

Characters	
1. Romeo	Male protagonist . A young man of the Montague family, living in Verona. He is romantic, impulsive and fickle character who falls in love with Juliet.
2. Juliet	Female protagonist . A 13 year old girl, the daughter of the Capulet family. She is impressionable, romantic and falls in love with Romeo.
3. Tybalt	The play's antagonist . He is a member of the Capulet household and Juliet's cousin. He is violent and hot tempered .
4. Benvolio	A Montague and loyal friend and cousin of Romeo. He is a peacemaker .
5. Mercutio	A cousin of the Prince, and friend to Romeo. He has a quick wit and vivid imagination , but can be quick to anger .
6. Nurse	Juliet's nursemaid who acts as a confidante and messenger for Juliet.
7. Friar Lawrence	Romeo's confessor , who advises Romeo and Juliet. He believes Romeo and Juliet's marriage may heal the feud between the two families.
8. Capulet	Head of the Capulet family, which has held a long and violent feud with the Montague family. Juliet's father.
9. Lady Capulet	Juliet's mother, although their relationship is cold and distant .
10. Montague	Head of the Montague family. Romeo's father.
11. Lady Montague	Romeo's mother.
12. Prince Escalus	The symbol of law and order in Verona.

Features of a tragedy	
1. Tragic Hero	Protagonist who possesses a flaw that leads to their downfall .
2. Hamartia	The fatal character flaw of the tragic hero.
3. Catharsis	The release of audience emotions through empathy with characters.

Context	
1. Shakespeare's time	The play was written and performed around 1594 , at the time of two monarchs: Queen Elizabeth I and King James I . The play was extremely popular in Shakespeare's lifetime.
2. Patriarchal society	Women were considered inferior to men . This was the case across England and Italy at the time. Women belonged to their fathers , and then their husbands , who they would be expected to obey .
3. Religion	England was under Protestant rule. Romeo and Juliet display their faith at several points in the play, including being married before they share a bed.
4. Fate	The belief that your life is mapped out and 'written in the stars.' Many Elizabethans believed that God decided your fate, and that astrology could help you identify your course in life.
5. Verona, Italy	Shakespeare frequently set his plays in Italy . It was a country of keen interest at the time, being considered an advanced and beautiful place to travel to.

Themes	
1. Love	Love is an extremely overpowering force that supersedes all other values, emotions and loyalties. Romeo and Juliet's love leads them to rebel against the forces of their entire social world .
2. Violence	Extreme violence takes place sporadically throughout the play. The feud between the two families is so bitter that the mere sight of each other can cause a fight to the death . Unchecked violence is personified through the character of Tybalt.
3. Fate	From the very beginning, Romeo and Juliet are introduced as 'star-crossed lovers' meaning that fate had intended for their paths to cross, and that fate controls their actions .

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Plot	Act 1
Prologue	The Chorus speaks of an ancient grudge between two households, from which two ‘star-crossed lovers’ appear
Act 1.1	A street brawl breaks out between the Montagues and Capulets . The Prince intervenes. He threatens the death sentence for anyone who breaks the peace again.
Act 1.2	Paris speaks of his desire to marry Juliet to Capulet. They arrange a masquerade ball so that he can begin to woo her. A messenger accidentally invites Romeo and Benvolio
Act 1.3	Lady Capulet discusses the prospect of Juliet getting married to Paris . She dutifully says that she will look upon him
Act 1.4	Before the ball, Mercutio mocks Romeo . He gives his ‘Queen Mab’ speech. Romeo fears the night will set fate in motion.
Act 1.5	Romeo and Juliet meet at the ball. They immediately fall for each other – Romeo uses metaphors to compare her to a pilgrim. Tybalt spots Romeo and wants to kill him, but Capulet stops him. Romeo and Juliet learn that they are from warring families.

Key quotations from scenes in Act 1		
Prologue	Chorus	"From forth the fatal loins of these two foes A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life. . ."
1.1	Prince Escalus	"To old Free-town, our common judgment-place. Once more, on pain of death, all men depart"
1.2	Paris	"Younger than she are happy mothers made"
1.3	Juliet	'Il look to like if looking liking move But no more deep will I endart mine eye"
1.4	Mercutio	"O, then I see Queen Mab has been with you..."
1.5	Romeo	"If I profane with my unworhiest hand This holy shrine, the gentle sin is this: My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss"
1.6	Juliet	"You kiss by the book."

