

Outwood Grange Academies Trust

English Literature Revision Guide

Romeo and Juliet

by William Shakespeare



Version 1

December 2017

Learn key quotes for every
theme and character!

How to approach your exam

- Romeo and Juliet is part of your Component 1 English Lit exam:

English Literature Component 1: 2 hours		English Literature Component 2: 2 hours 30 mins		
A) Shakespeare play (Romeo and Juliet): - part a (20 mins) - part b (40 mins)	B) The Poetry Anthology (1 hour)	A) An Inspector Calls (45 mins)	B) A Christmas Carol (45 mins)	C) Unseen poetry comparison (1 hour)

In the Romeo and Juliet section you will be given two questions:

Part a: extract question (15 marks – 20 minutes): A short extract from the play will be printed and you will be asked to focus on either:

- a) how a character speaks and behaves or;
- b) how Shakespeare creates mood and atmosphere for the audience.
- Whatever the question, you should firstly make it clear in your response where the extract appears in the play.
- You should then track the text, commenting on at least five quotes and ensuring that you always relate your comments to the key words in the question.
- Try to refer to subject terminology at some point e.g. *The repetition of the word “civil” in The Prologue serves to emphasise just how lacking in civility the “ancient feud” between the families actually is.*

Part b: essay question (25 marks – 40 minutes): You will then be given one essay question that you must answer. The focus of the question might be a character or a theme from the play.

- It is essential to plan your essay – spend five minutes selecting 5-6 key events from across the text (beginning, middle, end) and make notes on any quotes or detail from the play that could relate to the question.
- You are assessed on your understanding of language so explore some quotes in your comments e.g. *Mercutio uses the simile...*
- Try to evaluate the character through your essay, including your own opinion as to why they behave as they do.
- You will need to check your spelling and punctuation thoroughly as there are five marks for accuracy.

How to revise from this guide

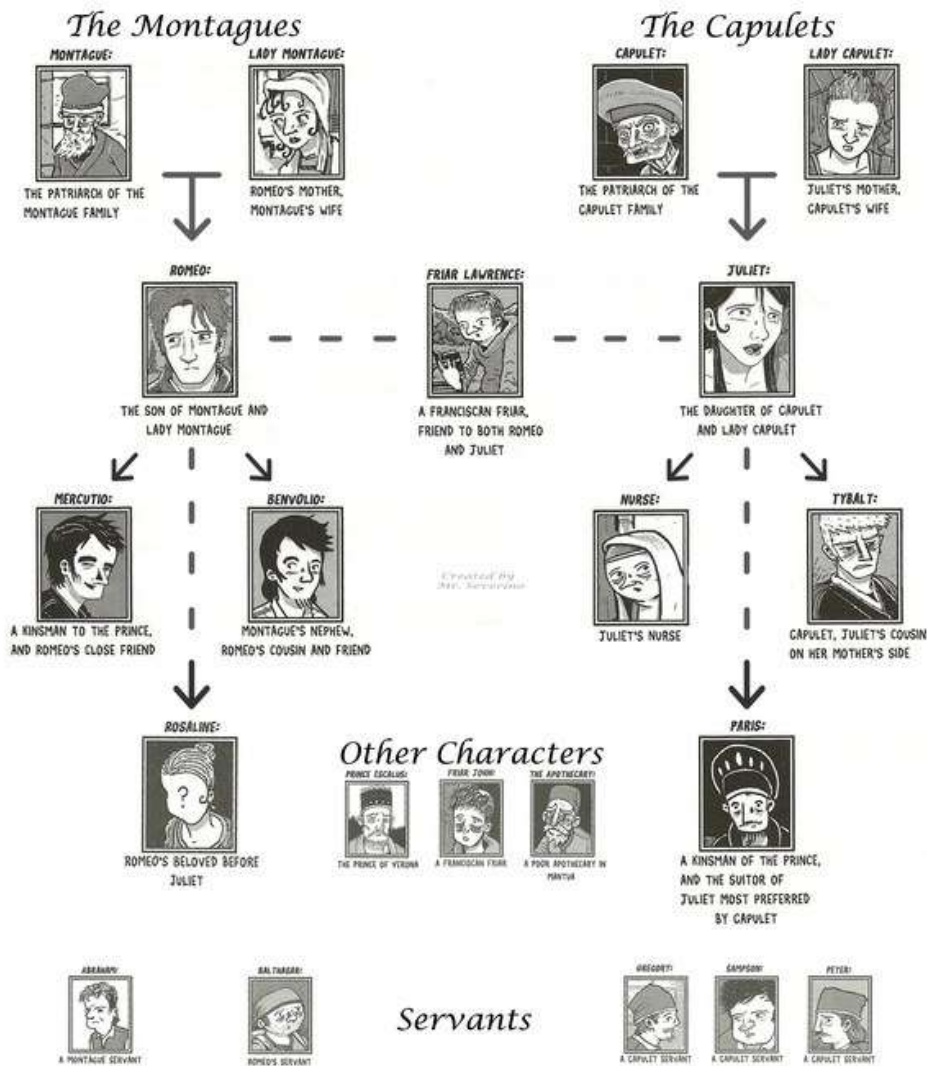
You should be spending at least 60 minutes a week revising for English Literature from this point onwards, aiming to learn 5-7 key quotes for each character or theme. Create detailed notes on each character or theme in the form of mindmaps or grids. There is no magic formula to revision but this three-point strategy has helped many Y11s succeed in learning quotes in the past:

