

Romeo and Juliet: Theme Workbook



Major Themes: *Romeo and Juliet*

The idea the writer wishes to convey about the subject—the writer’s view of the world or a revelation about human nature.

Utilizing the table below:

1. Identify a pervading idea for each Act within *Romeo and Juliet*
(i.e. Provide a few short sentences to demonstrate what Shakespeare is saying)
2. Include evidence to support your theme statement (Quotes from text)
3. Connect your theme to the adaptation discussed in class.

Utilize the box below to guide your thinking

Common topics identified within *Romeo and Juliet*

The Nature of Free Will - Honour and Obligation - The Naivety of Youth - The Power of Love and Hate
Violence and Death - Gender Roles - Revenge - The Multiplicity of Identity

An example of evidence used from text and an appropriate citation 📌

JULIET:

“Tis but thy name that is my enemy; Thou art thyself, though not a Montague. What’s Montague? ...O, be some other name! What’s in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet; So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call’s, retain that dear perfection which he owes without that title.”

(*Romeo and Juliet*, Act-II, Scene-ii, Lines 38-49)

Track Your Understanding:

ACT I	Explanation
Evidence from text	<p>ROMEO:</p> <p>“O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright! It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night; Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop’s ear; Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear! So shows a snowy dove trooping with crows; As yonder lady o’er her fellows shows. The measure done, I’ll watch her place of stand; And, touching hers, make blessed my rude hand. Did my heart love till now? Forswear it, sight! For I ne’er saw true beauty till this night.”</p> <p><i>(Romeo and Juliet, Act I, Scene v, Lines 42-51)</i></p>
1. Topic Revealed 2. Idea writer wishes to convey	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The Naivety of Youth2. In this scene we see Romeo quickly fall in love with Juliet on first sight. He describes her beauty and his love for her by thinking “O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright! It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night; Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop’s ear; Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear! So shows a snowy dove trooping with crows; As yonder lady o’er her fellows shows. The measure done, I’ll watch her place of stand; And, touching hers, make blessed my rude hand.” He then goes on to question “Did my heart love till now? Forswear it, sight! For I ne’er saw true beauty till this night.” He had just earlier been in love with another girl but quickly fell for Juliet and he wonders if his heart had really loved the other girl as she seemed to insignificant compared to Juliet. This shows the theme of Nativity of the Youth and how they very quickly fall in and out of love, even within minutes of meeting someone.
Connection to Adaptation	<p>We can see this theme of love at first sight in Gnomeo and Juliet. When Gnomeo and Juliet meet for the first time on the greenhouse roof, both in disguise, attempting to get the flower for their gardens. Within a few minutes of trying to get the flower from each other they had both fallen in love. Gnomeo sneaks into the Reds’ garden to arrange a date with Juliet. They then meet the next day in a neutral garden and have a blast. We again see the theme of youth naivety in the speed in which Gnomeo and Juliet fall in love and the danger they put themselves into to see each other.</p>

