his dying moments Mercutio realises the pointlessness of the feud. Look at connotations of 'plague'
Fate, destiny	"O, I am fortune's fool" 3.1	Romeo laments destiny's control – context links
Parental figures	"Art thou a man?.../thy wild acts denote/The unreasonable fury of a beast." 3.3	Friar Lawrence lambasts Romeo for his impulsive and extreme behavior highlighting just how irrational he is being. However FL does NOT manage to stop him.
Forbidden love	"More <u>light</u> and light, more <u>dark</u> and dark our <u>woes!</u> " 3.5	Romeo and Juliet only meet in the dark at night, highlighting their relationship as being outside of what is socially acceptable. Their love is forbidden.
Family, loyalty, patriarchy	" <u>Hang</u> thee, young baggage, <u>disobedient wretch!</u> " 3.5	Lord Capulet transforms once Juliet refuses to marry Paris. He cannot believe she would disobey him. Aggressive and violent language used – zoom in.
Objectification of women	"Thy <u>face</u> is <u>mine</u> , and thou hast slandered it." 4.1	All the men who claim to love Juliet, in this case Paris, (even Romeo!) also objectify her and treat her as their possession.
Family, love, death	"Death lies on her like an <u>untimely</u> frost/Upon the <u>sweetest</u> flower of all the field." 4.5	Lord Capulet is devastated at the death of Juliet. Use of superlative to capture his earlier sentiments from Act 1. Tragic that he never expressed this love directly to her in the play.
Fate, destiny	"I <u>defy</u> you <u>stars!</u> " 5.1	Links to star-crossed lovers and fortune's fool. Ironic – in him saying this, he plays into the hands of destiny re: prologue. Arguably, his character controls his fate.
Love, impulse	"O <u>happy</u> dagger,...there <u>rust</u> , and let me die." 5.3	Like Romeo, Juliet is impulsive in her decision to commit suicide – she is 'happy' to die – oxymoron - zoom
Tragedy	" <u>torch</u> doth burn" " <u>misadventure</u> " 5.3	Words from earlier on in the play echo in 5.3 – use of dramatic irony and repetition to highlight tragedy
Tragedy, love	"For <u>never</u> was a story of more <u>woe</u> /Than this of Juliet and her Romeo." 5.3	Final lines of the play – rhyming couplet reinforces inevitable tragedy – 'woe' and 'Romeo'