

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Study Guide: Romeo and Juliet

The Prologue— *In the Prologue, Shakespeare tells us what we are going to see in the play. This technique removes some of the suspense, but it enables the reader to concentrate on the language and action.*

1. Who is the “Chorus”?
2. Where is the play taking place?
3. What problem exists in the city?
4. What does the term “star-crossed lovers” suggest? ★★
5. In what verse (poem) form is the Prologue written?
6. What number is echoed throughout the Prologue? How many examples of its use (or words that echo this number) can you find?



#### Act 1:1

1. This scene opens with a series of puns. **What is a pun?** (See “Shakespeare’s Style” sheet later in packet.) **Find one example in** this scene.
2. Gregory and Sampson, servants to the Capulets, are bragging, vulgar-mouthed men who engage in puns.
  - a. Find one crude remark that one of them makes.
  - b. Find an example of words or actions that suggest that the Capulet servants are not as brave and tough as they pretend to be.
3. After the servants of the Montague and the Capulet houses start a fight, one person tries to break it up and says, “I do but keep the peace.” Who is this peacekeeper?

4. What character tries to continue and inflame the fight by saying about *peace*: “I hate the word/ As I hate Hell, all Montagues, and thee”?
5. How does the fight “spread”? Although the fight begins with the servants, to what social classes does the feud between the two families extend?

What image or idea might this convey to the audience? (Hint: Do some free association: What other things *spread*?)

6.  The Prince arrives. Summarize the key points of his speech. What is his decree?
7. What do we learn about Romeo from Lord Montague and Benvolio? (l. 120-155).
8. What is the cause of Romeo’s problem?
9. What is Benvolio’s advice to Romeo?
10. What examples of love and hate exist in this scene? What effect has the love had? What effect has the hate had?

### **Act 1:2**

1. What is Capulet’s reaction to the Prince’s decree?
2. After the small talk, what does Paris ask Capulet?
3. What is Capulet’s response in this scene to Paris’s request?
4. How does Romeo find out about the Capulets’ party?
5. Capulet and Benvolio have similar advice for Paris and Romeo, respectively. What is it?
6. What does Romeo think of Benvolio’s advice?

7. In Scenes 1 and 2, Shakespeare is clearly **satirizing** courtly love by making Romeo a **caricature** of the courtly lover. Find one example of how Romeo appears to demonstrate the (annoying and artificial) qualities of a courtly lover.

### **Act 1:3**

1. What does Lady Capulet tell Juliet?
2. Explain in your own words how Juliet reacts to the news her mother tells her. Is she happy? sad? or something else—if so, what?
3. What adjective would you use to describe the Nurse? Explain why.
4. What adjective would you use to describe Lady Capulet? Explain why.

### **Act 1:4 (Also see Queen Mab sheet)**

1. What characters plan to go with Romeo to the Capulet party?
2. What does Romeo say he won't do at the party? Why? Find the pun in lines 14-16.
3. What is Mercutio's attitude toward love? Explain.
4. Romeo brings up a dream he had when he speaks to Mercutio, but we never learn exactly what Romeo's dream was about. Look at Romeo's last lines in this scene and make a guess about what the dream might have been about. Support your answer with evidence.



### **Act 1:5**

1. Motives: Paris is coming to the party to see\_\_\_\_\_  
Romeo is coming to the party to see\_\_\_\_\_.
2. How long does it take Romeo to fall in love with Juliet?
3. In this scene, violence between the Capulets and Montagues threatens to break out again. Who threatens to start the violence? Why?

4. Why does Capulet keep the peace? What does this show about his character?
5. How does Tybalt react to Capulet's scolding? What does he vow to do? (→ This is important foreshadowing!)
6. Re-read the first fourteen lines (l. 104-117) that Romeo and Juliet speak to each other-- from Romeo's first words to their first kiss. What do you notice about the form of this passage?
7. How does Romeo discover Juliet's identity? How does he react to the news?
8. How does Juliet discover Romeo's identity? How does she react to the news?
9. In what ways does this scene join the twin ideas of love and hate that have been carried through this act? (Hint = it's ironic! Ask yourself: who is doing the arguing in this scene, and who is doing the loving?)

### **ACT 2—Prologue**

**Note: Some scholars argue that Shakespeare didn't write this; they believe it was added on after the original script was written by the Bard.**

1. What poetic form is this Prologue? (Hint: Look at the number of lines and the rhyme scheme.)

### **Act 2:1**

1. After Romeo and his friends leave the party, Romeo slips away from his friends. Who does Mercutio assume Romeo is still in love with? Prove this with evidence in Mercutio's crude words.
2. How would you play Mercutio in this scene? What type of mood is he in? Explain.

