

Year

10

General

ENGLISH LESSON BOOK



Unit 4

Part 1

Responding to a Shakespearean
drama and interpretation of
Shakespeare in film

 v5



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Icon legend

 Sheet	 Send-in	 Digital	 Tutor/teacher	 Negotiated task
 Handwriting	 Exercise book	 Safety	 Keep	 Prac work
 Starter kit	 English resource	 Maths resource	 Science resource	 History resource

Year 10 Unit 4

Topic: Shakespeare in context

Elizabethan England

Today you will:

- ▶ understand unit intent and assessment task
- ▶ understand values, beliefs and assumptions of the Elizabethan context.

Resources

Text

Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare

Digital

Video — Why read Shakespeare? (1:47)

Video — Unit introduction (3:32)

Video — A snapshot of Elizabethan England: Part 1 (3:00)

Video — A snapshot of Elizabethan England: Part 2 (6:34)

Slideshow — Overview: *Romeo and Juliet*

Find and prepare

Sheet 1 — English glossary Year 10 Unit 4

Key terms

chorus, prologue, Shakespearean tragedy, values (attitudes), assumptions and beliefs

For definitions and explanations of terms, please see the [Glossary](#).

Keep the **Glossary** for reference throughout this unit. You will also find a link to the **Glossary** on the **Lesson and resource overview**.

Lesson

Understand unit intent

Welcome to Unit 4 of Year 10 English. In this unit, you will be introduced to William Shakespeare with an in-depth reading of his play *Romeo and Juliet*. You will watch a film interpretation and compare representations between the original play and the film adaptation. Some of you may have preconceived notions about Shakespeare. Thoughts like, 'He's a billion years old, why bother?' or 'His language is too hard to read', might cross your mind.

Humph! There is a reason people still read my work. Watch the next presentation that explains why it's worth it.



1. View the Video — Why read Shakespeare?

This video addresses why it is important to read Shakespeare. For example, it is both a challenge and a privilege to go that extra mile in understanding Shakespearean literature as it is considered to be world renowned and rich in language, poetry, imagery and history.



It is compulsory that you have access to the script for the play *Romeo and Juliet*. It is recommended you find a contemporary edition of *Romeo and Juliet* that has a modern translation side by side with the original text. This will help with your comprehension.

Your teacher can also provide you with information about helpful websites to use. Refer to **Sheet 1** — [English glossary Year 10 Unit 4](#) for definitions of key terms.

In your last unit, Shakespeare himself guided you through the unit. He will also be here to assist during this unit.



Welcome back. I hope you enjoy my play, *Romeo and Juliet*. I am interested to hear your final evaluation. You will also be joined by the main characters, Romeo and Juliet.

My love for Juliet is world famous. I hope by the end of the unit you will have a better understanding of it.



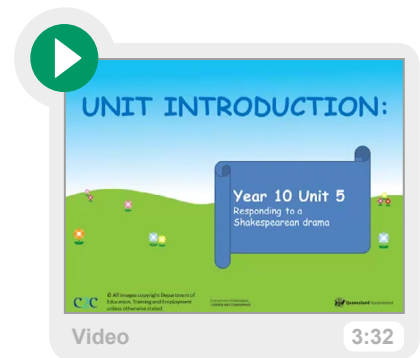
And my love for Romeo equals his love for me.



Understand assessment task

2. View the **Video — Unit introduction.**

This video introduces what you will be studying in this unit, including comprehending, analysing and interpreting *Romeo and Juliet*.



You now know your assessment task is a written analytical response to a representation of a theme in the play and film, *Romeo and Juliet*.

Develop knowledge about the Elizabethan context

When engaging with Shakespeare's work, you need to understand a little about the context in which he wrote. Shakespeare was born in the Elizabethan era, the period of history when Queen Elizabeth I reigned in England and Ireland (1558–1603).

Understanding the period in which Shakespeare wrote is important because the values, assumptions and beliefs of the Elizabethan era are evident in his writing.



- **cultural assumptions:** beliefs or attitudes about such things as gender, religion, youth, age, disability, sexuality, social class and work that are taken for granted as being part of the fabric of the social practices of a particular culture. Cultural assumptions underlie cultural expressions in texts and may also be embedded in texts in various ways. It is an idea that is common throughout a sub culture.
- **attitudes:** mental and emotional positions towards things (people, places, actions, and events) that arise from the values, beliefs, and experiences of an individual. A way of thinking or feeling with regards to someone or something.
- **values:** ways of expressing a view of how things should be, by placing importance on different things or believing that things should be done in a particular way. These are often the key ideas and beliefs in a text. They may be reflected in characters, through what they do and say; through the setting of the text, reflecting particular social views; and through the narrative voice of the text, perhaps through authorial comment. Values are specific to individuals and groups, and a text may contain a number of conflicting values.
- **beliefs:** ideas that are taken to be 'true' by individuals and, therefore, not subject to question. Beliefs often are assumptions and convictions we hold to be true based on past experiences. An idea that is accepted as true without facts. A belief can underpin messages in texts.

4. Think about the values, cultural assumptions, attitudes and beliefs that inform the dominant Australian perspective on the following topics and try to summarise them in one sentence.

