

Romeo and Juliet

GCSE English · Follows the national curriculum

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

1. Worked example

Analyse the Prologue's opening lines.

Step 1 · Form

A sonnet, the classic form of love poetry, used to introduce a tragedy.

Step 2 · Language

'civil blood makes civil hands unclean': repetition of 'civil' shows citizens killing citizens.

Step 3 · Fate

'star-cross'd lovers' and 'fatal loins' suggest destiny.

Step 4 · Effect

Love and death are fused from the start; the audience watches with dread.

Answer: The Prologue frames the story a love poem and a tragedy foretold.

Check: Form, language and effect all covered.

2. Now try one with the steps

Compare Romeo's language about Rosaline and Juliet.

Step 1 · Rosaline (1.1)

Step 2 · Juliet (1.5, 2.2)

Step 3 · Difference

Answer:

3. Practice

Show your working. The marks tell you how much is expected.

1. In which city is the play set? [1]

2. How old is Juliet at the start of the play? Write the number. [1]

3. Who does Romeo love before he meets Juliet? [1]

4. Who kills Mercutio? [1]
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5. To which city is Romeo banished? [1]
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6. What poetic form are the Prologue and the lovers' first conversation written in? [1]
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7. Explain the meaning of 'star-cross'd lovers'. [2]
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8. Why is Mercutio's line 'A plague o' both your houses!' important? [2]
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9. How does the Nurse's advice in Act 3 Scene 5 affect Juliet? [2]
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10. Analyse 'It is the east, and Juliet is the sun' (2.2). [3]
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11. How does Shakespeare use time to create tension? [2]
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12. Give one way Juliet changes across the play, with evidence. [2]
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13. Write a thesis for: 'How does Shakespeare present conflict in Romeo and Juliet?' [2]
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14. Explain why 'These violent delights have violent ends' (2.6) is dramatically ironic. [2]
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4. Before you hand it in

Treating it simple love story.

Link love to conflict and time in every theme essay.

Calling the lovers 'stupid' or 'just teenagers'.

Write about how Shakespeare presents their impulsiveness and why.

Ignoring minor characters.

Use them for theme and structure (e.g. Mercutio's death turning point).

Assuming fate explains everything.

Weigh fate against human decisions and haste.