### **♥Act 2:2 The Balcony Scene♥♥♥♥**

1. At first Romeo sees Juliet on the balcony, but he does not speak. Why not?
2. Why does Romeo finally decide to say something?

3. Paraphrase (line by line) these two parts of Juliet's speech about Romeo:

*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*

*What's in a name? That which we call a rose  
By any other word would smell as sweet'  
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo called  
Retain that dear perfection which he owes  
Without that title.*

4. Juliet is embarrassed that Romeo has overheard how she feels about him, but she decides to give up the typical courtly love game of "playing hard to get." Although she is only 13, she shows herself to be shrewd and knowledgeable about men. How? Give a text cite and explain.

5. Who is the first to suggest marriage?

6. Notice that the scene is set at night.

 What *negative* associations might night have held for Elizabethans? Consider how night might have been different for them than it is for us (who have technology to turn night into day).

Why do night and darkness hold a positive association for the lovers?

Find a line that shows how they understand how darkness helps their meeting.

7. Imagery: Find and list at least four references to celestial bodies and other things that belong in the sky (above us/ not of our world). Who are they used to describe?

→APPLICATION: Notice how all these **heavenly** images contrast sharply with the **very earthy**, crude images in Mercutio's speech in 2.1. This is a clear example of **JUXTPOSITION** of scenes- placing 2 scenes side-by-side for contrast. Do these contrasting views of "love" still exist today? Come up with examples in today's music.

8. Although in earlier scenes Shakespeare satirizes courtly love, in this scene, he seems to define the “real love” of Romeo and Juliet. Find a line in which Juliet shows that her love
- is based on honesty, not games
  - makes her willing to sacrifice anything she has for Romeo
9. ⚡ Why does Juliet compare the evening’s encounter to “lightning” (l. 126)? In what ways does this simile work?

### Act 2:3

1. To whom does Romeo go for help?
2. What is this person doing as the scene opens?
3. In the following lines, Friar Lawrence makes an observation that there is a likeness between men and plants. What is the likeness? Paraphrase his lines:

*Virtue itself turns vice, being misapplied  
And vice sometime by action dignified.*

*Two such opposed kings encamp them still  
In man as well as herbs--grace and rude will;*

4. What does Romeo ask Friar Lawrence?  
Why is Friar Lawrence surprised at this request?

What **satiric comment** about the love of young men does the Friar make?

5. Motivation: Why does Friar Lawrence consent to Romeo’s request?

### Act 2:4

1. 📦 What has been delivered to Romeo’s father’s house for Romeo? (Be specific)

2. Before Romeo arrives, what attitude does Mercutio express about Romeo's and Tybalt's respective fighting abilities in this scene?
3. When Romeo arrives, Mercutio comments on Romeo's change in behavior. How has Romeo changed?

Time for an inference ✎ What is the cause of Romeo's new (and improved) behavior?

4. Whom does Juliet send to Romeo?
5. How would you describe Mercutio in this scene? Explain.
6. What is Romeo's message to Juliet?

**Act 2:5**

1. What is Juliet's mood at the beginning of this scene? Is her attitude believable given her situation?
2. Why does Juliet get annoyed with the Nurse even after the Nurse arrives?



### Act 2:6 Romeo and Juliet's wedding

1. **Dramatic irony** occurs when the audience is aware of a fact that a character isn't. In this way the audience recognizes an ominous implication of the character's words that the character does not recognize. Identify the speaker of these lines and explain how they are an example of dramatic irony:

*Do thou but close our hands with holy words,  
Then love devouring death do what he dare:  
It is enough I may but call her mine.*

2. What difficulties for themselves are Romeo and Juliet creating by their marriage? Does Friar Lawrence have a plan for solving these difficulties?

3. What does Friar Lawrence mean when he says:

*These violent delights have violent ends  
And in their triumph die, like fire and powder,  
Which, as they kiss, consume.*

4.  Is it ever possible to "love moderately" as Friar Lawrence advises Romeo in this scene?



### Act 3:1

1. This scene opens with comedy, but quickly makes a turn towards tragedy. Read Mercutio's comedic and ridiculous descriptions of Benvolio. How does Mercutio describe Benvolio? How are these descriptions the complete opposite of what Benvolio really is?
2. Motivation: What is Romeo's real reason for trying at first to avoid a fight with Tybalt even though Romeo has been insulted?

What might Mercutio assume is "motivating" Romeo to back down? (See Act 2.4, question #2, above.)

3. Paraphrase (line by line) these lines:

*I do protest I never injured thee  
But love thee better than thou canst devise  
Till thou shalt know the reason of my love.  
And so, good Capulet, which name I tender  
As dearly as mine own, be satisfied.*

4. What adjective would you use to describe how Mercutio faces death? Briefly explain.

5. Even as he dies, Mercutio cannot resist the opportunity for a pun. Which word in the following sentence has a double meaning? What are the two meanings?