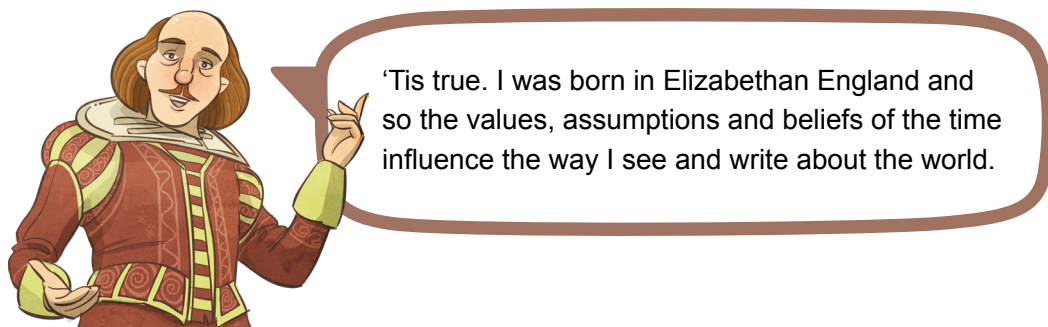
a. Sport:

b. Gender roles:

c. Marriage:

d. The environment:

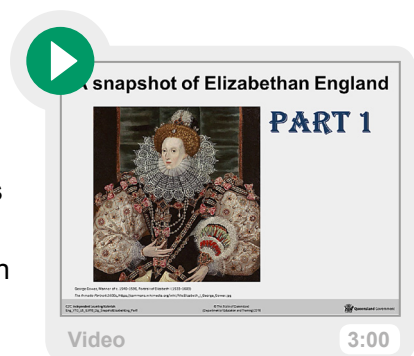
These attitudes and values shape the way people see the world and Shakespeare was no exception.



When you view the videos below, make sure you read each section carefully as you will have to summarise your findings by filling the gaps in the table that follows.

5. View the **Video — A snapshot of Elizabethan England: Part 1.**

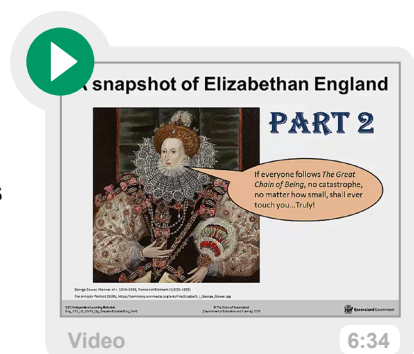
Part 1 of this video series illustrates the social, cultural and historical context which determined the values, assumptions and beliefs inherent in Shakespeare's plays — it shows a glimpse of Elizabethan England, including how life in London was like and Shakespeare's Globe theatre.



George Gower, Manner of c. 1540–1596, Portrait of Elizabeth I (1533–1603)
The Armada Portrait 1600c. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Elizabeth_I_George_Gower.jpg

6. View the **Video — A snapshot of Elizabethan England: Part 2.**

Part 2 of this video series illustrates the social, cultural and historical context which determined the values, assumptions and beliefs inherent in Shakespeare's plays — it shows a glimpse of Elizabethan England, such as their beliefs about The Great Chain of Being, love, marriage and predetermined fate.



George Gower, Manner of c. 1540–1596, Portrait of Elizabeth I (1533–1603)
The Armada Portrait 1600c. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Elizabeth_I_George_Gower.jpg

7. Complete the table below to categorise beliefs and values held by Elizabethans. The left column should summarise the beliefs held by Elizabethans and the right column should identify the values that these beliefs indicate. (Two categories have been completed for you.)

The Elizabethan era		
Beliefs	Attitudes to:	Values
<p>Life followed a rigid, hierarchical and natural order. This natural order governed society, family, nature and the human body.</p> <p>The Great Chain of Being must stay in proper order or chaos would reign.</p>	<p>social order</p>	<p>Hierarchy valued and respected</p> <p>Maintaining the status quo and social order</p> <p>Patriarchal society — God, King and Father honoured above all else</p>
	<p>family</p>	
<p>Marriage was generally for status rather than love, and was often arranged.</p>	<p>love and marriage</p>	<p>Marriage was a practical arrangement for the improvement of wealth and political status. This was valued above marrying for love.</p>
	<p>fate</p>	



What do you think? Would you have liked to have lived in Elizabethan England or do you prefer the time you live in now?

8. If you were living in Elizabethan England, how would you respond to the following scenarios? (1–2 sentences for each scenario)
- a. You are female and are told you are going to marry the heir to the very rich and famous Montulet family. You've never met your betrothed, but the marriage has been arranged. You haven't really considered marriage before now.

 - b. Your 12-year-old daughter expresses a keen desire to join her brother in attending classes at the local public school.

As you read *Romeo and Juliet*, keep in mind that it is meant to be performed and would be accompanied by the excitement of a live performance on stage.

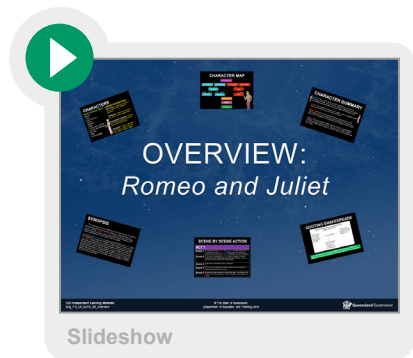




Before you begin a detailed reading of the play, it helps to have a clear overview of the characters and plot. In a moment, you are going to view a slideshow that provides a synopsis of the play, brief description of the characters and an act-by-act summary about where the action happens. This will help you locate quotations more easily later in the unit. Use this overview as a reference tool throughout the unit.

9. View the **Slideshow — Overview: *Romeo and Juliet***.

This is an interactive slideshow that presents a summary of the play *Romeo and Juliet*, as well as a scene-by-scene breakdown of the play, an explanation of the characters and their relationships with each other and how to cite quotations.



10. Place the following plot statements in the correct order, from 1 to 10.

Romeo and Juliet meet and fall in love.	
Friar Laurence secretly weds Romeo and Juliet.	
Juliet drinks poison to appear dead.	
Romeo kills himself by drinking poison.	
A fight breaks out between the Montague and Capulet families, ending with the deaths of Tybalt and Mercutio.	
Juliet's father arranges to bring her planned marriage to Paris forward.	
Romeo is lovesick and moping about Rosaline.	
Friar Laurence devises a plan to save Juliet from her marriage to Paris and to reunite her with Romeo.	
Juliet awakes to find Romeo dead and kills herself.	
Romeo is banished from Verona.	