- Read the quote out three times
- Write it out three times
- Recite the quote three times with your eyes closed

It is also helpful to write your key quotes on sticky notes and place them all over your bedroom wall. Over time they will stick in your memory!

Romeo & Juliet Character Tree

Created by Mr. Severino



Plot summary:

In Verona a brawl breaks out between the servants of the feuding families of Capulet and Montague. 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. Romeo confides that he is in love with Rosaline, who does not feel the same way. Benvolio suggests he forget this woman and find another, more beautiful one.

Meanwhile, Paris, a kinsman of the Prince, wants to marry Juliet. Her father, Capulet, though happy at the match, asks Paris to wait two years, since Juliet is not yet even 14. 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 Juliet will begin to fall in love with him.

Romeo and Benvolio, still discussing Rosaline, meet the Capulet servant with the list of invitations. Benvolio suggests that they go. 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. As Romeo watches Juliet, Tybalt, recognizes him, and is angry that a Montague would sneak into a Capulet feast. He wants to attack, but Capulet holds him back. Soon, Romeo and Juliet speak and 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 Romeo is the son of Montague, she grows equally upset.

After the party Romeo 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 Friar Lawrence, who agrees to marry the lovers in secret since he hopes their love will end the age-old feud between the families. The following day, Romeo and Juliet meet at Friar Lawrence's cell and are married.

The next day, Benvolio and Mercutio encounter Tybalt—Juliet's cousin—who, still angry that Romeo attended Capulet's party, has challenged Romeo to a duel. Romeo appears, but now related to Tybalt by marriage, he refuses to fight. Disgusted with Romeo, Mercutio says that he will fight Tybalt himself. Romeo tries to stop the fight by leaping between them. 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 banishes him 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 tells Juliet that Romeo has killed Tybalt. Distraught, Juliet finds herself married to a man who has killed her cousin, but she soon realises that her duty belongs with her husband, Romeo.

Romeo and Juliet spend the night together. Morning comes, and the lovers part, unsure when they will see each other again. Juliet learns that her father wants her to marry Paris in just three days. She asks her nurse for advice. The nurse suggests Juliet should proceed as if Romeo were dead and marry Paris. Juliet disregards her advice and hurries to Friar Lawrence. He suggests 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.

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. Romeo believes that Juliet is dead.

Romeo decides to kill himself rather than live without Juliet. He buys poison from a reluctant Apothecary, then speeds back to Verona to take his own life at Juliet's tomb. Outside the Capulet crypt, Romeo meets Paris, who is scattering flowers on Juliet's grave. They fight and Romeo kills Paris. He enters the tomb, sees Juliet's 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 – Character Summary

Romeo is the only son of Montague and Lady Montague. He is a head-strong young man and in love with the idea of being loved. When we first meet him he is besotted with a lady called Rosaline. However, she is immediately forgotten when he lays eyes on Juliet, the daughter of his family's enemy.

Key Quotes:

Act One

- “Love is a smoke made with the fume of sighs”. Here Romeo reflects on how intangible love can be, how difficult it is to grasp and contain, and how much of the time is fuelled with the sadness of “sighs”.
- “Is love a tender thing? It is too rough, too rude, too boistrous, and it pricks like thorn!” Romeo is talking to Mercutio and reflecting on how an emotion can cause almost physical pain. The repetition of the word “too” highlights how unpleasant and intense love can be.
- “I fear too early, for my mind misgives/Some consequences yet hanging in the stars...” Even in Act One Romeo has misgivings about how the future will turn out. His words of caution are ironic as darkness does lay ahead but Romeo has no understanding yet of how grave the consequences will be.
- “O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!” Juliet's beauty is so radiant it makes others forms of lights seem dim by comparison.
- “Did my heart love til now? Forswear it sight! For I never saw true beauty til this night.” Finally Romeo realises that he has never really loved Rosaline. His attraction to Juliet is immediate and Rosaline pales into insignificance.

