



Cardinal Newman
CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Year 10

English

*Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet
Knowledge Book for Assessments*

2017-2018

Instructions:



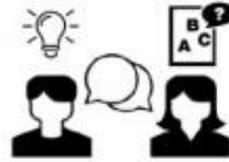
Plan ahead



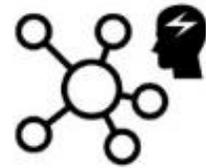
Use technology wisely



Use post-its



Test each other



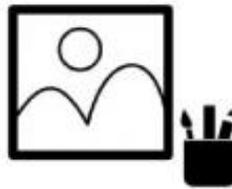
Draw mind maps



Draw pictures and diagrams



Use colours and highlighters



Make posters



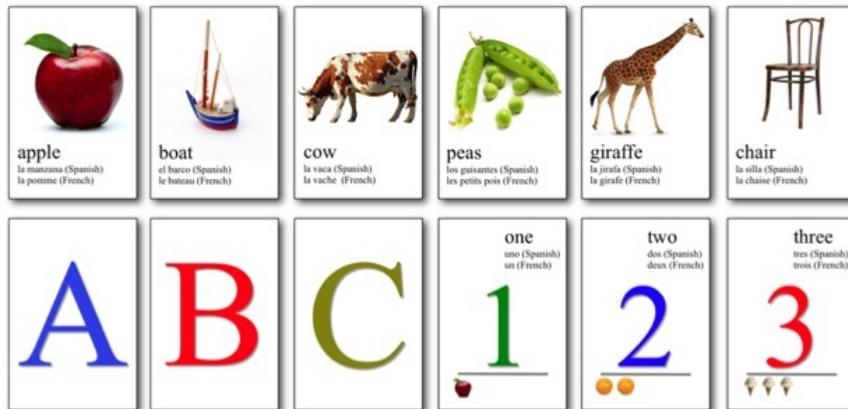
Focus on keywords



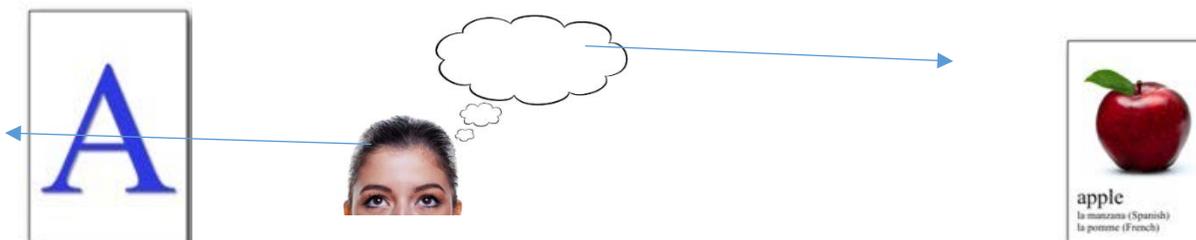
Create index cards

Use the support information in this booklet and your exercise books to make revision materials. Below are some more detailed explanations of how to create effective revision cards and mind maps...

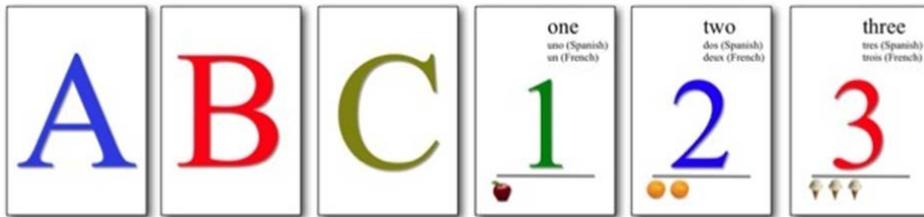
Revision Cards: If you are making cards put a heading for the card on one side and the information that you want to remember on the other side.



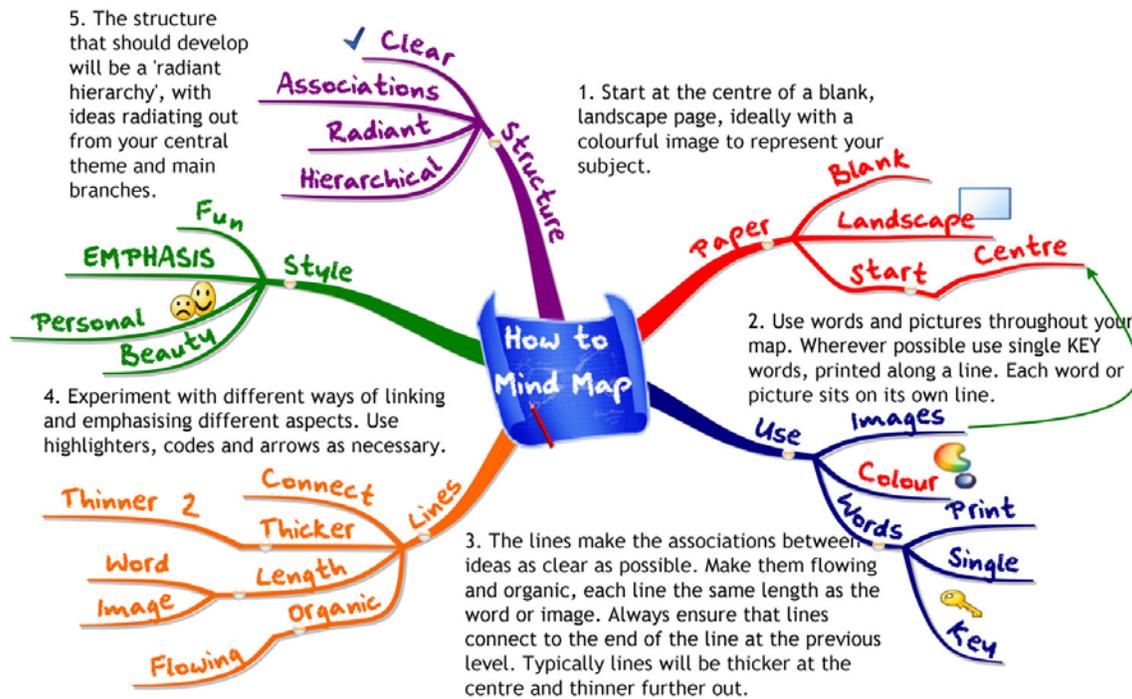
Once you have read through a card, turn it over and try to remember the information from memory.



Eventually revise by just looking at the card titles and trying to recall the information without looking!



Mind-map: Make a mind-map for the topic that breaks the topic down into “spurs” and “sub-spurs” working out from the middle. You could focus on a specific character or theme, or look at a specific Act or chapter.