Symbols	
1. Thumb biting	The action is a silent and immature way to insult someone and could be interpreted as an invitation to violence . The use of this entices the brawl in Act 1.4
2. Swords/weapons	The swords and weapons used in A1.4 are symbolic of the long-standing feud between the Capulet and Montague households .
3. Queen Mab/dreams	Through the Queen Mab imagery, Mercutio suggests that all desires and fantasies are as nonsensical and fragile as Mab and that they are corrupting .
4. Saints and Pilgrims	Romeo refers to Juliet as a saint and himself as a pilgrim who worships her “holy shrine”. He flirtatiously asks if he can kiss her when he describes his lips as “two blushing pilgrims.

Vocabulary	
1. Unrequited	Love that is not returned - a one sided love .
2. Virtuous	Having or showing high moral standards . To be honest and honourable.
3. Foreshadowing	A warning or indication of an event .
4. Transgression	An act that goes against a law , rule or expectation of conduct. An offence
5. Feud	A prolonged and bitter quarrel or dispute.

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Plot	Act 2
Act 2.1	Benvolio and Mercutio search for Romeo , who has escaped them in the hope of finding Juliet somewhere in the house.
Act 2.2	The famous ‘balcony scene.’ Romeo decides that he cannot go home without seeing Juliet again. He trespasses into her garden, where she appears at a window. They decide that they will wed.
Act 2.3	Romeo visits Friar Laurence to ask if he will wed him to Juliet. Whilst shocked at how fickle Romeo’s love is, he agrees because he believes it may end the feud between the two families.
Act 2.4	Benvolio tells Mercutio that Romeo has been sent a challenge to duel by Tybalt. Romeo arrives to meet Mercutio and Benvolio. Mercutio makes fun of the Nurse when she arrives to speak with Romeo. When Mercutio leaves, Romeo arranges with the Nurse for Juliet to meet him at Friar Laurence’s chamber.
Act 2.5 & 2.6	The Nurse sends Juliet to Friar Laurence’s cell , where they are married. The Friar warns them to love moderately.

Key quotations from scenes in Act 2		
2.1	Benvolio	“Go then, for ’tis in vain to seek him here that means not to be found.”
2.2	Juliet	“O Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo?/ Deny they father and refuse thy name _”
2.3	Friar Lawrence	“Thy love did read by rote that could not spell. But come, young waverer, come go with me...”
2.4	Romeo	“Bid her devise/ Some means to come to shrift this afternoon. And there she shall at Friar Lawrence' cell be shrived and married.”
2.5	Nurse	“Then hie you hence to Friar Lawrence’ cell./ There stays a husband to make you a wife.”
2.6	Friar Lawrence	“These violent delights have violent ends, And in their triumph die, like fire and powder.”

Symbols and Motifs	
1. Light/The Sun	Romeo describes Juliet as ‘the sun’, which is lifegiving and essential, just as Juliet is to him. It also includes connotations of brightness and happiness, linking to the simplicity and joy of their love at this point in the play.
2. Names	Juliet asks ‘what’s in a name?’ She is asking why she should be at war with Romeo simply because he is a Montague. She argues that Romeo’s name does not define who he is.
3. The moon	Despite being a romantic symbol, Juliet asks Romeo not to swear by ‘th’ inconstant moon’ because it changes every night, and she does not want his love to be as changeable as the moon.
4. Poison and medicine	Friar Lawrence muses that the same plant can be used both for medicine and a powerful poison. This foreshadows the use of poison later in the play, but is also a symbol of Romeo and Juliet’s love , which delights them, but will end violently.

Vocabulary	
1. Soliloquy	Thoughts spoken out loud.
2. Juxtaposition	Two ideas or things placed close together with contrasting effect.
3. Metaphor	A descriptive technique where something is described as something else.
4. Foreshadowing	A hint of what is to come later in the story.
5. Aside	Dramatic device in which a character speaks to the audience but is unheard by the characters on stage.