Let's see if you can recognise the values and beliefs of Elizabethan England in my writing. You are now going to read the opening prologue of my play, *Romeo and Juliet*. This is delivered by the chorus.



prologue: an introductory scene that precedes the first act of a play

chorus: a group of people who recite the introduction or prologue to each act in a Shakespearean play; they almost act as a narrator, preparing the audience for the upcoming act

For some, this will be your first time reading Shakespeare. You will find the original script in the left column and a modern translation in the right column.

***Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare**



THE PROLOGUE	
Original script	Translation
<p>Enter Chorus.</p> <p>Two households, both alike in dignity, In fair Verona, where we lay our scene From ancient grudge break to new mutiny, Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.</p> <p>From forth the fatal loins of these two foes A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life; Whose misadventur'd piteous overthrows Doth with their death bury their parents' strife.</p> <p>The fearful passage of their death-mark'd love, And the continuance of their parents' rage, Which, but their children's end, naught could remove, Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage; The which if you with patient ears attend, What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.</p> <p>[Exit.]</p>	<p>Enter Chorus.</p> <p>Two families, both nobility, in beautiful Verona, where this story is set. A long-standing hatred is about to become violent again, and citizens will stain their hands with the blood of their fellow citizens.</p> <p>From these enemy families, two ill-fated children fall in love and commit suicide. Their unfortunate deaths finally end their parents' feud.</p> <p>This doomed love affair, along with their parents' continuing family feud, which nothing but their children's deaths could end, is what will be played out on stage for the next two hours. If you listen patiently, what we have not explained in this prologue, we will act out onstage.</p> <p>[Exit.]</p>

11. After reading the prologue carefully, answer the following questions.
- Look closely at line 6, 'A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life'. What Elizabethan beliefs are reflected in this line? Use the **Video — A snapshot of Elizabethan England: Part 2** to help you answer. (1–2 sentences)
 - What does line 6, 'A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life', tell us about the tragedy of the play? (1 sentence)
 - What are the effects on the audience of knowing the ending? (1–2 sentences)
 - Do you think a contemporary audience or an Elizabethan audience would be more inclined to relate to the tragedy of this play? Explain.




Make sure you have access to *Romeo and Juliet* in time for the next lesson. Find a new edition with a translation or contact your teacher for details on how to access a copy.

English glossary Year 10 Unit 4


Key terms	Definition
allusion	<p>an indirect reference to someone or something that conveys or enhances a particular meaning</p> <p>Allusions usually refer to literary works, social and historical events, or people. For example: 'The footballer's <i>Herculean</i> efforts were appreciated by the fans'; 'Chocolate is my <i>Achilles</i>' heel.'</p>
characterisation	<p>the construction of character/s by an author; the attitudes, beliefs, behaviours and language of each character are developed by an author to convey particular messages or reasons for situations in a narrative or play</p>
chorus	<p>a group of people who recite the introduction or prologue to each act in a Shakespearean play; they almost act as a narrator, preparing the audience for the upcoming act</p>
clause	<p>A grammatical unit that refers to a happening or state (for example, 'the netball team won' [happening], 'the cartoon is an animation' [state]).</p> <p>A clause usually contains a subject and a verb group/phrase (for example, 'the team [subject] has played [verb group/phrase] a fantastic game'), which may be accompanied by an object or other complements (elements that are closely related to the verb – for example, 'the match' in 'The team lost the match') and/or adverbials (for example, 'on a rainy night' in 'The team won on a rainy night'). </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • main clause: a clause that makes sense on its own • subordinate clause: relies on a main or independent clause to make sense, for example: 'I took my umbrella <i>because it was raining</i>'. • embedded clause: a subordinate clause which occurs within a main clause. It cannot stand alone. It depends on the noun for meaning, for example: 'The Arctic wasteland <i>that the explorers had found</i> resembled a blank canvas'.
cohesion	<p>Grammatical or lexical relationships that bind different parts of a text together and give it unity. Cohesion is achieved through various devices such as connectives, ellipses and word associations (sometimes called lexical cohesion). </p>
citation conventions	<p>When quoting from or referencing a Shakespearean play, it is important to use proper citation conventions.</p> <p>These numbers indicate act 1, scene 1, lines 37– 40: 1.1.37– 40</p>
complex sentence	<p>consists of a main clause and one or more subordinate clauses</p> <p>For example: 'Although fate contributes to the tragedy of <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>, social forces also play a part.'</p>



Key terms	Definition
compound sentence	<p>A sentence with two or more main clauses of equal grammatical status, usually marked by a coordinating conjunction such as 'and', 'but' or 'or'. AC</p> <p>For example: 'Fate contributes to the tragedy of <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> yet social forces assure the tragedy of the play.'</p>
context	<p>The environment in which a text is responded to or created. AC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cultural context: the culture in which the text was created • historical context: the time in which the text was created or set • social context: the social situation in which language is being used. For example, the text is set in a different society that has different ways of speaking or interacting. <p>For example: Shakespeare's <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> was written over 500 years ago, so the cultural, historical and social contexts are very different compared to 21st century Australia.</p> <p>The term is also used to refer to the wording surrounding an unfamiliar word, which a reader or listener uses to understand its meaning. AC</p>
foreshadowing	<p>providing subtle hints that indicate what will occur later in a narrative; builds anticipation about what will happen next</p>
hyperbole	<p>an obvious exaggeration for effect or an extravagant statement not intended to be taken literally</p> <p>For example: 'At last! I have waited an eternity.'</p>
idiom	<p>an informal expression used by a particular social group and needs to be explained as one unit; only people who are familiar with that society or culture will understand the idiom AC</p> <p>For example: 'I am over the moon', which means 'very happy'.</p> <p>Some idioms that Shakespeare made popular, most of which are still in use today, are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'hoist with your own petard' — meaning you are injured with the same instrument or device that you intended to use to injure others • 'you wear your heart upon your sleeve' — meaning you openly display your feelings for everyone to see • 'in a pickle' — stuck in a difficult situation or position • 'in stitches' — laughing so hard you are almost in physical pain • 'pound of flesh' — is when someone comes to ruthlessly collect what the other person owes them • 'this is the long and the short of it' — this is the simple truth • 'that which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet' — meaning what matters is what someone is like on the inside, not what they are called.