Act Two

- “It is the east, and Juliet is the sun”. Romeo sees Juliet on her balcony and reaffirms his love for her. The use of the metaphor acts as an emphasis. Juliet is as radiant and beautiful as the sun, and as she appears, her presence in his life signifies a new start, a new day.

Act Three

- “O I am fortune's fool!” Romeo has seen Mercutio slaughtered and killed Tybalt in revenge. He believes himself to be the plaything of fate, his life of little value and him unable to control its direction.

Act Five

- “I defy you stars!” Another reference to the idea of fortune and fate. Romeo, upon hearing about Juliet's apparent death, refuses to allow himself to be controlled any further by the “stars”, He is determined to be with his love.
- “A grave? O no, a lantern, slaughter'd youth.” Romeo sees Juliet's apparently dead body and with his use of the verb “slaughtered” suggests that Juliet's death is almost a murder, brought about by the hatred and feuding of the two families. “Youth” works to emphasise how young Juliet is (was) and how undeserving of her fate.
- “Here will I set up my everlasting rest,/ And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars.” Romeo believes his death will bring him and Juliet together in eternal “rest”. Death by his own hand means he has finally taken control over his fate. He will die on his own terms.
- “Thus with a kiss I die.” And he does. He and Juliet's love ends, as it has begun, associated with death.

Juliet – Character Summary

Juliet is the only living child of Capulet and Lady Capulet. She is almost 14-years-old and seems a sensible and mature teenager. She is happy to abide by her parents' wishes, until she meets Romeo.

Act One

- “It is an honour I dream not of”. Juliet has not yet thought of marriage, a state she describes as an “honour”, so representing her view of its serious nature.
- “I’ll look to like, if looking liking move.” Juliet is open to the idea of liking Paris, she will expect to like him. Shakespeare’s repetition of “like” here serves to emphasise the intensity of her eventual feelings for Romeo.
- “Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much...” Juliet echoes Romeo’s extended metaphor of a worshipper before a holy shrine and by doing so she encourages his advances.
- “My only love sprung from my only hate!” Shakespeare pairs the opposing ideas of love and hate to show how Juliet’s first encounter with love is tainted by an age-old hatred.

Act Two

- “O swear not by the moon, th’inconstant moon...” The moon changes as the year progresses, but Juliet wants Romeo’s love to remain constant.
- “It is too rash, too unadvis’d, too sudden, too like the lightning.” Unlike Romeo, Juliet’s tone is that of caution. She has the maturity to recognise the danger of their actions and also to realise that Romeo’s protestations of love may be like “lighting”, as quickly gone as they appeared.
- “My bounty is as boundless as the sea, my love as deep.” Juliet emphasises the intensity and generosity of her love. It has the capacity to be almost endless.

Act Three

- “I have bought the mansion of a love/But not possess’d it...” Juliet uses a metaphor to imagine her love residing in a splendid house, that she has yet to fully take possession of.
- “My husband is on earth, my faith in heaven.” Juliet is already married to Romeo before the sight of God, so she cannot be released from this contract while Romeo remains alive “on earth”.

Act Five

- “O happy dagger!” Juliet rejoices at finding a weapon she can use to end her own life. It is ironic that the idea of happiness occurs at such a tragic point. Such is the nature of their world, death brings happiness while love and life bring misery and separation.



Mercutio – Character Summary

Mercutio is Romeo's friend. He is wild, a little bit rude and very excitable. His reckless speech and behaviour provokes a duel which has tragic consequences for many of the play's characters.

Act One

- “If love be rough with you, be rough with love...” Shakespeare uses the repetition of “rough” to suggest that you need to take control of love.
- “O then I see Queen Mab hath been with you...” Shakespeare seems to have invented Queen Mab to allow Mercutio to make a long speech about the nature of love. It is full of light-hearted fantasy and perhaps serves to make us like Mercutio with his wild and wonderful ways.

Act Two

- “Alas, poor Romeo, he is already dead, stabbed with a white wench's black eye.” Mercutio is speaking metaphorically here. In his mind Romeo has been killed or unmanned by the power of an attractive woman's gaze, but it is also ironic and it is Juliet and not Romeo who will actually be “stabbed” in the cause of true love.