1. Once you have studied the mind map put it away and try to draw it again from memory.
2. Once you have drawn all that you can take the original mind map out again and add any details that you missed out on the map that you drew from memory.
3. Repeat this process until you can produce it perfectly from memory.

Key Skills

The assessments in English are broken into 3 and each one requires different reading and writing skills.

Romeo and Juliet with be used for Assessment 3:

Format: Question comparing extract (provided) to text as a whole – 1 hour – Closed book

(Based on Literature: Paper I, Section A)

This assessment will be combined with Assessment 2 that was done earlier in the year to give the students an overall grade for Paper I for Literature and from this a predicted level they are currently working at in this subject.

Glossary of Literary Terms

You should be familiar with most of these terms and be able to use them in your discussions about English language or literature.

Make sure you note down any new terms that you come across during your study. It would be useful to create your own glossary. One way of doing this is by buying an address book with A-Z sections, then you can record the terms alphabetically to make referencing them easy!

Alliteration	The repetition of the same consonant sound, especially at the beginning of words
Allusion	A reference to another event, person, place or work of literature. The allusion is usually implied rather than explicit and provides another layer of meaning to what is being said
Ambiguity	Use of language where the meaning is unclear or has two or more possible meanings or interpretations. It could be created by a weakness in the writer's expression, but it is more likely it is a deliberate device used by the writer to create layers of meaning
Anthropomorphism	The endowment of human characteristics to something that is not human
Assonance	The repetition of similar vowel sounds
Atmosphere	The prevailing mood created by a piece of writing
Colloquial	Ordinary, everyday speech and language
Connotation	An implication or association attached to a word or phrase. It is suggested or felt rather than being explicit
Diction	The choice of words a writer uses. Another word for "vocabulary"
Empathy	A feeling on the part of the reader of sharing the particular experience being described by the character or writer
End stopping	A verse line with a pause or stop at the end of it
Enjambment	A line of verse that flows on into the next line without a pause
Figurative language	Language that is symbolic or metaphorical and not meant to be taken literally
Genre	A particular type of writing – e.g. prose, poetry, drama
Imagery	The use of words to create a picture or "image" in the mind of the reader. Images can relate to any of the senses, not just sight
Internal rhyme	Rhyming words within a line rather than at the end of lines
Irony	At its simplest level, it means saying one thing while meaning another. It occurs where a word or phrase has one surface meaning but another contradictory, possibly opposite meaning is implied. Irony is often confused with sarcasm. Sarcasm is spoken, relying on the tone of voice and is much more blunt than irony
Metaphor	A comparison of one thing to another to make the description more vivid. The metaphor actually states that one thing is another.

Metre	The regular use of unstressed and stressed syllables in poetry
Narrative	A piece of writing that tells a story
Onomatopoeia	The use of words whose sounds copies the thing or process they describe
Pathos	The effect in literature which makes the reader feel sadness or pity
Personification	The attribution of human feelings, emotions, or sensations to an inanimate object. Personification is a type of metaphor where human qualities are given to things or abstract ideas
Plot	The sequence of events in a poem, play, novel or short story that make up the main storyline
Point of View	A story can be told by one of the characters or from another point of view. The point of view can change from one part of the story to another when events are viewed through the minds of two or more characters.
Protagonist	The main character or speaker in a poem, monologue, play or story
Pun	A play on words that have similar sounds but quite different meanings
Rhyme	Corresponding sounds in words, usually at the end of each line, but not always
Rhyme scheme	The pattern of rhymes in a poem
Rhythm	The 'movement' of the poem as created through the meter and the way that language is stressed within the poem
Satire	The highlighting or exposing of human failings or foolishness through ridiculing them. Satire can range from being gentle and light to extremely biting and bitter in tone
Simile	The comparison of one thing to another in order to make the description more vivid
Sonnet	A fourteen-line poem, usually with 10 syllables in each line. There are several ways in which the lines can be organised, but they often consist of an octave and a sestet
Stanza	The blocks of lines into which a poem is divided. [Sometimes these are, less precisely, referred to as verses, which can lead to confusion as poetry is sometimes called 'verse']
Structure	The way a poem or play or other piece of writing has been put together
Style	The individual way in which the writer has used language to express his or her ideas
Symbol	Like the use of images, symbols present things which represent something else. In very simple terms, a red rose can be used to symbolise love; distant thunder can symbolise approaching trouble. Symbols can be very subtle and multi-layered in their significance
Syntax	The way in which sentences are structured. Sentences can be structured in different ways to achieve different effects
Theme	The central idea or ideas that a writer explores through a text

Independent Study Guidance

<p>Week 1</p>	<p>Key Words Spellings</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shakespeare 2. Tragedy 3. Fate 4. Destiny 5. Supernatural 6. Illiteracy 7. Patriarchal Society 8. Groundlings 9. Dialogue 10. Adaptable 11. Liberal 12. Conservative 13. Imagery 14. Connotation 15. Property 16. Ownership
<p>Week 2</p>	<p>Research Homework</p> <p>REMEMBER the useful websites listed on the last page of this booklet if you need additional support</p>	<p>Expectation is one page in your own words on your given focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women • Entertainment • Health • The law • Class system • Shakespeare <p>Make sure you look at the context information in this booklet and the school library and useful websites listed will provide you with plenty of information to read and collate.</p>
<p>Week 3</p>	<p>Diary Entry</p> <p>REMEMBER the useful websites listed on the last page of this booklet if you need additional support</p>	<p>Look at character and plot information on Romeo in this booklet. Reread your class notes from the lesson.</p> <p>Now write a diary entry in first person as if you are Romeo at the end of Act 1, having just met Juliet at the ball. (1/2 page) Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would he be feeling? • What might Romeo be thinking / worried about? • Who might Romeo want to talk to? • What might he do next?
<p>Week 4</p>	<p>Key Words Spellings</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Naivety 2. Youth 3. Haste

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Wisdom 5. Caution 6. Mockery 7. Symbolic 8. Behaviour 9. Iambic pentameter 10. Rhythm 11. Immoral 12. Sonnet 13. Pilgrim 14. Dramatic irony 15. soliloquy
Week 5	Memorisation of key quotations and create a quiz	<p>Learn key quotes given and create a quiz to test your learning partners knowledge of key quotes (who said what) and/or key plot points in the play so far</p> <p>Either use quotations selected in class or by your teacher OR refer to key quotations page in the knowledge book to help you.</p> <p>Remember you can use your own initiative and look online (see useful websites) to aid your understanding and try to make sure these quotes allow you to discuss implicit ideas/themes/character traits</p>
Week 6	<p>Essay and analysis practise</p> <p>REMEMBER the useful websites listed on the last page of this booklet if you need additional support</p>	<p>Written Home work –</p> <p>Most of the key characters have divided critics and audiences over the years. What do you think Shakespeare’s attitude is to your character? Write up your interpretation including supporting evidence.</p> <p>(1 page)</p> <p>Remember to use the PETER structure when creating your response.</p> <p>The following resources will help you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class book • key characters information in knowledge book • Useful websites in knowledge book