Key terms	Definition
irony	the use of words, actions or situations (sometimes contrived and other times incidental) to convey a meaning that is the opposite of the original meaning, usually with strangely funny consequences
literary devices	<p>Writers of imaginative and narrative texts, such as poems, short stories, novels and plays, use literary devices to relay information in a subtle way, often conveying multiple layers of meaning to add excitement, grasp attention, stimulate intellectual curiosity and affect the senses.</p> <p>Some literary devices found in a Shakespearean play are metaphor, simile, personification, paradox, foreshadowing, irony, hyperbole, oxymoron, allusion, and idiom.</p> <p>Shakespeare’s use of language devices (for example, the selection of adjectives, his choice of expression) can engage the emotions of the audience.</p>
metaphor	<p>a descriptive connection made from one object, person, place or event to another, which can help the reader apply qualities of one to the other to provide insight or new knowledge; when one thing is said to be something that it is not; it is not meant to be taken literally</p> <p>For example: ‘Juliet is the sun’ (2.2.2).</p> <p>Romeo suggests Juliet’s beauty makes her stand out in the night.</p>
modality	<p>An area of meaning having to do with possibility, probability, obligation and permission. </p> <p>When developing logical arguments, you should avoid statements or generalisations that reflect overly high degrees of certainty (how likely something is to happen) or usuality (how often something happens). If using high modality, make sure your point is well thought out. Statements that use high modality are often easy to disagree with.</p> <p>For example, when responding to an interpretation, it is better to use ‘It could be argued that ...’ rather than ‘Shakespeare definitely wants the audience to accept the idea that ...’.</p> <p>It is better to use <i>reduced</i> modality when refuting or supporting interpretations.</p>



Key terms	Definition
nominalisation	<p>a process for forming nouns from verbs, adjectives or clauses</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nouns from verbs ('excitement' from 'excite') • nouns from adjectives ('height' from 'high') • noun groups/phrases from clauses ('their exit from the building' from 'they exited the building') <p>Nominalisation can be used to condense information in analytical writing. By collapsing a clause into a noun or noun group, writing can become more concise and more refined.</p> <p>For example:</p> <p>Description 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'When Romeo decides to kill Tybalt, intending to avenge Mercutio, he begins a series of events which culminate in the final tragedy of the play.' <p>Description 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Romeo's decision to avenge Mercutio is the catalyst which culminates in the final tragedy of the play.' <p>Note that nominalisations articulate ideas in a manner appropriate to literary analysis. In the second description, the focus is on abstract, thematic concepts (a character's decision-making, vengeance) rather than recounting the actions of Romeo.</p>
nouns and noun groups/ phrases	<p>A word class that includes all words denoting physical object such 'man', 'woman', 'boy', 'girl', 'diamond', 'car', 'window' etc. </p> <p>A noun group/phrase consists of a noun as the major element, alone or accompanied by one or more modifiers. The noun functioning as the major element may be a common noun, proper noun or pronoun.</p> <p>For example: 'some people', 'many mistakes', 'the old man's house', 'two days', 'Kim's behaviour'</p>
oxymoron	<p>the pairing of contradictory words for effect; it highlights paradox and contrast and is often patterned as an adjective–noun</p> <p>For example: 'deafening silence', 'clearly confused', 'bitter sweet', 'civil war', 'crash landing', 'pretty ugly', 'alone together', 'awfully good', 'run slowly', 'small crowd', 'sweet agony', 'found missing', 'impossible solution', 'loud whisper', 'old news', 'same difference', 'seriously funny', 'unbiased opinion'</p>
paradox	<p>a statement that seems to contradict itself or sound absurd, but is actually an insightful statement</p> <p>For example: 'Ahh, youth is wasted on the young.'</p>



Key terms	Definition										
paragraph	<p>consists of a topic sentence, body (evidence with elaboration) and a closing sentence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic sentence: The first sentence presents the central idea of the paragraph — the subject matter or argument to be discussed throughout. The sentences that follow should all relate to this central idea. • Elaboration: Sentences that provide discussion of ideas and present evidence of fact that support or validate the topic sentence. All sentences should support the central idea raised in the topic sentence. • Closing sentence: When writing a single paragraph, the closing sentence should summarise information in such a way that the central idea of the paragraph is emphasised. 										
personification	<p>a literary device that gives human characteristics to something that is not human, such as objects, concepts and forces</p> <p>For example: 'The wind breathes a sigh of relief.'</p>										
plot of Shakespearean tragedy	<p>The plot of a Shakespearean tragedy is unique even though it does follow the same basic narrative structure as that of a novel or short story; however, it has additional 'tragic' elements.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="560 1111 1422 1966"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" data-bbox="560 1111 1422 1162">Dramatic structure</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="560 1162 791 1391"> <p>Initial disorder</p> <p>↕</p> </td> <td data-bbox="791 1162 1422 1391"> <p>Exposition: sets the mood, time and place of the play, and introduces key characters.</p> <p>Rising action: the initial incident or complication that motivates the drama and, in hindsight, leads to tragedy.</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="560 1391 791 1619"> <p>Increasing disorder</p> <p>↕</p> </td> <td data-bbox="791 1391 1422 1619"> <p>Hamartia: here the flaw/s of the protagonist or tragic hero lead to a set of increasingly tense complications and conflict.</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="560 1619 791 1848"> <p>Chaos</p> <p>↕</p> </td> <td data-bbox="791 1619 1422 1848"> <p>Climax: this moment of high tension is the turning point of the play, the protagonist or tragic hero moves steadily towards final consequences. A sharp reversal in fortune is put into effect.</p> <p>Falling action: the events that occur after the climax, up until the death of the hero.</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="560 1848 791 1966"> <p>Some order restored</p> </td> <td data-bbox="791 1848 1422 1966"> <p>Catastrophe: the hero's death.</p> <p>Restoration: a glimpse of better times is given to the audience.</p> <p>These elements occur across five acts.</p> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Dramatic structure		<p>Initial disorder</p> <p>↕</p>	<p>Exposition: sets the mood, time and place of the play, and introduces key characters.</p> <p>Rising action: the initial incident or complication that motivates the drama and, in hindsight, leads to tragedy.</p>	<p>Increasing disorder</p> <p>↕</p>	<p>Hamartia: here the flaw/s of the protagonist or tragic hero lead to a set of increasingly tense complications and conflict.</p>	<p>Chaos</p> <p>↕</p>	<p>Climax: this moment of high tension is the turning point of the play, the protagonist or tragic hero moves steadily towards final consequences. A sharp reversal in fortune is put into effect.</p> <p>Falling action: the events that occur after the climax, up until the death of the hero.</p>	<p>Some order restored</p>	<p>Catastrophe: the hero's death.</p> <p>Restoration: a glimpse of better times is given to the audience.</p> <p>These elements occur across five acts.</p>
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prologue	an introductory scene that precedes the first act of a play										