ACT II	Explanation
Evidence from text	<p>1. JULIET: "Tis but thy name that is my enemy; Thou art thyself, though not a Montague. What's Montague? ...O, be some other name! What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet; So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call's, retain that dear perfection which he owes without that title." <i>(Romeo and Juliet, Act-II, Scene-ii, Lines 38-49)</i> — — — —</p> <p>2. JULIET: "Well, do not swear. Although I joy in thee, I have no joy of this contract tonight. It is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden; Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be 120; Ere one can say "It lightens." Sweet, good night! This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath, May prove a beauteous flow'r when next we meet. Good night, good night! As sweet repose and rest; Come to thy heart as that within my breast!" <i>(Romeo and Juliet, Act-II, Scene-ii, Lines 117-124)</i></p>
<p>1. Topic Revealed 2. Idea writer wishes to convey</p>	<p>1. Power of Love 2. Q1: Shakespeare writes about how love can motivate people to overlook long going conflicts and hatred to be with someone who is an enemy. Juliet questions "<i>What's Montague? ...O, be some other name! What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet</i>" by which she means does a name really matters and whether it defines a person. Q2: Juliet tells Romeo "<i>Although I joy in thee, I have no joy of this contract tonight. It is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden</i>" this shows that she thinks that although she enjoys the idea of getting married and being with him, she thinks the marriage is too hasty and that they should slow down and think it through more thoroughly before committing.</p>
Connection to Adaptation	<p>In <i>Warm Bodies</i>, we see the adaption of this scene when R gets past the wall and comes to Julies house. When he arrives Julie is on the balcony missing him. In <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>, Juliet says: "<i>How camest thou hither, tell me, and wherefore? The orchard walls are high and hard to climb, And the place death, considering who thou art, If any of my kinsmen find thee here... If they do see thee, they will murder thee.</i>" In <i>Warm Bodies</i> Julie says to R "<i>What you are doing here? ... It's dangerous. Jesus, R! Are you crazy? The people here are not like me. If you see, you will be killed. You understand that?</i>" In both these scenes we can see how Juliet/Julie try to convince Romeo/R that them being there is too dangerous and they will get killed.</p> <p>In this scene of <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>, Romeo won't leave and keeps trying to convince Juliet that they should get married. In <i>Gnomeo and Juliet</i> the adaptation of this scene is when Gnomeo and Juliet are attempting to kiss through the fence and Gnomeo instead of sticking around like in <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>, he quite literally gets stuck in the fence and is unable to leave.</p>

ACT III	Explanation
Evidence from text	<p>CAPULET: Hang thee, young baggage! disobedient wretch! I tell thee what— get thee to church a Thursday; Or never after look me in the face. Speak not, reply not, do not answer me! My fingers itch. Wife, we scarce thought us blest; That God had lent us but this only child; But now I see this one is one too much, And that we have a curse in having her. Out on her, hilding!</p> <p><i>(Romeo and Juliet, Act-III, Scene-V, Lines 160-168)</i></p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Topic Revealed 2. Idea writer wishes to convey 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gender Roles 2. As Capulet rages insults at Juliet, he states <i>“Hang thee, young baggage! disobedient wretch! I tell thee what—get thee to church a Thursday.”</i> This shows how he is angered by her disobedience and orders her to go the the church on Thursday to marry Paris. This reveals the gender roles that girls were expected to do exactly as their fathers told them, including marrying the person of their choosing regardless if they loved them or not. It also revels how angry her father became as he was not used to being disobeyed and thinks that perhaps <i>“Wife, we scarce thought us blest; That God had lent us but this only child; But now I see this one is one too much, And that we have a curse in having her.”</i>
Connection to Adaptation	<p>We can see the theme of controlling fathers in both <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> and <i>Gnomeo and Juliet</i>. In <i>Gnomeo and Juliet</i>, Juliet’s father (Capulet) keeps her on a pedestal in the garden and becomes angry when she tries to leave the pedestal to get a flower for their garden. It is here that she meets Gnomeo. She then hears Tybalt and when he sees her he says <i>“Juliet. You're not allowed off your pedestal. What are you doing out in the alley?”</i> He along with Lord Redbrick (Juliet’s father) would be horrified if they knew she had just spent time with a blue (red and blue represented the two feuding families).</p>