Easter Holidays

Week 1	Key Words Spellings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wet nurse 2. Constructs 3. Effeminate 4. Tolerant 5. Sentimental 6. Romantic 7. Determination 8. Revenge 9. Mad-blood 10. Atmosphere 11. Resolution 12. Theatricality 13. Juxtaposition 14. Heartfelt 15. Artificial 16. Opposites
Week 2	<p>REVISION</p> <p>REMEMBER the useful websites listed on the last page of this booklet if you need additional support</p>	REVISE FOR ASSESSMENT
Week 3	<p>REVISION</p> <p>REMEMBER the useful websites listed on the last page of this booklet if you need additional support</p>	REVISE FOR ASSESSMENT
Week 4	EOY EXAM WEEK	EOY ASSESSMENT WEEK
Week 5	<p>Memorisation of key quotations</p> <p>Developed understanding of meaning and effect of quotations</p>	<p>Knowledge HW – Pick 5 key quotes to learn from final scenes and become an ‘expert’ on</p> <p>What key themes do they link to?</p> <p>What techniques are being used?</p> <p>What do they reveal about the character?</p> <p>Can these be linked to relevant context?</p>
Week 6	Evaluation of film	Written HW –

	<p>REMEMBER the useful websites listed on the last page of this booklet if you need additional support</p>	<p>Answer the (minimum 5) questions you came up with as you watched the play</p> <p>Write down 3 things you found particularly interesting about the portrayal</p> <p>Write down three things you liked and three things you disliked about the performance. 1 page</p> <p>It may be useful to re watch play or clips from you tube</p> <p>Think about what they have kept the same as the text and what they have interpreted differently and why?</p> <p>Are the characters how you imagined or not and why?</p> <p>Have they cut any scenes and why do you think they have done this?</p>
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Support Material

Plot Summary

In the streets of Verona another brawl breaks out between the servants of the feuding noble families of [Capulet](#) and [Montague](#). [Benvolio](#), a Montague, tries to stop the fighting, but is himself embroiled when the rash Capulet, [Tybalt](#), arrives on the scene. After citizens outraged by the constant violence beat back the warring factions, [Prince Escalus](#), the ruler of Verona, attempts to prevent any further conflicts between the families by decreeing death for any individual who disturbs the peace in the future.

[Romeo](#), the son of Montague, runs into his cousin Benvolio, who had earlier seen Romeo moping in a grove of sycamores. After some prodding by Benvolio, Romeo confides that he is in love with [Rosaline](#), a woman who does not return his affections. Benvolio counsels him to forget this woman and find another, more beautiful one, but Romeo remains despondent.

Meanwhile, [Paris](#), a kinsman of the Prince, seeks [Juliet](#)'s hand in marriage. Her father Capulet, though happy at the match, asks Paris to wait two years, since Juliet is not yet even fourteen. Capulet dispatches a servant with a list of people to invite to a masquerade and feast he traditionally holds. He invites Paris to the feast, hoping that Paris will begin to win Juliet's heart.

Romeo and Benvolio, still discussing Rosaline, encounter the Capulet servant bearing the list of invitations. Benvolio suggests that they attend, since that will allow Romeo to compare his beloved to other beautiful women of Verona. Romeo agrees to go with Benvolio to the feast, but only because Rosaline, whose name he reads on the list, will be there.

In Capulet's household, young Juliet talks with her mother, [Lady Capulet](#), and her nurse about the possibility of marrying Paris. Juliet has not yet considered marriage, but agrees to look at Paris during the feast to see if she thinks she could fall in love with him.

The feast begins. A melancholy Romeo follows Benvolio and their witty friend [Mercutio](#) to Capulet's house. Once inside, Romeo sees Juliet from a distance and instantly falls in love with her; he forgets about Rosaline completely. As Romeo watches Juliet, entranced, a young Capulet, Tybalt, recognizes him, and is enraged that a Montague would sneak into a Capulet feast. He prepares to attack, but Capulet holds him back. Soon, Romeo speaks to Juliet, and the two experience a profound attraction. They kiss, not even knowing each other's names. When he finds out from Juliet's nurse that she is the daughter of Capulet—his family's enemy—he becomes distraught. When Juliet learns that the young man she has just kissed is the son of Montague, she grows equally upset.

As Mercutio and Benvolio leave the Capulet estate, Romeo leaps over the orchard wall into the garden, unable to leave Juliet behind. From his hiding place, he sees Juliet in a window above the orchard and hears her speak his name. He calls out to her, and they exchange vows of love.

Romeo hurries to see his friend and confessor [Friar Lawrence](#), who, though shocked at the sudden turn of Romeo's heart, agrees to marry the young lovers in secret since he sees in their love the possibility of ending the age-old feud between Capulet and Montague. The following day, Romeo and Juliet meet at Friar Lawrence's cell and are married. [The Nurse](#), who is privy to the secret, procures a ladder, which Romeo will use to climb into Juliet's window for their wedding night.

The next day, Benvolio and Mercutio encounter Tybalt—Juliet's cousin—who, still enraged that Romeo attended Capulet's feast, has challenged Romeo to a duel. Romeo appears. Now Tybalt's

kinsman by marriage, Romeo begs the Capulet to hold off the duel until he understands why Romeo does not want to fight. Disgusted with this plea for peace, Mercutio says that he will fight Tybalt himself. The two begin to duel. Romeo tries to stop them by leaping between the combatants. Tybalt stabs Mercutio under Romeo's arm, and Mercutio dies. Romeo, in a rage, kills Tybalt. Romeo flees from the scene. Soon after, the Prince declares him forever banished from Verona for his crime. Friar Lawrence arranges for Romeo to spend his wedding night with Juliet before he has to leave for Mantua the following morning.

In her room, Juliet awaits the arrival of her new husband. The Nurse enters, and, after some confusion, tells Juliet that Romeo has killed Tybalt. Distraught, Juliet suddenly finds herself married to a man who has killed her kinsman. But she resettles herself, and realizes that her duty belongs with her love: to Romeo.