*“Ask for me tomorrow, and you shall find me a grave man.”*

6. Why does Romeo finally fight Tybalt?

7. Why does Romeo flee after killing Tybalt?

8.  Which character summarizes what has happened to the Prince?

Find at least one passage that shows that this character knows how to use words to move his listeners to sympathize with Romeo's side.

9.  Lady Capulet points out Benvolio's bias, but she is not so accurate herself. Find one (outrageous) factual inaccuracy in her speech to the Prince.

10. What decision does the Prince make regarding Romeo? Is his decision consistent with what he said he was going to do? Explain? What reasons does he have for the decision he makes?

 Write a persuasive paragraph. Did the Prince make the right decision? Take a position: Should Romeo be exonerated, sentenced to death, or banished? Make sure your position is clear in a topic sentence and make sure that you have at least three reasons that are clearly explained for your position. All references to text should be cited in MLA format.

## Act 3:2

1. What is Juliet looking forward to as the scene opens?

2. **Daytime/ Nighttime Revisited:** What is Juliet's attitude toward daytime in her opening speech?



List three destructive/ negative events that have occurred during the day so far in the play?



What two key positive events for the lovers have occurred in nighttime so far?



Given the fact that Romeo and Juliet's "right time" is the "nighttime," what images does each use to describe the other as his/her light in the darkness? (Romeo's description of Juliet is in 1.5 and 2.2; Juliet's description of Romeo is in this scene.)

3. When the Nurse says, "He's killed. He's killed," what assumption does Juliet make?

4. Who does Juliet describe in this line, and what is her meaning: "O serpent heart, hid within a flowering face! Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave?"

Write three other contrasts (oxymorons or antithesis) Juliet uses to describe this same character in this same speech.

5. When the Nurse begins to criticize Romeo, how does Juliet react?

6. Is Juliet's change of attitude believable? Explain briefly.

7. By the end of the scene, what is Juliet's plan for the night?

8. Shakespeare couldn't stop himself! 🗨️ What play on words (CCW alert) opens and closes this scene?

### **Act 3:3**

1. Consider the contrast we find in this scene in the reactions and behavior of Romeo and the Friar.

#### **Consider Romeo:**

- a. How does Romeo react upon hearing the Prince's sentence?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- b. What views does he have of the future?

#### **Consider the Friar:**

- a. What is his reaction to the Prince's sentence?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- b. How does he react to Romeo's behavior?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- c. What plan does he suggest to Romeo?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- d. Evaluate the Friar's advice so far? Is he a responsible advisor?

2. Now consider **Juliet's reaction** in Scene 3.2. How are 3.2 and 3.3 examples of **juxtaposition**?

### **Act 3:4**

1. In Shakespeare's day, a daughter was expected to obey her father without question. Keeping in mind that Capulet knows nothing about Juliet's love for Romeo, is Capulet unreasonable in arranging a marriage between Juliet and Paris at this point? Explain.

2. When is the marriage to take place?

### Act 3: 5

1. Where is Romeo, and what does he mean when he says, “ I must be gone and live or stay and die”?

2. What reasons does the Nurse give when she advises Juliet to marry Paris?

Could the Nurse be protecting herself? Explain.

What does her advice reveal about her character and her attitude about love?

3. In this scene we see Juliet deserted by all those people she has always relied on. She moans self-pityingly: “That heaven should practice stratagems upon so soft a subject as myself.” What does she mean by this?

What evidence is there in the play so far that Juliet is not “so soft a subject” as she thinks she is?

5. ↪ Review what has happened in Act 3, **the climax** (turning point or point of greatest emotional intensity) of the play. List at least three important events that make this the **climax**.

### Act 4:1

1. Why does Paris go to talk with Friar Lawrence?

2. Why does Paris think Juliet is so depressed? What is the actual reason for her depression?

3. Why does Lord Capulet want to rush the marriage of Juliet and Paris? Paraphrase these lines (line by line) to find the answer?

*Now sir, her father counts it dangerous  
That she do give her sorrow so much sway,  
And in his wisdom hastes our marriage,  
To stop the inundation of her tears  
Which, too much minded by herself alone,  
May be put from her by society.*

4. What is Friar Lawrence's solution to Juliet's problem?

Is it practical? Evaluate its risks and chances for success?

How is the Friar himself threatened by Paris's request and Juliet's news of her father's plans for her marriage?

5. Have we been prepared for Juliet's ready acceptance of this plan? Give examples of Juliet's rashness (*tendency to rush to act without careful consideration*) from earlier in the play.