ACT IV	Explanation
Evidence from text	<p>JULIET:</p> <p>Unless thou tell me how I may prevent it. If in thy wisdom thou canst give no help, Do thou but call my resolution wise; And with this knife I'll help it presently. God joined my heart and Romeo's, thou our hands; And ere this hand, by thee to Romeo's sealed, Shall be the label to another deed, Or my true heart with treacherous revolt; Turn to another, this shall slay them both. Therefore, out of thy long-experienced time, Give me some present counsel; or, behold, 'Twixt my extremes and me this bloody knife; Shall play the umpire, arbitrating that; Which the commission of thy years and art; Could to no issue of true honor bring. Be not so long to speak. I long to die; If what thou speakst speak not of remedy.</p> <p><i>(Romeo and Juliet, Act-IV, Scene-i, Lines 50-67)</i></p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Topic Revealed 2. Idea writer wishes to convey 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Honour and Obligation 2. In this scene, Juliet gives Friar Lawrence the ultimatum <i>"Unless thou tell me how I may prevent it. If in thy wisdom thou canst give no help, Do thou but call my resolution wise; And with this knife I'll help it presently."</i> She says that unless he can provide her with a way to avoid marrying Paris so she can be with Romeo (<i>"God joined my heart and Romeo's, thou our hands; And ere this hand, by thee to Romeo's sealed"</i>) she will kill herself. She goes on to say <i>"'Twixt my extremes and me this bloody knife; Shall play the umpire, arbitrating that; Which the commission of thy years and art; Could to no issue of true honor bring. Be not so long to speak. I long to die."</i> This suggests that she doesn't want to have to marry Paris but she is expected to meet a certain level of honour and obligation to her father. She feels that best way to escape this obligation to her father and Paris is death since she can't be with Romeo.
Connection to Adaptation	<p>In <i>Warm Bodies</i> we can see how R's zombie friend takes the role of Friar Lawrence. When Julie and R are trying to escape the Skeletons, he pulls up in an airport luggage vehicle and helps to delay the skeletons so they have time to run. Similarly in <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>, Friar Lawrence helps Romeo and Juliet in the form of guidance (although his motives were more to unite the two feuding families than the wellbeing of Romeo and Juliet) and providing the idea and potion for Juliet to go into a deep sleep with.</p>

ACT V	Explanation
Evidence from text	<p>PRINCE: This letter doth make good the friar's words, Their course of love, the tidings of her death; And here he writes that he did buy a poison; Of a poor 'pothecary, and therewithal; Came to this vault to die and lie with Juliet. Where be these enemies? Capulet, Montague, See what a scourge is laid upon your hate, That heaven finds means to kill your joys with love! And I, for winking at your discords too; Have lost a brace of kinsmen. All are punished.</p> <p><i>(Romeo and Juliet, Act-V, Scene-iii, Lines 286-295)</i></p> <p>...</p> <p>PRINCE - CONTINUED: glooming peace this morning with it brings. The sun for sorrow will not show his head. Go hence, to have more talk of these sad things; Some shall be pardoned, and some punished; For never was a story of more woe; Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.</p> <p><i>(Romeo and Juliet, Act-V, Scene-iii, Lines 305-310)</i></p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Topic Revealed 2. Idea writer wishes to convey 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Violence and Death 2. The prince states <i>“Capulet, Montague, See what a scourge is laid upon your hate, That heaven finds means to kill your joys with love! And I, for winking at your discords too; Have lost a brace of kinsmen. All are punished.”</i> By this he is saying how the Capulet and Montague conflict that has resulted in so many deaths of loved ones and the Prince has also lost many kinsmen to the violence the Capulets' and Montagues' have against each other. This violence ultimately resulted in the death of their children, as the Prince tells in this concluding line of the play <i>“glooming peace this morning with it brings. The sun for sorrow will not show his head. Go hence, to have more talk of these sad things; Some shall be pardoned, and some punished; For never was a story of more woe; Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.”</i>
Connection to Adaptation	<p>We see this theme of Violence and Death very prominently in West Side story. Throughout the movie there are fights between the Jets and Sharks, the two rival New York street gangs. When Tony sees Maria (the sister of the rival gang member) they fall in love instantly. Later in the story, Tony and Maria are planning on running away. Unfortunately in an alteration, a message is changed to say that Maria has been shot. We see this same issue of mixed messages in Romeo and Juliet when Romeo doesn't receive the message that Juliet is only in a very deep sleep and not actually dead. When Tony get the false news that Maria has been shot, he is heartbroken and begins shouting for Chino to kill him too. Maria suddenly appears, but as they run towards each other Chino shoots Tony and he falls mortally wounded, into Maria's arms. This connects to Romeo and Juliet, when Romeo kills himself because he thinks that Juliet has died. In a way Tony killed himself by shouting for Chino to come kill him too. Had he not done so Chino may not have known his whereabouts and have been unable to kill him. Although Maria does not die (unlike Juliet) she questions Chino if there are enough bullets left in the gun to them and herself, but is stopped when the Police arrive.</p>