Key terms	Definition																
Shakespearean tragedy	<p>The features of a Shakespearean tragedy are:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="523 394 1385 1563"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="523 394 743 477">Features of tragedy</th> <th data-bbox="743 394 1385 477">Explanation</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="523 477 743 636">tragic hero</td> <td data-bbox="743 477 1385 636">a decent, essentially good (although far from perfect) character who suffers from an underlying, yet significant, character flaw or weakness</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="523 636 743 808">tragic flaw or hamartia</td> <td data-bbox="743 636 1385 808">a flaw of a character or a weakness that leads to a tragic hero's downfall Examples of tragic flaws could be greediness or ambition.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="523 808 743 1021">the supernatural, fate, fortune and chance</td> <td data-bbox="743 808 1385 1021">The supernatural can affect characters — providing access to knowledge or haunting characters. Fate, fortune and chance can play a part in shaping characters' destinies.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="523 1021 743 1234">foil</td> <td data-bbox="743 1021 1385 1234">a character who contrasts with the protagonist or tragic hero of the play The difference between the characters highlights the characteristics of the tragic hero or protagonist.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="523 1234 743 1357">protagonist</td> <td data-bbox="743 1234 1385 1357">the central character or characters that drive the action and establish emotional connections with the audience</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="523 1357 743 1480">antagonist</td> <td data-bbox="743 1357 1385 1480">a character (or force) that acts in direct opposition to the protagonist, causing problems or obstacles</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="523 1480 743 1563">dramatic structure</td> <td data-bbox="743 1480 1385 1563">the exposition, rising action, hamartia, climax, falling action, catastrophe, restoration</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Features of tragedy	Explanation	tragic hero	a decent, essentially good (although far from perfect) character who suffers from an underlying, yet significant, character flaw or weakness	tragic flaw or hamartia	a flaw of a character or a weakness that leads to a tragic hero's downfall Examples of tragic flaws could be greediness or ambition.	the supernatural, fate, fortune and chance	The supernatural can affect characters — providing access to knowledge or haunting characters. Fate, fortune and chance can play a part in shaping characters' destinies.	foil	a character who contrasts with the protagonist or tragic hero of the play The difference between the characters highlights the characteristics of the tragic hero or protagonist.	protagonist	the central character or characters that drive the action and establish emotional connections with the audience	antagonist	a character (or force) that acts in direct opposition to the protagonist, causing problems or obstacles	dramatic structure	the exposition, rising action, hamartia, climax, falling action, catastrophe, restoration
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simile	<p>a comparison made between two things that have something in common (or are similar to each other) and are compared using the words <i>like</i>, <i>as</i> or <i>than</i></p> <p>For example: 'Like the stars in the heavens, her eyes sparkle with much awe-inspiring delight.'</p>																
simple sentence	<p>has the form of a single independent clause</p> <p>For example: 'Shakespeare wrote <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>.'</p>																

Key terms	Definition
soliloquy	<p>when a character is alone onstage and talks to themselves, expressing their innermost thoughts and feelings</p> <p>A Shakespearean soliloquy is famous for allowing tragic characters to do this but there is an ironic element to it as characters are usually unable to perceive the flaws in their own reasoning. Shakespeare imbues his soliloquies with lush imagery and literary devices as the characters verbally battle with their private thoughts and quickly changing moods. This is also reflective of the way the soliloquy should be performed.</p>
text connectives	<p>words and phrases that establish cohesion in texts</p> <p>Connectives to use when supporting or refuting interpretations of literature are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comparative connectives to compare and/or make concessions (for example: <i>even though, however, nevertheless</i>) • causal connectives to demonstrate logical results (for example: <i>because, therefore, as a result, for that reason</i>) • additive connectives to acknowledge the validity of a point or add further supporting evidence (for example: <i>in addition, indeed, also, furthermore, on top of that, as well, likewise</i>) • clarifying connectives to emphasise the validity of a particular point (for example: <i>for example, for instance, in particular, in fact, that is</i>).
thematic message	<p>refers to the main idea or message of a text</p> <p>Authors often embed perspectives, messages or ideas in a text for the audience to review; interpretations of these messages may vary according to the dominant values, beliefs and assumptions of the audience.</p> <p>Major themes in <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> include youth, love and fate.</p>
values (attitudes), assumptions and beliefs	<p>The ideology inherent in a particular historical, social or cultural context is made up of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • values: ideas or attitudes that are seen as 'ideal' or 'worthwhile' in our society • assumptions: rarely questioned opinions that are taken to be absolutely correct; assumptions are learned over time in a particular cultural context and are applied automatically when understanding the world • beliefs: ideas that are taken to be 'true' by individuals and, therefore, not subject to question.



