

# Romeo and Juliet

## Act One (study guide)

### Literary Devices You Need to Know

1. pun
2. metaphor/simile
3. dramatic irony
4. situational irony
5. conflict (internal and external)
6. foreshadowing
7. iambic pentameter
8. soliloquy
9. oxymoron
10. allusion (*not illusion*)

### My Introduction with Research Focus on Marriage and Writing Tasks

This play is about two feuding families and the two children from opposite sides who fall in love with each other. Romeo is 14 and Juliet is 13. They actually marry each other, too. Was this normal? It was only normal among the lower classes. The upper classes lived longer and were rich enough to support their adult children.

1. Is early marriage normal? Check out this article:

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/200000-children-married-us-15-years-child-marriage-child-brides-new-jersey-chris-christie-a7830266.html>. What is your opinion of this?

2. Shakespeare portrays Italy as a barbaric country where even the upper class thought it was normal and acceptable for children to marry and become pregnant *before they turned 13*. However, during Shakespeare's career, he served King James I. Read the following and explain why it is ironic:

Throughout his youth, James was praised for his chastity, since he showed little interest in women. After the loss of Lennox, he continued to prefer male company.<sup>[39]</sup> A suitable marriage, however, was necessary to reinforce his monarchy, and the choice fell on fourteen-year-old Anne of Denmark, younger daughter of Protestant Frederick II. The couple were married formally at the Bishop's Palace in Oslo on 23.

3. Paris is an older man who's supposed to marry Juliet. Her parents arrange this marriage. What is your opinion of arranged marriages? Please read this article and comment:

<http://www.indiamarks.com/the-culture-arranged-marriages-india/>

4. Juliet is willing to die for Romeo, and Romeo is willing to break laws, risk his life and kill others for Juliet. I think this isn't love; this is a mental disease. Try to explain how someone should behave if their love is healthy form of love.

## COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

### Prologue

Why would a Hollywood movie never start with a prologue like this? Explain using the word "spoiler."

### ACT ONE -SCENE ONE

1. Between what two families does the feud exist? What are the servants arguing about?
2. Why does Shakespeare make the servants so foul-mouthed and bellicose/belligerent/fractious/aggressive?
3. What decree does the Prince make after the street brawl? Is it a good way to ensure future peace? Why or why not?
4. Identify at least three ways in which Montague seems like a fool.
5. What advice does Benvolio give Romeo about Rosaline? Is it good advice?
6. Exactly what did Romeo want from Rosaline? How does this portray Italian men/boys?

### ACT ONE -SCENE TWO

1. How does Capulet respond to Paris' proposal to marry Juliet? Does Capulet speak to her about it? Should he?
2. How do Romeo and Benvolio learn about the Capulet's ball? What do they decide to do? Is it a wise decision?
3. What mistake did Romeo make while standing beside Tybalt?

### ACT ONE - SCENE THREE

1. How does Juliet feel about getting married to Paris? Is her feeling rational?
2. How old is Juliet? What does Romeo probably want from her?
3. Why does Shakespeare portray old Capulet as someone who can't remember the past very clearly?

### ACT ONE - SCENE FOUR

1. Explain Romeo's speech. Discuss why it doesn't sound very Christian?
2. What does Romeo like about Juliet? What stereotype about Italian men does this reflect?

### ACT ONE - SCENE FIVE

1. Discuss the heretical (unChristian) metaphors and language in Romeo and Juliet's words (lines 91-108). Why is it inappropriate for them to use religious language?
2. Who is Romeo talking about in lines 46-55? Explain the irony in these lines.
3. Why does Tybalt become so upset, and how does Capulet respond to his rage? How does this show that Capulet and Tybalt are both idiots?
4. Who said the following lines?
  - A) "is she a Capulet? O dear account, my life is my foe's debt."
  - B) "My only love sprung from my only hate. Too early seen unknown and known too late."

Why? And, why are these lines evidence of foolishness?