Act Three

- “O calm, dishonourable, vile submission!” Mercutio cannot understand why Romeo refuses to fight Tybalt. He sees Romeo's apparent submission as something like cowardice and is desperate to protect his reputation.
- “A plague a'both your houses! They have made worms' meat of me...” Mercutio's decaying body will be devoured by the worms as he rots in the ground. He curses those he leaves behind. Ironically, Romeo and Juliet's deaths do bring a plague on both their houses.
- “Ask for me tomorrow and you will find me a grave man.” Even in death Mercutio plays with worms. The use of the word “grave” is used here to represent a serious nature as well as the ground he will be buried in.

The Nurse – Character Summary

The Nurse is an affectionate but simple-minded woman. She has looked after Juliet all her life and dotes on her.

Act One

- “Thou wast the prettiest babe that e'er I nurs'd.” The nurse loves Juliet as if she were her own daughter. She dotes on her and praises her lavishly.
- “A man, young lady! Such a man as all the world – Why, he's a man of wax.” Here the nurse suggests that Paris is the perfect model of a man. The “wax” he is made of has been moulded skilfully.

Act Two

- “If ye should lead her in a fool's paradise, as they say, it were a very gross kind of behaviour...” The nurse is very protective of Juliet. She wants to protect her and is endeavouring to determine whether Romeo's intentions are sincere.
- “I am the drudge, and toil in your delight...” The Nurse works hard to bring Romeo and Juliet together, but she is keen to labour for their happiness.

Act Four

- “O woe! O woeful, woeful, woeful day!” The repetition of “woe” suggests the Nurse is very sad at Juliet’s death.

Tybalt - Character Summary

Tybalt is an angry and proud young man, who finds Romeo’s thoughtless gate crashing of the Capulet party to be extremely insulting.

Act One

- “Peace? I hate the word! As I hate hell, all Montagues and thee.” Tybalt is associated with hatred and punishment from our first meeting with him. He is consumed with bitterness and rage. In Act One Benvolio describes him as “fiery”.
- “I’ll not endure him.” The use of the word “endure” suggests the sheer torture Tybalt must put up with when his Uncle refuses to allow him to fight Romeo at the party.

Act Two

- “Prince of cats.” Mercutio’s description of Tybalt plays on his name Tybalt. Tibault was the cat in a Dutch fable. The use of the word “Prince” suggests that Tybalt is a leader of men and something beyond the ordinary

Act Three

- “Thou art a villain.” Tybalt insults Romeo by calling him a scoundrel or a common person
- “Thou wretched boy.” Tybalt again insults Romeo, emphasising his youth, and insisting he will follow his friend Mercutio to his death.

Benvolio – Character Summary

Benvolio is the peacemaker – an intelligent and sensible friend to Romeo.

Act One

- “Part fools! Put up your swords, you know not what you do!” Benvolio is a serious young man. He recognises the danger of the fight and his words sound almost biblical in their tone and serve to reinforce Benvolio as a righteous and sensible character.
- “No, coz, I rather weep!” The use of the verb “weep” shows how seriously Benvolio takes Romeo’s concerns about love.
- “I do but keep the peace.” Benvolio is a lover not a fighter.

Act Three

- “O Romeo, Romeo, brave Mercutio is dead.” Benvolio can’t believe what has unfolded. He praises Mercutio’s bravery in defending Romeo and later in the same speech describes him as “gallant”.

Friar Lawrence – Character Summary

A friar of the Order of Saint Francis. He is Romeo's confessor and friend, but his good intentions lead to the tragedy.

Act Two

- “For this alliance may so happy prove/To turn your households' rancour to pure love.” The Friar believes the union of Romeo and Juliet could also lead to the union of Verona.
- “These violent delights have violent ends.” The repetition of “violent”, offered as a warning to Romeo, foreshadows the tragedy that lies ahead.
- “Therefore love moderately, long love doth so...” Again the Friar offers a warning against extreme behaviour, believing too much of a good thing can ruin it for you forever.

Act Three

- “Ascend her chamber, hence and comfort her...” The Friar is able to offer practical advice. He asks Romeo “Art thou a man?” He recognises that Romeo needs to master his emotions of despair.

Act Four

- “Take this via... No warmth, no breath shall testify thou livest.” The repetition of the negative “no” emphasises how dead Juliet will appear.

Act Five

- “Come go, good Juliet, I dare no longer stay.” In her hour of need, the Friar, for all his religion and good intentions abandons Juliet to her fate.

Paris – Character Summary

A nobleman whom Juliet's parents think will make an excellent match for their daughter.

Act One

- “But now, my lord, what say you to my suit?” He is eager to marry Juliet and suitably respectful to her father.