#### **Act 4:2**

1. What decision does Lord Capulet make about the wedding date? See lines 24-25.

#### **Act 4: 3**

1. Juliet's soliloquy (4.3.15-60) is full of **imagery**.

 Find an image that appeals to the sense of hearing.

Find an image that appeals to the sense of smell.

 Find an image that appeals to the sense of touch

 Find a visual image.

2. Before she drinks the potion, Juliet imagines at least three possible outcomes when she drinks the potion. What are they?

4. As you read Juliet's **soliloquy** from beginning to end, how does Juliet's grip on reality change?
- Does this speech echo another speech where the character moved from "in control" to almost hysterical?

**Act 4:4**

1. In their friskiness, the Nurse and Juliet's parents engage in some name-calling. List three insults that are exchanged.
2. Who arrives at the end of this scene, and what sounds signal his arrival?

**Act 4:5**

1. Paraphrase (line by line) Capulet's lines about death:

*Death is my son-in law; death is my heir  
My daughter he hath wedded. I will die  
And leave him all. Life, living, all is death's*

What type of literary device is used here? Explain.

2. Identify the literary device that is used in the following lines + explain:

*All things that we ordained festival  
Turn from their office to black funeral  
Our instruments to melancholy bells  
Our wedding cheer to a sad burial feast*

3. The end of this scene with Peter and the musicians seems to be for comic relief. What is the purpose of **comic relief**?

**Act 5:1**

1. Where is Romeo, and what is his mood at the beginning of this scene? Explain.
2. Romeo mentions a dream in this scene. Contrast this dream with the dream he mentions in 1. 4.

3. Explain the **irony** of Romeo's indifferent comment, "No matter," when Balthasar tells him he has brought no letter from Friar Lawrence. What type of irony is this and why?

4. What is an apothecary?

5. ☠️ What argument does Romeo use in persuading the apothecary to sell him a dram of poison even though such a sale is against the law?

7. What social commentary about wealth ( money or gold) is being made by Romeo (or Shakespeare) in the following words?

*There is thy gold, worse poison to men's souls,  
Doing more murder in this loathsome world  
Than these poor compounds that thou mayst not sell  
I sell thee poison; thou hast sold me none.*

**Act 5:2** ⌚

1. Why has Friar John been unable to deliver Friar Lawrence's letter to Romeo?

2. What last minute adjustment in plans does Friar Lawrence have to make?

**Act 5:3**

1. At the beginning of the scene, what is Paris doing in the graveyard? What does this show about Paris? Has it changed your feelings about him? Explain.

2. Motivation: Why does Paris attack Romeo?

3. What request does Paris make of Romeo as he is dying? Does Romeo honor this request?

4. Romeo pauses for a rather long speech before taking the poison. How does this speech create tension? What do we hope will happen?

5. What two tragic discoveries does Friar Lawrence make when he enters the tomb?

6. What does the Friar urge Juliet to do when she awakens?

7. *Motivation*: Why does the Friar leave the tomb without Juliet?

9. How does Juliet first attempt to end her life and “join” her husband?

10. How does Juliet actually end her life?

11. Every cloud has a silver lining! The Capulet-Montague feud is finally resolved!  
What is responsible for the reconciliation of the two warring families?

Explain the **irony** in the Prince’s comment that “heaven finds a means to kill your joys with love”?

What is the Prince referring to when he notes that he has lost a “brace of kinsmen”?

What do Montague and Capulet agree to do to memorialize each other’s child?

13. We find out that another character has died. Who is it? How did the character die?

14. How many deaths have occurred in the play among named characters? How many in each family?

 15. Why is it appropriate for the Prince to speak the last words in the play? What might this suggest in terms of symbolism and resolution of the conflict?



### ✂ Who Killed Juliet?

In Romeo and Juliet, the actions, inactions, reactions, and advice of many characters combine to create the situation in which Juliet finds herself when she decides to take her own life. Take each character below and list one “if only” (an action, inaction, or suggestion) by that character that contributed to the chain of events that ended in Juliet’s death.

*Example: **Romeo** --- If only he had paid attention to the clues (red lips and cheeks) that indicated that Juliet wasn’t actually dead, or if only he wasn’t so rash and eager to kill himself, Juliet wouldn’t have had a reason to commit suicide.*

**Nurse**

**Friar Lawrence**

**Friar John**

**Lord Capulet**

**Lady Capulet**

**Balthasar**

**Paris**

**Mercutio**

**Tybalt**

**Prince**

**Apothecary**

**Benvolio**

**Gregory and Sampson**

**Bonus:** Can you find any evidence *within the play* that Shakespeare wants us to believe that **Fate** (destiny) is actually responsible?