Key terms	Definition
verbal irony	<p>when the actual meaning of a statement is significantly different to what is literally or explicitly stated; when someone says something but really means something else</p> <p>For example: Your parents may make the following remark about your messy room — ‘It’s nice to see that you’re looking after your room.’ Obviously, your parents don’t think you’ve been doing a great job looking after your room. They are, in fact, hinting that you have not been looking after your room.</p>
verbs and verb groups/ phrases	<p>A verb is a word class that describes a kind of situation such as a happening (for example, ‘climbed’ in ‘she climbed the ladder’) or a state (for example, ‘is’ in ‘a koala is an Australian mammal’). </p> <p>Verb groups are made up of a main verb that is modified by an auxiliary or modal verb. This means a description has been added to it.</p> <p>Verb groups/phrases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create tense, as in ‘He [was happy]’, ‘She [is working] at home’, I [have seen] him before’ • express modality using modal verbs such as ‘can’, ‘may’, ‘must’, ‘will’, ‘shall’ and so on, as in ‘You [must be] mad’, ‘He [will have arrived] by now’, ‘She [may know] them’ • create passive voice, as in ‘A photo [was taken]’. 

Key terms	Definition
Angles/lines	The 'direction' of an image based on the angles or lines within it. Horizontals create a sense of calm, verticals a sense of structure and diagonals a mood of unease or being off balance.
Body language	Facial expressions, body language and gestures used to show character's attitudes, moods or personality. Often focussed on overall body movement and positioning.
Colour (Hues/tones)	Colours are symbolic of different emotions, moods, etc. and are used to evoke corresponding responses in audiences. Purple is a colour of royalty, wealth and luxury whereas red symbolises lust, passion, anger and so on. Also consider how saturated colours are (are they bright and vivid or dull and de-saturated?).
Composition	What an image is made up of – where things are placed, how it is framed, the colour and lighting used, etc. This generally refers to the image as a whole.
Contrast	Placing things that are considered opposite close to each other. Contrasts can be between colours (black and white), sizes (large and small), textures (rough and smooth), etc. to create interest and complexity. One small contrasting colour/size/shape in an image is also usually highly salient because it stands out.
Costuming	The clothes, makeup, hairstyles, accessories, etc. designed to be worn by characters to represent their personality, status, heritage, culture, etc. Often characters clothes will fit within one or two similar colour palettes or tones and use fabrics of similar textures. Colour symbolism often comes into play here (a character wearing earthy colours may be associated with gardening, plants and nature).
Cut	The splicing of two shots together so that one seems to instantly move to the other. There are many different types of cuts – jump cuts are more jagged and create a sense of fast pace or deliberately poor editing, match cuts involve cutting between two very visually similar shots to create a more seamless flow.
Dialogue	The words spoken by characters. Regular literary techniques are used here (metaphor, simile, personification, etc.) but also consider character vocal inflection, tone, pauses, etc. as well as their vocal range (does the character have a deep voice? A high, feminine voice?).
Digital Effects	Any images, characters, setting and effects added digitally in post-production to add to or alter the original shot. Remember that all digital effects are deliberate and have been added for a reason – to change the mood of a shot, change character gesture, etc.



Key terms	Definition
Fade in/out	A transition device whereby a shots fades into or out of black (or another image) at the end or beginning of the shot respectively. These are generally used to create a sense of slow movement, intimacy or 'trailing off' in a shot/scene.
Framing	The camera shots and angles used in images/films to create different audience reactions and emotions. E.g. close-up, extreme close-up, mid shots, aerial shots, etc.
Gaze	Where a character looks, which then directs viewer's eyes. A 'demand' gaze involves direct eye contact between a character and the viewer, an 'offer' has the character look at something within the image, drawing the viewer's eyes there too. Can also be used to express emotion/intent.
Law of thirds	By dividing an image into equal thirds along the horizontal, the vertical axis you can break it into 9 equal sections which each have different connotations, Movement is expected to from the left thirds to the right thirds, otherwise it's read as moving backwards (literally or figuratively). Characters in the top right third are seen as powerful or in control, while those in the bottom left thirds are weaker or being controlled.
Lighting	How a shot is lit or not lit. This includes natural lighting (the sun, open windows, etc.) and man-made lighting (lamps, torches, etc.) as well as feature lighting such as coloured lights, spotlights, moving lights, etc. Lighting has a major impact on the mood and atmosphere of an image (low light is seedy, harsh light is unnerving, soft light is intimate, etc.)
Point of view	How the shot is framed in reference to the viewer or a character. Does the shot take the character's point of view (a shot of a character leaning out a window cutting to an aerial shot looking down from a window) or is the audience placed level with, above or below the characters/objects/action?
Positioning	Where have objects and characters been placed in the shot? What is in the foreground, middle ground and background and why have they been placed there?
Montage	The cutting together or several shots that show small pieces of a larger scene or idea to create an overall sense of time passing/ something occurring. Most commonly used in training sequences where a character must become skilled in a task over time, so many shots of them completing different training exercises are cut together to create a sense of them improving over time.