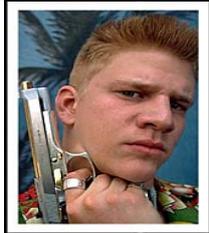
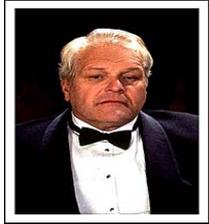
Romeo sneaks into Juliet's room that night, and at last they consummate their marriage and their love. Morning comes, and the lovers bid farewell, unsure when they will see each other again. Juliet learns that her father, affected by the recent events, now intends for her to marry Paris in just three days. Unsure of how to proceed—unable to reveal to her parents that she is married to Romeo, but unwilling to marry Paris now that she is Romeo's wife—Juliet asks her Nurse for advice. She counsels Juliet to proceed as if Romeo were dead and to marry Paris, who is a better match anyway. Disgusted with the Nurse's disloyalty, Juliet disregards her advice and hurries to Friar Lawrence. He concocts a plan to reunite Juliet with Romeo in Mantua. The night before her wedding to Paris, Juliet must drink a potion that will make her appear to be dead. After she is laid to rest in the family's crypt, the Friar and Romeo will secretly retrieve her, and she will be free to live with Romeo, away from their parents' feuding.

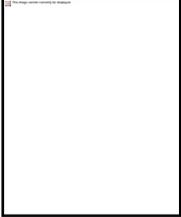
Juliet returns home to discover the wedding has been moved ahead one day, and she is to be married tomorrow. That night, Juliet drinks the potion, and the Nurse discovers her, apparently dead, the next morning. The Capulets grieve, and Juliet is entombed according to plan. But Friar Lawrence's message explaining the plan to Romeo never reaches Mantua. Its bearer, [Friar John](#), gets confined to a quarantined house. Romeo hears only that Juliet is dead.

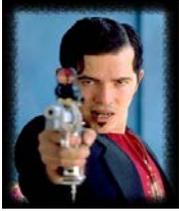
Romeo learns only of Juliet's death and decides to kill himself rather than live without her. He buys a vial of poison from a reluctant Apothecary, then speeds back to Verona to take his own life at Juliet's tomb. Outside the Capulet crypt, Romeo comes upon Paris, who is scattering flowers on Juliet's grave. They fight, and Romeo kills Paris. He enters the tomb, sees Juliet's inanimate body, drinks the poison, and dies by her side. Just then, Friar Lawrence enters and realizes that Romeo has killed Paris and himself. At the same time, Juliet awakes. Friar Lawrence hears the coming of the watch. When Juliet refuses to leave with him, he flees alone. Juliet sees her beloved Romeo and realizes he has killed himself with poison. She kisses his poisoned lips, and when that does not kill her, buries his dagger in her chest, falling dead upon his body.

The watch arrives, followed closely by the Prince, the Capulets, and Montague. Montague declares that [Lady Montague](#) has died of grief over Romeo's exile. Seeing their children's bodies, Capulet and Montague agree to end their long-standing feud and to raise gold statues of their children side-by-side in a newly peaceful Verona.

Romeo and Juliet Characters:

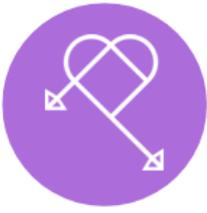
<u>CHARACTER</u>	<u>WHO ARE THEY?</u>	<u>ADDITIONAL INFORMATION</u>
 ROMEO	The hero and one of the protagonists of <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> . This character is the son of Old Montague. A romantic character, he is at first in love with Lord Capulet's niece, Rosaline. When he meets Capulet's daughter Juliet, he falls instantly in love with her. His two closest friends are Benvolio and Mercutio...	
 BENVOLIO	Nephew of Montague and friend to Romeo. Here is a thoughtful character who makes a genuine effort to defuse violent scenes in public places. His loyalty to his friends and family can not be questioned. He is a sensible and trustworthy young man who spends most of his time in the play trying to cheer up Romeo... It's BENVOLIO!	
 MONTAGUE	Head of one of the most influential and wealthy families in Verona. Here is a true patriarch who does not like to be crossed. This character is the bitter enemy of Capulet but a concerned father to his son. At the beginning of the play, he is chiefly concerned about Romeo's melancholy and what he can do to make his child happy... it's MONTAGUE!	

<u>CHARACTER</u>	<u>WHO ARE THEY?</u>	<u>ADDITIONAL INFORMATION</u>
 <p data-bbox="209 450 408 477">LADY MONTAGUE</p>	<p data-bbox="539 197 986 517">Though she is wife of the powerful Montague there is little room in the play for this character. She is a loving mother who cherishes her son and dies of grief when Romeo is exiled from Verona...it's LADY MONTAGUE</p>	
 <p data-bbox="236 1014 351 1041">MERCUTIO</p>	<p data-bbox="539 772 986 1227">Kinsman to the Prince and close friend to Romeo and the Montagues. This character overflows with imagination, wit, and a strange, biting satire. A hotheaded character he loves wordplay and finds Romeo's romanticized ideas about love tiresome. This character tries to convince Romeo to view love as a matter of sexual appetite...it's MERCUTIO!</p>	
 <p data-bbox="244 1648 320 1675">JULIET</p>	<p data-bbox="539 1395 986 1787">The heroine and one of the protagonists of <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>. She is the thirteen-year-old daughter of Capulet and begins the play as a naïve and gentle girl, obedient to her parents. Raised by her nanny and with none of freedom to roam the city that Romeo has, this character is a happy, romantic, and an innocent girl...it's JULIET!</p>	

<u>CHARACTER</u>	<u>WHO ARE THEY?</u>	<u>ADDITIONAL INFORMATION</u>
 <p data-bbox="236 539 331 568">TYBALT</p>	<p data-bbox="539 282 991 775">Cousin to Juliet from her mother's side. Vain, fashionable, supremely aware of courtesy and the lack of it, he becomes aggressive, violent, and quick to draw his sword when he feels his pride has been injured. Honour and his family mean a lot to this character. Once drawn, his sword is something to be feared...it's TYBALT!</p>	
 <p data-bbox="236 1205 347 1234">CAPULET</p>	<p data-bbox="539 947 991 1361">The patriarch of the Capulet family and enemy, for unexplained reasons, of Montague. He loves his daughter, though he is not well acquainted with her thoughts or feelings. He commands respect and is liable to fly into a rage when it is lacking. This character is a stubborn old man, who is used to getting his own way...it's CAPULET!</p>	
 <p data-bbox="193 1843 368 1872">LADY CAPULET</p>	<p data-bbox="539 1606 991 2033">A woman who married young and gave birth at close to the age of fourteen. This character is eager to see her daughter married well- to Paris. On the whole this is an incompetent mother, relying on the Nurse for moral and logical support with her daughter. She loves her daughter but is not close to her...it's LADY Capulet.</p>	