5. Find one example of each of the following literary devices used anywhere in Act One.

1. Pun	6. Hyperbole
2. Alliteration	7. Irony
3. Oxymoron	8. Comic Relief
4. Allusion	9. Foreshadow
5. Metaphor	10. Personification

## Romeo and Juliet

### Act Two (study guide)

Explain the Prologue.

#### **ACT TWO - SCENE ONE:**

1. Explain the dramatic irony in this scene.
2. What's rude and vulgar about Mercutio?

#### **ACT TWO - SCENE TWO:**

(This is the most famous scene in the entire play.)

1. Discuss some of the hyperbole spoken by Romeo and Juliet.
2. Comment on Romeo's use of the word "merchandise" in line 83.

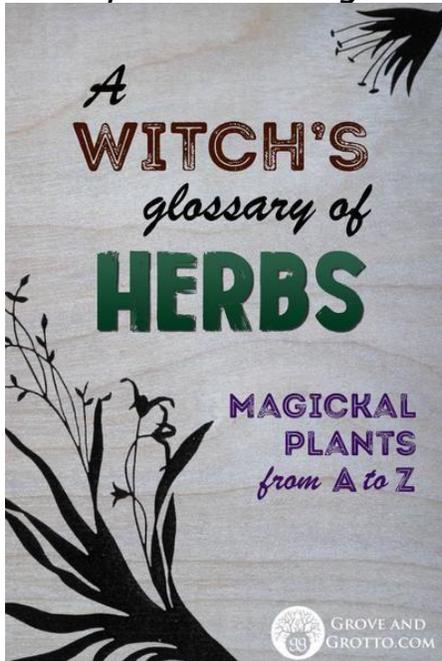
3. Find dramatic irony in this scene.

5. After Romeo and Juliet vow their love for one another, what do they decide to do and when?

### ACT TWO - SCENE THREE

1. Discuss evidence that Friar Laurence acts and talks like witch, aa pagan, or nature worshipper, instead of life a Catholic priest. See pictures below for help.

2. Why does Romeo go to see Friar Laurence? Is this the right reason to



visit a religious

man? What is Shakespeare telling us?

3. How does Friar Laurence respond to Romeo's request?

4. What does Friar Laurence's consenting to Romeo's request show us about his religion or holiness?

5. What is strange about the friar's way of talking and thinking? How would you expect a Christian priest to speak about nature? How does he behave like a wizard or a witch?

6. The Nurse and the Friar are both encouraging young children to do something without parental consent. Express your opinion about this and the following parallel: <https://www.wikihow.com/Get-Vaccinated-Without-Parental-Consent>

### **ACT TWO - SCENE FOUR**

1. For whom is the nurse looking and why?
2. What warning does she give Romeo (143-151)? Is the Nurse being a responsible Christian and servant of the Capulets?

### **ACT TWO - SCENE FIVE**

1. Juliet is waiting very impatiently for the nurse's return. Why does she become so irritated when the nurse does return?
2. Why doesn't the nurse get to the point more quickly?

### **ACT TWO - SCENE SIX**

Romeo and Juliet are married in Friar Laurence's cell. How does this scene foreshadow future events?

General - Find one example in Act Two of each of the following literary devices:

1. Conceit	6. Simile
2. Personification	7. Dramatic Irony
3. Hyperbole	8. Paradox
4. Pun	9. Apostrophe

5. Metaphor	10. Allusion
	11. Oxymoron

## Romeo and Juliet

### Act Three (study guide)

#### ACT THREE - SCENE ONE

1. Tybalt, still enraged at Romeo's intrusion at the Capulet's ball, is determined to fight, but Romeo refuses. Why?
2. How does Mercutio get involved, and what happens to him?
3. Identify Mercutio's use of understatement (a form of irony).
4. Explain why the Prince's judgement is an extremely poor, subjective or biased one in addition to being unfair as well as inconsistent with his earlier warning.
5. Explain how this scene serves as the climax or turning point of the drama. (Think of all that has happened between Romeo and Juliet so far.)