Key terms	Definition
Props	Items and objects used within a shot to create a sense of setting, represent character interests, symbolise something else or be interacted with. Generally the most important props are those used or seen as important by characters, as well as recurring props that feature in several different scenes/shots throughout the film.
Symbolism	The use of one image/object to represent an idea or concept that is more complex than it is. Religious symbolism, pop culture symbolism and animal symbolism are all very common.
Salience	How much any section of an image draws the viewer's eyes – the most salient feature of an image is whatever/wherever the viewer's eyes are first drawn when they look at it. Salience is always deliberate and usually created through contrast, colour, framing and layout.
Text	Words used within images to convey a literal or figurative message. Consider the font, colour, size, weight, etc. of the text, where and how often it has been used and the connotations of the words actually used.
Voice-over	Audio narration laid over the top of a shot's regular soundtrack. Generally voiceover is used to give audiences extra information, additional commentary or character's specific views/comments on the scene.

Topic: Shakespeare in context

Understanding Shakespearean prose

Today you will:

- ▶ understand strategies for reading and comprehending Shakespearean prose
- ▶ understand representations of people, cultures, places, events, objects and concepts in a Shakespearean play.

Resources

Text

Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare

Digital

Video — What's he talking about? (3:49)

Video — Problem 1 (3:06)

Video — Problem 2 (3:39)

Video — Problem 3 (2:05)

Find and prepare

Sheet 3 — Shakespearean glossary

Sheet 4 — Tips for understanding Shakespeare

Key terms

allusion, citation conventions, context, idiom, metaphor, nouns and noun groups/phrases, values (attitudes), assumptions and beliefs, verbs and verb groups/phrases

For definitions and explanations of terms, please see the **Glossary**.

Lesson

Develop skills for reading Shakespearean prose

At first glance, you might feel a little overwhelmed by Shakespearean prose. He didn't use language the way we do — his characters don't speak like we speak. But never fear, once you get the hang of it, you will begin to appreciate what a wonderful writer he was.

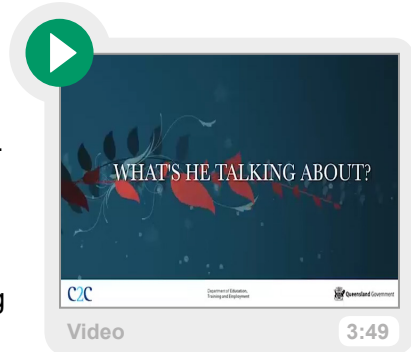
In a moment, you are going to view a presentation that translates some Shakespearean language. It is taken from act 1, scene 5 of *Romeo and Juliet*. You won't be up to this section of the play yet, but don't worry because it's just an example for you.



1. What is the citation reference for act 1, scene 5, lines 42 to 45? (Hint: See **Slideshow — Overview** last slide.)

2. View the **Video — What's he talking about?**

This video showcases actors deconstructing lines of Shakespearean dialogue from act 1, scene 5, lines 42 to 45. Often, Shakespeare's writings have a deeper meaning than that which is on the surface — it is rich with metaphors, imagery, symbolism, allusion and much more — and it is this that makes deciphering his literature equally challenging and fascinating, particularly as it was based on a society and culture unlike our own with an expired set of values, assumptions and beliefs.



The English language has changed since Shakespeare was alive. In this lesson, you are going to develop skills for reading Shakespearean prose. The first thing you need to do is identify the words that are completely different to modern language.

3. Open **Sheet 3 — Shakespearean glossary**. Refer to this sheet as required to become familiar with the terms used in this unit. These are actual differences in language that you simply need to remember. After the lesson, keep this sheet in a safe place to be used in future lessons.



You now know some of the common words used by Shakespeare, but Shakespearean language is more complex than that. You are going to learn some tricks to decode Shakespearean words and phrases by addressing some common problems encountered when reading Shakespeare.

Some common problems encountered when reading Shakespeare include:

- reading lines in isolation
- unfamiliar words, idioms and allusions
- irregular grammatical order
- dense, lengthy descriptions.

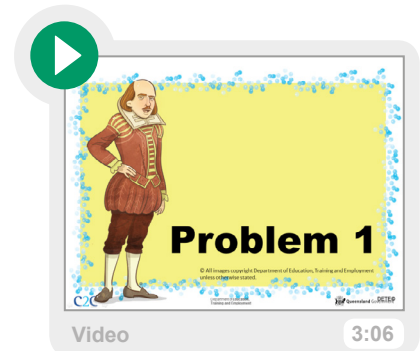
To manage these problems there are solutions provided on **Sheet 4 — Tips for understanding Shakespeare**. You can remove this sheet and keep it next to you as you read the play. Refer to it as much as you need. You will need this sheet as you work through the remainder of this lesson, which comprises watching of various presentations and answering questions.

Let's focus on each of these problems one by one.

4. Open **Sheet 4** — [Tips for understanding Shakespeare](#) and read the first problem and its solution.

5. View the **Video — Problem 1**.

This video demonstrates how to read Shakespearean dialogue, including following the cues provided by the punctuation and considering the entire sentence, not just the individual line.



6. What is Tybalt saying here in act 1, scene 1? Note that 'drawn' refers to having a sword drawn and out of the scabbard.

Tybalt: *'What, drawn, and talk of peace! I hate the word
As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee:
Have at thee, coward!'* (1.1.60–63)

7. Return to **Sheet 4** and read the second problem and the suggested solution.

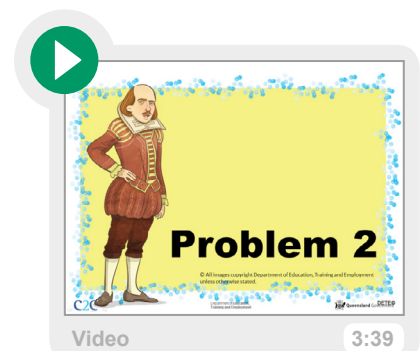
allusion: an indirect reference to someone or something that conveys or enhances meaning; allusions usually refer to literary works, social and historical events, or people. For example: 'The girl's love of chocolate was her *Achilles'* heel'. Achilles is a hero in Greek mythology.

idiom: an informal expression used by a particular social group and needs to be explained as one unit; only people who are familiar with that society or culture will understand the idiom. For example: better late than never; wear and tear; neither here nor there; to have the upper hand; back-seat driver; storm in a tea cup; over the moon; out of the frying pan and into the fire; laugh in the face of danger.