<u>CHARACTER</u>	<u>WHO ARE THEY?</u>	<u>ADDITIONAL INFORMATION</u>
 <p data-bbox="236 450 328 479">NURSE</p>	<p data-bbox="539 197 979 674">The woman who breast-fed Juliet when she was a baby and has cared for Juliet her entire life. A vulgar, long-winded, and sentimental character, she frequently makes inappropriate remarks and speeches. She is Juliet's faithful confidante but the idea that Juliet would want to sacrifice herself for love is incomprehensible to her...it's the NURSE!</p>	
 <p data-bbox="193 1016 405 1046">FRIAR LAWRENCE</p>	<p data-bbox="539 763 979 1137">Friend to both Romeo and Juliet, this kind and civic-minded citizen is always ready with a plan. He secretly marries the young lovers in the hope that the union might bring peace to Verona. As well as being a Catholic holy man, this character is also an expert in the use of seemingly mystical potions and herbs...it's FRIAR LAWRENCE!</p>	
 <p data-bbox="245 1621 317 1650">PARIS</p>	<p data-bbox="539 1384 987 1682">A young nobleman and kinsman to the Prince. He is handsome and courteous and favorable to the Capulets. They arrange for Juliet to marry him since they do not realise she is married to Romeo...it's PARIS!</p>	

Themes:



Love in *Romeo and Juliet* is not some pretty, idealized emotion. Yes, the love [Romeo](#) and [Juliet](#) share is beautiful and passionate. It is pure, exhilarating, and transformative, and they are willing to give everything to it. But it is also chaotic and destructive, bringing death to friends, family, and to themselves. Over and over in the play, Romeo and Juliet's love is mentioned in connection with death and violence, and finds its greatest expression in their suicide.

The theme of love in *Romeo and Juliet* also extends beyond the love that Romeo and Juliet feel for each other. *All* the characters in the play constantly talk about love. [Mercutio](#) thinks love is little more than an excuse to pursue sexual pleasure and that it makes a man weak and dumb. [Lady Capulet](#) thinks love is based on material things: Paris is handsome and wealthy; therefore Lady Capulet believes Juliet will love him. Lord Capulet sees love as obedience and duty. [Friar Laurence](#) knows that love may be passionate, but argues that it's also a responsibility. [Paris](#) seems to think that love is at his command, since he tells Juliet that she loves him. In short, love is everywhere in *Romeo and Juliet*, and everyone sees it differently.



From the opening prologue when the [Chorus](#) summarizes *Romeo and Juliet* and says that the "star-crossed lovers" will die, [Romeo](#) and [Juliet](#) are trapped by fate. No matter what the lovers do, what plans they make, or how much they love each other, their struggles against fate only help fulfill it. But defeating or escaping fate is not the point. No one escapes fate. It is Romeo and Juliet's determination to struggle against fate in order to be together, whether in life or death, that shows the fiery passion of their love, and which makes that love eternal.

Fate is not just a force felt by the characters in *Romeo and Juliet*. The audience also senses it through Shakespeare's use of foreshadowing. Time and again, both Romeo and Juliet unknowingly reference their imminent deaths, as when Juliet says after first meeting Romeo: "If he be married / My grave is like to be my wedding bed." She means that if Romeo is already married she'll be miserable. But the audience knows that Juliet's grave actually *will* be her wedding bed. In *Romeo and Juliet*, fate is a force that neither the characters nor the audience can escape, and so every word and gesture gains in power, becomes fateful.



Because of their forbidden love, [Romeo](#) and [Juliet](#) are forced into conflict with the social world around them: family, friends, political authority, and even religion. The lovers try to avoid this conflict by hiding, by escaping from it. They prefer the privacy of nighttime to the public world of day. They volunteer to give up their names, their social identities, in order to be together. They begin to keep secrets

and speak in puns so that they can publicly say one thing while meaning another. On the morning after their marriage, they even go so far as to pretend that day is night so they won't have to part.

But no one can stop day from dawning, and in the end Romeo and Juliet can't escape the responsibilities of the public world. Romeo tries to stop being a Montague and avoid fighting [Tybalt](#), but fails. Juliet tries to stop being a Capulet and to stand up to her father when he tries to marry her off to [Paris](#), but is abandoned by her mother and the [Nurse](#). Romeo is banished from Verona by [Prince Escalus](#), who embodies political law. Finally, to preserve their love, Romeo and Juliet are forced to the ultimate act of independence and privacy: suicide.



[Romeo](#) and [Juliet](#) constantly play with language. They pun, rhyme, and speak in double entendres. All these word games may seem like mere fun, and they are fun. The characters that pun and play with language have fun doing it. But word play in *Romeo and Juliet* has a deeper purpose: rebellion. Romeo and Juliet play with language to escape the world. They claim they are not a Montague

and a Capulet; they use words to try to transform day, for a moment, into night; they hide their love even while secretly admitting it. Other characters play with language too. In particular, [Mercutio](#) and the [Nurse](#) make constant sexual puns implying that while everyone is running around talking about high ideals like honor and love, sex and other base desires are at the root of human existence.

So language in *Romeo and Juliet* serves two opposing purposes. It allows some characters to escape the world into intense love, while it allows other characters to reveal that the world of love, honor, and high ideals are just masks people use to cover their animal instincts.



For a play about the two noble teenagers struggling to preserve their forbidden love, *Romeo and Juliet* sure has a lot of scenes focused on servants and non-nobles. Shakespeare did this by design. The recurring presence of servants in the play, from [Peter](#), the Capulet servant who can't read, to the [apothecary](#) who's so poor he's willing to sell poison, Shakespeare in *Romeo and Juliet*

goes to great efforts to show that the poor and downtrodden have lives of their own, and that to them [Romeo](#) and [Juliet](#)'s love and death mean absolutely nothing. After all, why would the death of two noble teenagers mean anything to servants just trying to make it through the day and scrounge up something to eat for dinner?