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Plot	Act 1
Act 3.1	Tybalt duels Mercutio. Romeo tries to make peace, but Tybalt stabs Mercutio dead under Romeo's arm. In rage, Romeo kills Tybalt. The Prince arrives and exiles Romeo.
Act 3.2	The Nurse tells Juliet of the fight. Juliet is traumatised by the idea of an exiled Romeo. The Nurse says she knows where he is hiding.
Act 3.3	Romeo is desperate when he hears he's been banished to Verona and Friar Lawrence cannot comfort him. Romeo fears Juliet will hate him and threatens to kill himself. Friar instructs Romeo to leave for Mantua by morning, after spending the night with Juliet.
Act 3.4	Capulet arranges with Paris that his wedding to Juliet will take place in a few days' time. He sends Lady Capulet to inform Juliet.
Act 3.5	After spending the night with Juliet, Romeo heads for Mantua. When Juliet refuses to marry Paris , Capulet is furious with her disobedience and threatens to disown her. Nurse advises Juliet to marry Paris. Juliet pretends to heed her advice but secretly heads to see the Friar.

Key quotations from scenes in Act 1		
3.1	Mercutio	"A plague o' both your houses" "Ask for me tomorrow, and you shall find me a grave man"
3.1	Romeo	"O, I am fortune's fool!"
3.2	Nurse	"Tybalt is gone- and Romeo banished. Romeo that killed him."
3.3	Romeo	"Ha! Banishment? Be merciful- say 'death'- For exile hath more terror in his look, Much more than death"
3.4	Lord Capulet	"Sir Paris!- I will make a desperate tender of my child's love"
3.5	Lord Capulet	"Hang thee, young baggage! Disobedient wretch! I tell thee what: get thee to church o' Thursday"

Symbols	
1. The plague	An illness that wiped out a huge number of people. Sufferers would have to stay in their house to die with an 'X' marking their door
2. Death	Mercutio uses harsh language to describe death. 'Worms meat' for example. He believes both families are at fault and he's dying for nothing.
3. Stars	Stars literally and figuratively represent light. Figuratively they represent the "star-crossed" or fated love of Romeo and Juliet. Which leads to "some consequence" and "expire the term" meaning the death of the two teens. Both express figurative darkness regarding the figurative light perpetrated by their great love.

Vocabulary	
1. Exile	Being barred from your country/city with no choice
2. Duplicitous	To be deceitful and misleading towards a person or group of people
3. Beguiled	To be captivated, charmed or enthralled by something. You are absorbed by it in an enjoyable way
4. Obligation	An act or course of action to which a person is legally or morally bound
5. Patriarchy	A society when men are in charge and women must follow their rules and expectations

Plot	Act 4
Act 4.1	Juliet meets Friar Laurence, saying that she would rather kill herself than marry Paris. Friar Lawrence suggests that Juliet take a potion to make herself seem dead. The Friar will write to Romeo and arrange for him to collect Juliet when she wakes in the Capulet tomb.
Act 4.2	On the Friar's advice, Juliet apologises to her father and pretends to agree to marry Paris the following day.
Act 4.3	Juliet is scared and imagines what might go wrong, but drinks the contents of the vial of potion.
Act 4.4	Hearing Paris arriving for the wedding, Capulet orders that Juliet should be woken up.
Act 4.5	The Nurse finds Juliet apparently dead in her room. The family are distraught, but agree to make the funeral arrangements after being comforted by Friar Lawrence.

Key quotations from scenes in Act 4		
4.1	Friar Lawrence	"If...thou hast the strength of will to slay thyself/ then is it likely thou wilt undertake/ a thing <i>like</i> death to chide away this shame –"
4.2	Juliet	"I have learnt me to repent the sin/ of disobedient opposition/to you and your behests."
4.3	Juliet	"Romeo, Romeo, Romeo! Here's drink! I drink to thee!"
4.4	Capulet	"Go waken Juliet! – go, and trim her up./ I'll go and chat with Paris."
4.5	Lady Capulet	"O me, O me! My child, my only life, Revive, look up, or I will die with thee!"