#### ACT THREE - SCENE TWO

1. Comment on Juliet's soliloquy (lines 1-31). What was Shakespeare telling us about Italians?
2. Explain the dramatic irony in the beginning of this scene.
3. How does Juliet react to the nurse's news?
4. What does Juliet plan to do with the cords? (See lines 132-137)

5. How does the nurse console her? Explain what the nurse should have done instead.

### **ACT THREE - SCENE THREE**

1. How does Romeo react to the news of his banishment?
2. Read Friar Laurence's speech (lines 108-154) and rewrite it in the way you think a priest should or would have spoken to a youth like Romeo.

### **ACT THREE - SCENE FOUR**

1. How does the action in this scene complicate matters even further?
2. How does Capulet's attitude now differ from his attitude when Paris first came to ask for Juliet's hand in marriage?
3. Explain the dramatic irony in this scene.

### **ACT THREE - SCENE FIVE**

Day breaks, and the two lovers must part after consummating their wedding vows. Juliet is very reluctant to have Romeo leave her and does not want to admit that it is morning. Finally Romeo leaves and Juliet's mother comes to her chamber. Their conversation about Tybalt's death has Juliet speaking in ambiguous terms.

1. Explain the paradoxical phrases in lines 94-103.
2. How does Capulet react to Juliet's refusal to marry Paris?
3. What advice does the nurse give Juliet?
4. What does Juliet decide to do?

5. Find one example in act three of each of the following literary devices:

1. Allusion	6. Simile
2. Apostrophe	7. Oxymoron
3. Conceit	8. Metonymy
4. Personification	9. Pun
5. Foreshadow	10. Irony

## Romeo and Juliet

### Act Four (study guide)

#### ACT FOUR - SCENE ONE

Someone wrote, "Juliet is no longer the obedient child. The events of the past few days have caused her to mature. With no hope of help from her mother or the nurse she is now taking matters into her own hands." Do you agree? What points could you use to disagree?

#### ACT FOUR - SCENE TWO

1. What day is it now?
2. Juliet is so convincing in her deception that her father decides to move the wedding day up from Thursday to Wednesday. What complication (problem) does this change foreshadow?
3. Find the irony in this scene.

### **ACT FOUR - SCENE THREE**

1. Summarize Juliet's soliloquy (lines 14-58)
2. List Juliet's fears as she is about to drink the potion.
  - A.
  - B.
  - C.
  - D.
  - E.

### **ACT FOUR - SCENE FOUR**

The Capulets are busy preparing for Juliet's wedding. The Nurse is told to wake Juliet up and get her ready.

### **ACT FOUR - SCENE FIVE**

1. Why is it appropriate for the Nurse to find the dead body first?
2. What reversal of fortune do we have?
  3. a. Explain the dramatic irony in Friar Laurence's speech (lines 67-86).
  - 3.b. Explain why his speech is very unchristian.

## **Romeo and Juliet**

### Act Five (study guide)

## ACT FIVE - SCENE ONE

1. How does Romeo's dream, which he describes in his opening speech, compare with the news brought to him by Balthasar?
2. How does Romeo convince the apothecary to sell him poison? Is it a good argument? A Christian argument?
3. What does he plan to do with the poison?

## ACT FIVE - SCENE TWO

1. Explain the conversation between Friar Laurence and Friar John.
2. What does Friar Laurence now plan to do?

## ACT FIVE - SCENE THREE

1. Why does Paris come to Juliet's burial place?
2. What happens when Romeo and Paris meet?
3. Romeo enters the tomb and sees Juliet. He takes the poison, and no sooner does Romeo die, than Friar Laurence comes along - but too late.

## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN JULIET WAKES UP?

4. Friar Laurence's speech is a self-confession and absolution. (lines 229-269). Write a short accusation listing his sins and mistakes and finish with a criminal sentence.
5. Describe the conclusion of the drama and explain how poetic Justice operates in the play. Is the ending convincing and realistic? Would you behave the same way if your child was dead?

6. What is Romeo and Juliet's tragic flaw? How does it lead to their destruction?

### GENERAL

The entire course of action in this drama took place within five days.

### **Essay Theses and Topics:**

Italians have no law and no control over their language, anger, lust, children, aristocrats, church, priests and servants.

Roman Catholic Italians are terrible parents, Christians and citizens.