KEY QUOTATIONS	Love	Conflict	Fate	Death	Honour/family
Romeo	<p>"Did my heart love til now?"</p> <p>"O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!"</p>	<p>(To Tybalt) "Either thou or I, or both, must go with him"</p>	<p>'O, I am fortune's fool!' Act 3 sc1</p> <p>"I defy you stars."</p>	<p>"Ha, banishment! Be merciful, say "death".(To Friar L) "Well, Juliet, I will lie with thee tonight"</p>	<p>"My life is my foe's debt" "And so, good Capulet – which name I tender/As dearly as my own – be satisfied."</p>
Juliet	<p>"What's in a name? That which we call a rose by another name would smell as sweet."</p>	<p>"My only love sprung from my only hate; too early unknown and known too late."</p>	<p>(about Romeo)"Methinks I see thee, now thou art below, As one dead in the bottom of a tomb." Act 3 sc 5</p>	<p>"My grave is like to be my wedding bed."</p>	<p>"'Tis but thy name that is mine enemy. Thou art thyself, though not a Montague."</p>
Friar Lawrence	<p>"Wisely and slow. They stumble that run fast." (to Romeo)</p>	<p>"These violent delights have violent ends." (at the wedding)</p>	<p>"Unhappy fortune!" (about the letter not being delivered)</p>		<p>"For this alliance may so happy prove, To turn your households' rancour to pure love." (to Romeo)</p>
The Nurse	<p>Peace, I have done. God mark thee to his grace! Thou wast the prettiest babe that e'er I nursed:.... (N to Juliet)</p>	<p>"His name is Romeo, and a Montague; The only son of your great enemy."</p>		<p>"She's dead, deceased, she's dead; alack the day!"</p>	<p>(About Paris) "I think it best you married with the County. O he's a lovely gentleman."</p>
Tybalt		<p>"What, drawn, and talk of peace! I hate the word, (Act 1 sc1) "Romeo, the hate I bear thee can afford No better term than this,—thou art a villain." (Act 3 scene 1)</p>	<p>About Montagues) "I will withdraw, but this intrusion shall/Now seeming sweet, convert to bitterest gall"</p>	<p>"Come thee Benvolio, look upon thy death." Act 1, sc1)</p>	<p>"Now by the stock and honour of my kin To strike him dead I hold it not a sin." (Act 1 s 5)</p>
Capulet	<p>"But saying o'er what I have said before: My child is yet a stranger in the world;..." "Earth hath swallowed all my hopes but she./She's the hopeful lady of my earth"</p>	<p>"What noise is this? Give me my long sword, ho!" "My sword, I say! Old Montague is come, And flourishes his blade in spite of me."</p>		<p>"As rich shall Romeo's by his lady's lie,/Poor sacrifices of our enmity."</p>	<p>"And you be mine, I'll give you to my friend And you be not, hang, beg, starve, die in the streets."</p>
Mercutio	<p>"You are a lover; borrow Cupid's wings, And soar with them above a common bound." (to R)</p>	<p>"Tybalt, you ratcatcher, will you walk?"</p>	<p>"A plague o'both your houses"</p>	<p>"Ask for me tomorrow and you shall find me a grave man."</p>	<p>"O calm, dishonourable, vile submission!" (about Romeo refusing to duel Tybalt)</p>
Miscellaneous			<p>(Prologue) "A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life;"</p>	<p>(Prologue) "The fearful passage of their death marked love..."</p>	<p>"I will bite my thumb at them which is a disgrace to them if they bear it." –Caps to Monts</p>

Context:

When William Shakespeare wrote *Romeo and Juliet* in approximately 1595, England had a great deal in common with fourteenth-century Italy, the era in which the play takes place. As in fourteenth-century Italy, Elizabethan England experienced incredible violence and tragedy. In 1592 England was ravaged by the bubonic plague, a disease that had also swept across Italy in 1348. England was deeply enmeshed in a political and religious power struggle that resembled conditions in Italy 250 years before. Both societies, scarred by tragedy, subscribed to the philosophy formulated by the imprisoned Roman statesman and philosopher Boethius (c. 480-524), who asserted that Fortune—both good and bad—is part of life and, along with God, controls human destiny. Further, he insisted that Fortune is random and that adverse fortune is a greater teacher than good fortune.

A history of violence

Verona is located near the northern border of Italy on the Po River, east of Venice. It was a very lively city in the fourteenth century. Culturally rich and commercially successful, it boasted a thriving artistic community and a robust business climate centered in international trade that rivaled that of Venice, the wealthiest city-state in Italy. But Verona, like all other regions of the country, was subject to rampant violence and war—a condition that had endured throughout Italy for centuries.

Since the Etruscan occupation of Italy in the tenth century B.C., the region had suffered from periodic epidemics of violence. Territorial battles between Romans, Etruscans, Gauls, Carthaginians, and a host of others occurred regularly through the founding of Rome in 753 B.C. until the Holy Roman Empire established its dominance after the Second Punic War in 201 B.C. The Roman Empire maintained control of Italy through 400 A.D., when it split into two distinct halves. The governmental faction established its capital in Constantinople and regarded the emperor as its supreme authority. The spiritual faction (often called "Christendom"), centered in Rome and was ruled by the pope. The result of the split was a long-standing and savage power struggle that bred deep-seated hatred between sides. In the absence of a united, central power, city-states emerged and their growth added to the competitive and hostile atmosphere. Territories competed for resources and political leaders clashed with religious leaders over control and influence.

By the fourteenth century, the division between supporters of the emperor and supporters of the pope was firmly established. As in other Italian city-states, a fierce rivalry existed in Verona between these two sides. Supporters of the pope, called Guelfs, and partisans of the emperor, called Ghibellines, grappled for control. They fought deadly battles over the most petty of differences: blood was spilled over such trivial issues as the proper method of eating garlic and the viability of wearing a feather on the left rather than the right side of the cap. The famed Italian poet Francesco Petrarca lamented this sad state of relations:

O my own Italy!—though words are vain
The mortal wounds to close
Innumerable that thy bosom stain—
Yet it may soothe my pain
To sing of Tiber's woes
And Arno's wrongs, as on Po's saddened shore
Mournful I wander, and my numbers pour.

Renaissance Women

The women of the Renaissance, like women of the Middle Ages, were denied all political rights and considered legally subject to their husbands. Women of all classes were expected to perform the duties of housewife. Peasant women worked in the field alongside their husbands and ran the home. The wives of middle class shop owners and merchants often helped run their husbands' businesses as well. Even women of the highest class, though attended by servants, most often engaged in the tasks of the household, sewing, cooking, and entertaining, among others. Women who did not marry were not permitted to live independently. Instead, they lived in the households of their male relatives or, more often, joined a convent.

