

Romeo and Juliet

Workshop Study Guide

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For
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Curriculum Connection to 9th grade Literature and Composition:

The plays of William Shakespeare are at the core of our high school literature curriculum, because they articulate virtually every significant aspect of human nature, human relations and emotional experience.

Many of his most popular, enduring plays concern young people. Blending the literature and performance aspects of Shakespeare, a ASC workshop on Romeo and Juliet will bring young people face to face with characters and situations they can identify with through Shakespeare's extraordinary language and dramatic writing skills.

Program objectives:

Students will understand the plot and characters of the play, and be able to discuss the central conflict of the play as well as the conflict inherent in the "balcony scene" of Act II, scene ii.



Students will learn how Shakespeare tells his actors and audience the setting of the scene. We also learn how the playwright, through his inventive use of symbolism, rhyme and imagery, helps us understand the emotions and motivations of the characters of Romeo and Juliet in the balcony scene, and the play as a whole.

Students will learn strategies for reading drama that expand studying and speaking skills throughout their coursework. Students will also be able to contrast and compare Elizabethan English with Standard English and point to similarities and differences that have occurred in the last 400 years.

Program Summary:

Students will gain new insights into Shakespeare's relevance while experiencing the power of his language when they get out of their seats and on their feet to play Shakespeare's text with the trained Tavern Education Artists who also make up The Tavern senior acting company.

Students will warm up their voices and bodies with a professional actor's warm up and through a series of highly interactive acting games, students will learn to "play" through the words, sounds, actions and circumstances of the famous balcony scene, Act II, scene ii, from William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet.

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Overview of the workshop form:

Looking at the Balcony scene, we will:

Play the Words:

What do we think this word means?
What does the editor think it means?
What did Shakespeare mean? What really works?

Play the Sounds:

Do the sounds of words influence the meaning of the word, the scene, and the play? How did Shakespeare indicate to his actors the emotional sense of the scene? How do we unlock the meaning of the word and make it work for us?

Play the Action:

What words indicate stage business and blocking? How does the language drive the action of the scene forward, and how do we figure it out?

Playing the Circumstances:

What just happened? What are the characters talking about? And what is going to happen now?

Who's Who in Act II, scene ii of Romeo and Juliet

Romeo: A lovesick young man, who spouts some of the most glorious love poetry of all time!

Juliet: An only child and 14 years old. Romeo says "she doth teach the torches to burn bright."

Pre- Workshop, Think About This:

That immortal poetry:

In your opinion, what has made this particular play so enduring, even among the rest of Shakespeare's plays? Is it

special to you or not? What made it so? Think of your favorite/least favorite line and put it in your own words. Poetry often rhymes. Can you find examples of rhymed and unrhymed verse in *Romeo and Juliet*?

Physical Actions Revealed:

Suit the deed to the word, the word to the deed. Where are there examples of the text itself telling the reader what the physical action on stage should be?

Example:

"She speaks, yet she says nothing" Act II, sc. ii, or "Hold, daughter" Act IV, sc. i.

During a Workshop, Watch And Listen For:

In Act II, sc ii, the famous "balcony scene", Romeo and Juliet both speak to the audience and themselves without knowing the other is there. What kinds of "action" words do you hear? What kinds of "emotion" words do you hear? Some examples:

Arise	pardon me
Lean	speak
Passion	joy
Hateful	afear'd

Can you find more?

Post Workshop:

Writing and Exploring:

Pair off with another student and "interview" each other as if one of you were Romeo or Juliet and the other was a gossip columnist. Write a persuasive essay about what each character thinks and feels about the other and why they do or do not make such a good couple!

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Write a “Dear Diary” entry for Romeo or Juliet. Imagine you have just gotten back to your room at home, after the “balcony scene.”

Design your own costumes for Romeo and Juliet. Cut out magazine pictures, draw or find real clothing that you think Romeo and Juliet might wear. Research in books or online what Italian Renaissance clothing looked like, or pick modern clothes that fit both characters.

Vocabulary Words From the Play:

These words appeared in print for the first time ever in this play!

Bump Swelling or raised spot

Denote To define or designate

Juiced Containing juice or fluids.

Vocabulary Words From the Workshop:

These words are not used as often now as they were in Shakespeare’s day.

Bepaint cover my face like makeup

But Soft! Wait a minute!

Vestal livery white, flowing clothing for a young girl

Wherefore Why?

Perjuries Little white lies

For Further Information/Exploration:

Websites for students:

For a complete synopsis and character list for Romeo and Juliet go to www.shakespearetaVERN.com, click on **Education** then **Study Guides** and look under *Romeo and Juliet*.

Mr. William Shakespeare and The Internet:

<http://shakespeare.palomar.edu/> this site contains excellent resources and is a great meta-site.

Shakespeare’s Globe website:

www.shakespeares-globe.org

Elizabethan and Renaissance Costuming:

www.homepages.wmich.edu/~rowen/renbk/paintings.html great pictures of actual clothing!

www.costumes.org/history/100pages/16tlinks.htm Really in-depth meta-site, which will send you to many more sites for resources.

Books for teachers:

Romeo and Juliet Folger Edition

Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human by Harold Bloom

Asimov’s Guide to Shakespeare by Isaac Asimov

Shakespeare A to Z by Charles Boyce

Movie Versions:

There are many, many movie versions of this play but these are the most popular!

Franco Zeffereilli’s Romeo and Juliet

Baz Lurhman’s Romeo + Juliet (rated R)

Jerome Robbin’s West Side Story