

Romeo and Juliet - Exploring Themes

Post-Show Activity for Grades 6-12

Goals

- Students will identify and analyze key themes in *Romeo and Juliet*.
- Students will connect themes to characters, plot, and historical context.
- Students will develop critical thinking through group discussion and written reflection.

NOTE: This activity has been aligned with TEKS and [Universal Design for Learning](#). Demonstration of Learning and TEKS can be found at the end of this document. [Artful Thinking Routines](#) are regularly referenced to encourage critical thinking.

Materials Needed

- Re-Sourced Guide for *Romeo and Juliet* (found [here](#)).
- *Romeo and Juliet* Story Web and Outline (included).
- Writing materials or digital devices for note-taking.
- Art supplies.

Step 1: Introduce the Themes

- **Define the concept:** Briefly discuss what a theme is and explain that *Romeo and Juliet* explores themes such as:
 - Love and Conflict
 - Family Loyalty and Individual Choice
 - Fate and Free Will
 - Youth and Impulsive Decisions
 - Secrecy and Failed Communication
- **Distribute the organizers:** Give students the included Story Web and Outline. Encourage them to use the outline to organize notes during the discussion and group work.
- **Brainstorm as a class:** Ask students to name themes they observed in the play. Record their ideas on the whiteboard or chart paper, prompting them to connect each idea to a specific scene.

Step 2: Assign and Discuss a Theme

- **Form groups:** Divide students into small groups and assign each group one theme from the play.
- **Discuss the theme:** Ask each group to examine how its assigned theme was portrayed in the play by considering:
 - Key scenes that highlighted the theme.
 - Character interactions that exemplified the theme.
 - Any dramatic or theatrical elements that contributed to their understanding of the theme.

Notes for UDL alignment: Bridge the language of the students (the way they phrased their ideas) with any academic or formal variations you wish to support. Example from Romeo and Juliet: “Just cause you’re family hates someone doesn’t mean you have to.” would be another way of saying “Shakespeare showcases the pitfalls of prolonged conflict.” Learn more about UDL guidelines for language and symbols [here](#).

Step 3: Create a Visual Representation

- **Choose a format:** Each group creates a visual representation of its assigned theme using one of the following options:
 - A poster that includes memorable quotes from the play, visuals, and explanations of the theme.
 - A collage using magazine cutouts, drawings, or digital images that symbolize the theme.
 - A short multimedia presentation that combines images, text, and audio to convey the theme.
- **Set the time:** Display a visible timer while students work and give verbal time warnings.
 - **Keep themes visible:** Post the list of themes where students can refer to it while creating.
 - **Use supporting notes:** Remind students to use the Story Web, Outline, and discussion notes.

Step 4: Share and Reflect

- **Present:** Designate a stage area. Have each student or group present its work, explain the assigned theme, and describe how the play expressed it.
- **Optional gallery walk:** If time allows, display the work and invite students to view each piece.
- **Guide peer reflection:** During presentations or the gallery walk, use the [See / Think / Wonder](#) routine:
 - **See:** What do you notice? Describe only the visual details, without interpreting them.
 - **Think:** What do you think is happening? What do you see that makes you say that?
 - **Wonder:** What questions come to mind as you look at the work?

TEKS

English Language Arts and Reading (Grades 6–12)

- (2A–E), (3A–C), (5A–C), (6A–B), (7A), (8A) – Analyze theme and genre; interpret character and plot development; make inferences and draw conclusions with textual evidence;

Theatre I–IV

- (1A–C), (2A–C), (3A–B), (4A–B) – Develop and sustain characters using voice, movement, and imagination; interpret scripts and dramatic literature; collaborate to express ideas and themes through performance; analyze and critique theatrical works and performances.

Romeo and Juliet – Play Outline

Use this outline as a guide to help you remember the play as you do the activity.

Basic Play Information

- A. Title: Romeo and Juliet
- B. Playwright: William Shakespeare
- C. Genre: Tragedy
- D. Setting: Verona, Italy in the Renaissance
- E. Central Points of View: Romeo and Juliet

Major Themes

- A. Love and Conflict
- B. Family Loyalty and Individual Choice
- C. Fate and Free Will
- D. Youth and Impulsive Decisions
- E. Secrecy and Failed Communication

Key Moments / Ideas

- A. A fight reveals the feud between the Montagues and Capulets. The Prince threatens death if the families disturb Verona again.
- B. Romeo and Juliet meet at the Capulets' celebration, fall in love, and are secretly married by Friar Laurence.
- C. Tybalt kills Mercutio. Romeo kills Tybalt in revenge and is banished from Verona.
- D. Ordered to marry Paris, Juliet drinks a potion that makes her appear dead. Friar Laurence's message explaining the plan never reaches Romeo.
- E. Believing Juliet is dead, Romeo takes poison. Juliet awakens, finds Romeo's body, and kills herself. Their deaths finally end the families' feud.

Overall Impact

- A. The play shows how hatred, secrecy, and impulsive choices can turn love into tragedy
- B. Romeo and Juliet's deaths bring peace to Verona, but only after an irreversible loss.

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Romeo and Juliet – Story Web

Use this story web as a guide to help you remember the play as you do the activity. Some notes are numbered to show the order in which they happened in the story.