A few wealthy women of the time were able to break the mold of subjugation to achieve at the least fame, if not independence. Lucrezia Borgia, the daughter of Pope Alexander VI, was one such woman. As pope, Alexander VI attempted to use Lucrezia as a pawn in his game of political power. To further his political ambitions, he arranged her marriage to Giovanni Sforza of Milan when she was thirteen, in 1493. Four years later, when he no longer needed Milan's political support to as great a degree, he annulled the marriage after spreading false charges of Sforza's impotence. Alexander VI then married Lucrezia to the illegitimate son of the King of Naples. The Borgia legend stipulates that Cesare Borgia, Lucrezia's older brother, murdered Lucrezia's son produced by this marriage. In 1502, at the age of 22, Lucrezia was again divorced and remarried, this time to the duke of Ferrara, Alfonso d'Este. She remained in Ferrara until her death in 1519, where she became a devoted wife and mother, an influence in Ferrara politics and social life, and a noted patron of the arts.

Glossary

Convent – a Christian community of nuns.

Subjugation – being under control or oppression

Pawn – a small chess piece

Patron – a supporter

Impotence - an inability to conceive children

1. Read through paragraph two, list four things you learn about Lucrezia Borgia.
2. What are your impressions of Renaissance women?

The bubonic plague

In 1348 the bubonic plague ravaged Europe. In Italy an estimated one-third of the population died from the disease. The plague sparked a cycle of famine and epidemic that lasted through the end of the century. It contributed to social instability that led to one hundred years of unending warfare and continual upheaval among Italy's citizens. Overcrowding in cities such as Venice, whose population by 1422 approached 200,000, led to fierce competition for few natural resources, further igniting the turmoil that already raged because of

political and religious differences. The effects of all this turmoil are significant factors in the play **Romeo and Juliet**.

Boethius

In the sixth century an imprisoned Roman statesman named Boethius wrote *Consolatione Philosophiae* (*The Consolation of Philosophy*), a work in which he attempted, in part, to explain why tragedy is part of life. He proposed that life is governed by both God and Fortune, with Fortune serving as a sort of agent carrying out God's master plan for the universe. He further asserted that good and bad Fortune occur randomly and that:

You are wrong if think that Fortune has
changed toward you. This is her nature, the way she always
behaves. She is changeable. . . .

Boethius was imprisoned and later executed because he fell out of favor with the government. *The Consolation of Philosophy*, however, was the most popular and influential literary work of the Dark Ages and regained prominence in the fourteenth century when it was translated by Geoffrey Chaucer. Boethius's concepts of God, Fate, and Fortune seemed to shed light on the plague and the terrible wars that were destroying hundreds of thousands of innocent lives; he even went so far as to claim that misfortune was a greater teacher than good fortune.

In fourteenth-century Italy, just as in the Elizabethan Age and later, people sought to understand the extent to which human beings are in control of their lives. **Romeo and Juliet** reflects fourteenth-century notions of God and Fortune as figures that work together to control the fate of human beings.

Astrology

Astrology was an influential part of Italian society as well. In the 1300s many people believed that the positions and aspects of heavenly bodies such as stars influenced the course of human events. The concept of astrology was seen as supporting Boethius's philosophy. Virtually every noble family in Italy had horoscopes drawn for their children upon birth, and most government leaders employed court astrologers to advise them on important issues of state. The newly developing science of astronomy was still closely linked to astrology and further indicated a close relationship between the stars and planets and events on earth. Many people believed that the conjunction of certain planets gave rise to different religions, and most believed that the stars dictated the outcome of wars.

Throughout **Romeo and Juliet**, references are made to supernatural forces at work, and suggestions are continually put forward that Fate is inextricably linked to the stars. Premonitions abound in the play, and there is evidence of widespread belief—as there was generally during that historical period—in unseen forces that control the characters' destinies. At the play's outset we are told that the lovers are "star-crossed," and soon Juliet foresees Romeo's death:

O God, I have an ill-divining soul!
Methinks I see thee, now thou art so low,
As one dead in the bottom of a tomb.
Either my eyesight fails, or thou lookest pale.
(**Romeo and Juliet**, 4.5.54)

Sources

The story of Romeo and Juliet is based on a long line of tragedies, beginning with *Ephesiaca* by Xenophon, written in the second century A.D. In that version the lovers are called Anthia and Habrocomes; the plot is fundamentally the same as that of Shakespeare's **Romeo and Juliet** but with one crucial difference: the lovers are reunited in the end. The tragic ending and the familial rivalry were introduced by Masuccio Salernitano in *Cinquanté Novelle*, written in 1476. Luigi da Porto retold the story in 1530, set it in Verona, and named the

lovers Romeo and Julietta. He based the family conflict on a well-known feud between the Capelletti family of the Guelfs and the Montecchi family of the Ghibellines.

Though all of these authors and several others wrote versions of the Romeo and Juliet story, the only source Shakespeare appears to have used is Arthur Brooke's *The Tragicall Historie of Romeus and Juliet*. Written in 1562, the narrative poem was the first English translation of the story. As was common practice for writers in the Elizabethan Age, Shakespeare began with Brooke's model but enhanced it, creating an original work of his own. His version—the first that was produced as a stage play—makes significant modifications to Brooke's poem. Shakespeare condensed the time-frame of the story from nine months to four days; expanded the roles of several characters, including Mercutio, Paris, and Tybalt; added several minor characters, including Samson, Balthasar, Gregory, and Potpan; killed off Paris; anglicized some of the characters' names; and employed a variety of literary styles, including the sonnet form and blank and rhyming verse—a significant change from Brooke's use of "Poulter's Measure" (alternating lines of twelve and fourteen syllables).

Shakespeare's play more fully develops all of the characters and enhances their personality traits. For example, the Nurse in Shakespeare's version is bawdier than her counterpart in Brooke's tale, while Mercutio is more cunningly combative, witty, and mercurial. Hardly mentioned in Brooke's poem, Mercutio becomes a central and pivotal character in Shakespeare's play.

In Shakespeare's more conversational version, Juliet's father becomes a full-bodied, frustrated father who tries to understand his teenage daughter but is exasperated nonetheless.

The influence of Petrarch

Written between 1594 and 1596, *Romeo and Juliet* was one of Shakespeare's early tragedies. Its style is more closely linked to his romantic comedies, such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, than to his dark tragedies, such as *Othello* or *Hamlet*. The play's lyric style reflects the influence of the Italian poet Petrarch, who wrote his love sonnets during the fourteenth century. Petrarch did not invent the form, but he made it famous. Using his verse as a model but modifying the structure, Shakespeare wrote his own collection of sonnets in the early 1590s and incorporated the style into *Romeo and Juliet*.

Shakespeare was influenced by Petrarch in content as well as form. In *Romeo and Juliet* he echoes Petrarch's lament over the violence and tragedy so prevalent in both fourteenth-century Italy and Elizabethan England. Just as Petrarch decried "the mortal wounds" inflicted on his country by constant civil war, Shakespeare's Friar Laurence observes how war devastates all concerned.