Act Four

- “Death, by thee beguil'd...O love! O life! Not life, but love in death!” Paris is very dramatic when speaking of Juliet's death, he has almost been seduced by death. He affirms that he loved her in life and loves her in death.

Act Five

- “Sweet flower, with flowers thy bridal bed I strew!” The repetition of “flower” highlights Juliet's purity and innocence, and is also quite a touching indication of Paris' feelings.

Capulet – Character Summary

Capulet is Juliet's father and, like any good father, he does his best to ensure a happy and prosperous future for his daughter. However, Capulet does become very emotional and perhaps irrational when she defies his order to marry Paris.

Act One

- “Woo her, gentle Paris, get her heart.” He is happy for his daughter to marry Paris, but he wants the love between them to be sincere.

Act Three

- “How now, wife,/Have you deliver'd to her our decree?” The use of the word “decree” suggests Juliet's lack of control in this situation. Her marriage is a decision, or agreement, that she has had no say in.
- “Out, you green-sickness carrion! Out, you baggage!” Capulet is so angry he says terrible things to his daughter. Her face has gone so pale, he describes her as a lifeless corpse and a burden to him.
- “Hang thee, young baggage, disobedient wretch!” His pride is insulted and he is outraged that his daughter has dared to defy him.
- “Speak not, reply not, do not answer me! My fingers itch.” He fights the urge to strike Juliet. He cannot bear to continue the discussion, but threatens to resort to violence, so reflecting the violent society that Romeo and Juliet have been brought up in.



Themes

Love

Perhaps the most obvious subject or theme in *Romeo and Juliet* is love. However, Shakespeare presents love in different ways. There is Romeo's early love for Rosaline. This is like a puppy love, which the Friar calls 'doting' and not 'loving', because it was only really Romeo who believed he was in love.

Paris' love for Juliet is quite similar. He wants to marry her, but approaches her father rather than Juliet (as was the tradition). He does not really show any deep feelings for her, until perhaps at the end of the play, and even says he has 'little talked of love'. This seems to indicate he wants a good marriage and has chosen her, rather than the two of them falling in love.

There is another view of love - as something spiritual and between friends. This is shown with the love Juliet shares with her Nurse, the Friar and Romeo, and the friendships between Mercutio, Benvolio and Romeo. Each of these shows a close understanding. They might make fun of each other and criticise one another's choices, but they respect and care for each other. They will also take great risks for one another: Mercutio dies to protect Romeo's honour.

The love between Romeo and Juliet is our classic idea of romantic love - they will do anything for each other and their language and behaviour reflect this.

Finally, Shakespeare deals with yet another view of love - as something purely sexual. A number of characters, especially Mercutio and the Nurse, make repeated references to sex. This is very different to the idealistic love shown by Romeo and Juliet, although Juliet does allude to it when she describes herself as "sold/Not yet enjoyed".

Fate

Another major topic of *Romeo and Juliet* is fate: the belief that an individual's life has been decided for them and there is nothing they can do to change it. This is used right from the start. Romeo and Juliet's ill-fated lives are described as 'death-marked', and they are a 'pair of star-crossed lovers'. The idea of fate works on several levels. Shakespeare sets the two families against each other, and there is nothing Romeo and Juliet can do about this.

The couple have a feeling that things will go badly for them. Romeo thinks something is 'hanging in the stars', while Juliet says a 'faint cold fear thrills through my veins'.

Death

Death is also mentioned a lot, in lots of different ways, such as 'we were born to die' or 'cold death', and 'death-darting eye'. Mercutio, Tybalt, Paris, Romeo and Juliet all die during the play. Death even becomes a person, one who has married Juliet ('Death is my son-in-law', says Capulet and Paris refers to Juliet being "beguil'd" by death).

Time

Time is another major topic. Even the Chorus at the start tells us the play will last for two hours. There are many other references to time, too, such as in Act 3, Scene 2 with Juliet is waiting for

the night and the arrival of Romeo. Plus, the whole play covers just a few days, and the pace changes frequently.

Time is also crucial to the plot: the plans for Juliet's marriage are brought forward, the sleeping potion only lasts a certain time, and Romeo kills himself just before Juliet wakes up. Even her death is related to time - she says she will 'be brief'. The audience might well feel the two lovers are racing to their deaths and there is nothing anyone can do to stop this.

The text of this booklet is copyrighted to Outwood Grange Academies Trust. It has been issued strictly for the use of students attending an Outwood academy who are sitting GCSE English Literature from June 2017 onwards only. It must not be copied, scanned or passed to anyone else without prior authorisation in writing.