Symbols and Motifs	
1. Death	Juliet is offered the chance to escape marriage to Paris through the appearance of death . She fears the potion not working, and her lying dead in her family tomb, which foreshadows the end of the play . It is ironic that it only through a deathlike trance, that she will be able to start the new life that she has planned with Romeo.
2. Marriage	Acts three and four are filled with thoughts and plans of marriage . In both instances, Juliet is the property of her father . She attempts to refuse him once and is shamed and abused. It is only when she agrees to marry her father's choice of husband , Paris, that her father displays enough love for her to mourn her 'death.'
3. Knife	Juliet keeps a knife by her side while she takes the potion, for fear of the potion not working. This foreshadows the final scene between Romeo and Juliet , but also has connotations of the violence which has ruled the lives of the two families.
4. Poison/Medicine	Alluding to the Friar's speech about medicinal plants in Act 2, Juliet takes a potion that is both a poison , because it will produce the appearance of death, and a medicine , because it will cure the predicament in which she finds herself.

Vocabulary	Definition
1. Dramatic Irony	When the audience is more aware of the full significance of what is happening than the characters.
2. Hamartia	The fatal character flaw of the tragic hero <i>or</i> the moment when a tragic character seals their fate .
3. Patriarchy	a system of society or government in which men hold the power and women are largely excluded from it.
4. Motif	A dominant or recurring idea .

Plot	Act 5	Key quotations from scenes in Act 5		
Act 5.1	Not having received the Friar's message, Romeo is told of Juliet's death by Balthasar. Romeo decides that he will return to Verona to kill himself. Before doing so, he purchases poison from an apothecary	5.1	Romeo	"Is it e'en so? Then I defy you, stars!"
Act 5.2	Friar Laurence learns that Romeo has not received his letter informing him of the plan, and is worried. He doesn't know that Romeo now thinks that Juliet is dead, but he is worried and heads for Juliet's tomb.	5.2	Friar Lawrence	"Unhappy fortune! By my brotherhood, The letter was not nice but full of charge."
Act 5.3	At the Capulet tomb, Paris challenges Romeo (who is still banished). They fight and Romeo kills Paris. Romeo finds Juliet and kisses her one last time before drinking the poison. Friar Lawrence arrives to find Romeo dead next to the sleeping Juliet. When Juliet wakes, the Friar tries to explain what has happened, but when he hears people approaching he flees. Juliet, in her grief, kills herself with a dagger. In their grief over their children's deaths, Capulet and Montague make peace.	5.3	Romeo	"Eyes, look your last./ Arms, take your last embrace!"
		5.3	Juliet	"Oh happy dagger!/ This is thy sheath! (<i>Stabbing herself</i>) – There rust, and/ let me die

Symbols and Motifs		Vocabulary	Definition
1. Death	The deaths of Romeo and Juliet have been foreshadowed since the beginning of the play, and their path towards this fatal end have been littered with the deaths of others. Love and death are juxtaposed throughout the play and foreshadowed by the Friar in Act 3 'these violent delights have violent ends.' Romeo and Juliet's love was impulsive, reckless and passionate, and their deaths were the same.	1. Mercurial	subject to sudden or unpredictable changes of mood or mind
3. Knife/Violence	Foreshadowed by the knife that Juliet kept by her side as she took the sleeping potion, Juliet ends her life violently with the use of Romeo's dagger. At the time, death by a violent weapon would have been seen as an act of strength, and therefore a more masculine act. Juliet's passion and strength, caused by her intense grief, is therefore evident when she chooses to kill herself this way.	2. Pardoned	Forgiven or excused for past offences.
4. Poison/Medicine	The Friar's talk of poison earlier in the play not only foreshadowed Juliet's use of the sleeping potion, but also Romeo's use of poison as a medicine for his grief. Poison was often seen as a woman's weapon, as it took no strength to use, and the brewing of poisons was linked to witchcraft. It could be a symbol of Romeo's romantic nature that he chooses this less violent method of ending of his life. It could also be argued that he was aware of his own fickle nature, and knew that he could not rely on himself to take his own life with the blade on his belt, choosing instead the irreversible poison.	3. Climax	the highest point of tension or drama in a narratives' plot.
		4. Denouement	the final part of a play, film, or narrative in which the strands of the plot are drawn together and matters are explained or resolved
		5. Catharsis	The release of audience emotions through empathy with characters.