Puns

Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* employs some literary devices traditionally found only in comedies or farces. Such devices are especially prevalent in the first half of the play. The drama features a substantial amount of punning and wit combat (a favorite style of the Elizabethans), suggesting that Shakespeare wanted the characters to have a playful quality and to show them given to frequent misunderstandings. Miscommunication, a major theme of the play, is often conveyed through constant punning. For example, the play opens with servants carrying on a conversation in which they play on each other's words but misunderstand what the other is saying:

Samson: Gregory, on my word, we'll not carry coals.
Gregory: No, for then we should be colliers.

Samson: I mean, an we be in choler, we'll draw.
Gregory: Ay, while you live, draw your neck out of collar.
(*Romeo and Juliet*, I. I. I-4).

The puns on "collier" (a coal miner), "choler" (anger), and "collar" (a band around the neck) illustrate how easily language can mislead and establishes at the outset of ***Romeo and Juliet*** the absurdity of wars and feuds based on simple misunderstandings. Through his use of puns, Shakespeare shows the folly and potentially tragic consequences of miscommunication and seems to suggest that this has been a major cause of violence throughout history.

Wit combat, punning, and satire were commonly used in both the Elizabethan Age and in fourteenth-century Italy to make political statements. Because blatant attacks on the church or on the government were punishable by imprisonment or even death in both eras, wit was used as a covert weapon. The well-known fourteenth-century Italian satirist Dolcebene remarked to the French King and to the Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV: "You fight with the sword, the Pope with his bulls, and I with my tongue" (Burckhardt, p. 117). Similarly, Shakespeare commented on British society with his pen, articulating serious messages behind a veil of wit. In ***Romeo and Juliet*** he slyly condemned the infighting between the royal Stuart and Tudor families, a feud that proved deadly during Shakespeare's time. At one point the Tudor Queen Elizabeth even had her cousin Queen Mary Stuart executed because she posed a threat to the throne.

Events in History at the Time the Play Was Written

Shakespeare was profoundly influenced by the events that occurred around him while he wrote ***Romeo and Juliet***. Episodes of extreme violence and bitter clashes of ideologies created a sometimes dark atmosphere in England. In ***Romeo and Juliet*** Shakespeare illustrated the tragic consequences of feuding and war between rival factions, a message that his Elizabethan audience could surely understand. Perhaps this relevance to its audience explains why ***Romeo and Juliet*** emerged as one of Shakespeare's most popular plays. It was staged often during his lifetime; only ***Hamlet*** was produced on more occasions.

England in the Elizabethan Age

Queen Elizabeth I set the tone for the Elizabethan Age, which was both a violent and a progressive era in English history. Under Elizabeth, the third Tudor monarch, England achieved prominence as a world power and its citizens brimmed with national pride. In 1588 the Spanish Armada mounted an invasion against England but was destroyed with the help of a sudden storm in the English Channel. The unlikely defeat of Spain's powerful navy bolstered Elizabeth's popularity and suggested to some of her supporters that her reign was divinely ordained.

But not all citizens supported the Queen. Although a thirty-year feud between rival royal bloodlines, the Yorks and Lancasters, had ended in 1485, a new rivalry between the Stuarts and Tudors emerged. Elizabeth, a Protestant, was challenged by both the Catholic Stuarts and the Puritan reformers and was beset by plots to unseat her from the throne. Her cousin Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, was beheaded because she posed a threat to Elizabeth. The Earl of Essex, a one-time court favorite, was similarly executed for plotting her overthrow. Because Elizabeth was unmarried, the question of succession loomed large during her reign and pitted rivals to the throne against one another.

The Danverses and the Longs

Another well-known feud of Shakespeare's time involved the Danvers and Long families of England. Some scholars have speculated that this rivalry might have been yet another source of inspiration for Shakespeare's drama. The animosity between the two families began when Charles and Henry Danvers killed their neighbor Henry Long during a heated dispute. With the aid of the Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare's patron, the

Danvers brothers escaped to France to avoid prosecution. When they returned to participate in a plot to overthrow Queen Elizabeth, Charles was beheaded for his earlier crime.

The plague

The bubonic plague struck England in 1592 and destroyed ten percent of the population. The plague, coupled with revolts in Ireland and Scotland and challenges to the throne by rival political and religious groups, produced tragedy and death on a broad scale. Shakespeare lived in London during this time and was forced to leave the city for at least one year when the epidemic hit and all theaters were closed. His knowledge of the deadly impact of the plague, coupled with his understanding of the family rivalries at court, where he often performed, allowed him to comment with authority on similar events that took place in fourteenth-century Italy.

Romance and tragedy

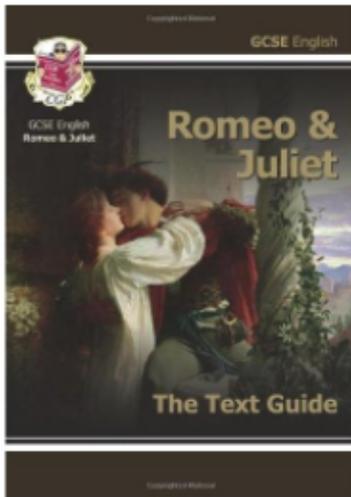
In addition to violence and intrigue, the Elizabethan Age was marked by romance. As a young unmarried woman in a position of great power, Elizabeth was constantly surrounded by suitors. She had an abundance of court favorites who competed for her affection, and her love life generated speculation and interest throughout Europe. Because of her unmarried status and her great achievements in office, Elizabeth was highly romanticized by the English, and it was said that she came to regard the country as her spouse. Her beauty (though apparently exaggerated) and political shrewdness were greatly touted. Many named their children after her, and some even constructed their homes in the shape of an "E" in her honor. An avid patron of the arts, Elizabeth was appreciated by artists and playwrights such as Shakespeare, who staged performances at court for her regularly. Her interest in romance, tragedy, comedy, and history greatly influenced the literature of her era.

Boethius and Astrology

In the sixteenth century, Queen Elizabeth had Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy* translated into modern English. This revived interest in his philosophy, which provided an explanation for much of the tragedy England was experiencing at the time. As in fourteenth-century Italy, Boethius's conception of Fortune as a controller of human destiny supported a common belief in astrology in Elizabethan England. Queen Elizabeth herself employed a court astrologer who advised her on matters of state. Shakespeare thus illustrated the Elizabethan view that certain elements of life are beyond human control. But he also concluded that hate was a controllable emotion and that it had ultimately caused the tragic events depicted in ***Romeo and Juliet***. The Prince of Verona summarizes this view at the play's end:

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.

Recommended Revision Guide: (available from the school library)



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