8. Now view the **Video — Problem 2**.

This video presents five different solutions to understanding Shakespeare's unfamiliar words, idioms and allusions. These are:

- being aware of common archaic words
- using logic to decipher a phrase by its similarity to a modern word
- searching the margin notes
- consulting an online dictionary
- searching online for Shakespearean translations.



9. Answer the following questions using the steps suggested in the video.

a. Use Step 1 to translate:

Tybalt: 'What, art thou drawn among these heartless hinds? Turn thee, Benvolio, look upon thy death.' (1.1.56–57)

b. Use Step 2 to translate the following language in bold, from act 1, scene 1.

'Tis true'	
'if thou art moved, thou runnest away.'	
'thou shalt not stir one foot ...'	
'three civil brawls ... Have thrice disturbed the peace.'	

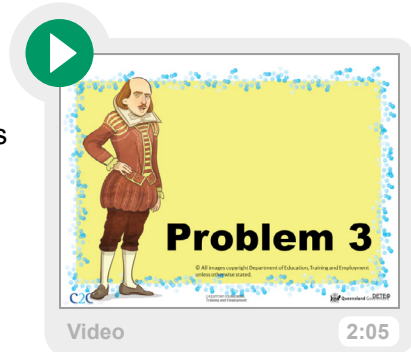
10. Return to **Sheet 4** and read the third problem and the suggested solution.

11. View the **Video — Problem 3**.

This video discusses how irregular grammatical order is a common feature in Shakespeare's texts and offers two steps to help decipher Shakespearean grammar:

Step 1: Identifying the subject, verb and object

Step 2: Rearranging the sentence structure so it makes more sense.



12. Answer the following questions using the steps provided in the video.

a. Identify the subject, verb and object in the following quotations and then provide a translation of the quote in order of subject–verb–object.

Lady Capulet: 'Why call you for a sword?' (1.1.66)

Subject:

Verb:

Object:

Translation:

13. Return to **Sheet 4** and read the fourth and final problem and the suggested solution.

Simplifying extended verbs and noun groups and then summarising these will improve understanding of the meanings of Shakespeare's lengthy descriptions. Consider Montague's description of his son in act 1, scene 1:

Montague:

Many a morning hath he there been seen,
 With tears augmenting (strengthening) the fresh morning dew,
Adding to clouds, more clouds with his sighs (1.1.121)

Identify the verbs, underlined above.

Identify the noun groups, highlighted above.

Simplify the lines to translate the section, for example:

Translation: Many mornings he has been seen there, early, crying and sighing.

Now you have some good tips to help you understand Shakespeare. Apply these solutions as you begin to hear our tragic tale.



Apply reading skills to a Shakespearean play

As you work through this unit, you will read the play *Romeo and Juliet*. You need to have read it carefully as your assessment requires you to present evidence and quotes from it to support your arguments.

To support your reading of the play, you will complete a reading journal for each act. There are five acts in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Next lesson, you will start to read Shakespeare!



Shakespearean glossary

Word	Meaning
anon	soon
art	are
ay/aye	yes, general agreement
betwixt	between
dost or doth	does or do
ere	before
fie	exclamation of dismay or disgust
hark	listen
hath	has
hence	away from this place
hie	to go in a hurry
hither	here, this place
ho	hey
leave	permission
mark	to pay close attention
marry	indeed; an oath to Mary, mother of Christ; it is a mild curse used in a similar manner to a contemporary phrase such as 'Oh my goodness!'
nay	no, disagreement
pray/prithee	please
saucy	cheeky, sassy
soft	be quiet, be cautious
stay	wait, hold on
tarry	to wait
thee	literally 'you'; it is used when referring to the object of the sentence I [subject] will give [verb] you [object] some advice. I [subject] will give [verb] thee [object] some advice.
thou	literally 'you'; it is used when referring to the subject of the sentence You [subject] are [verb] a well-respected person. Thou [subject] are [verb] a well-respected person.
thy/thine	your
thither	there
verily	in truth
whence	where
wherefore	why
wilt	will
ye	you; used in the same manner as 'thou' but generally addressed to individuals of significant status
yea	indeed

Tips for understanding Shakespeare

Problem 1: Reading lines in isolation — ‘I read each line closely, yet by the end of each line, I’m not sure what the characters are talking about.’

Solution

Follow the cues provided by the punctuation of the section of dialogue and **consider the entire sentence; not the individual line.**

- **Do not pause** if there is no punctuation at the end of a line.
- **Slight pause** for a comma or semicolon.
- **Long pause** for a question mark, exclamation mark or full stop.

Problem 2: Unfamiliar words, idioms and allusions — ‘I have no idea what these words or phrases mean!’

Solution

Step 1: Be aware of common ‘archaic’ words used frequently by Shakespeare (see **Sheet 3 — Shakespearean glossary**).

Step 2: Attempt to decipher the word or phrase in context or by its similarity to a modern word.

Step 3: Search the margin notes commonly provided in contemporary editions of Shakespearean plays.

Step 4: Consult an online dictionary.

Step 5: Search online for Shakespearean sites and translations.

Problem 3: Irregular grammatical order — ‘The characters sometimes seem to speak in a strange manner; it’s very different to modern dialogue.’

Solution

Step 1: Identify the subject, verb and object to understand ‘who’ is doing ‘what’.

Step 2: Mentally rearrange sentence structure to make more sense.

Problem 4: Dense, lengthy descriptions — ‘The characters seem to go on and on and on. I get lost in lengthy passages of description.’

Solution

Using all three strategies above, re-read the section of text. Simplify extended verb groups and noun groups and mentally summarise what is said.

Year 10 Unit 4

Topic: Shakespeare in context

Understanding tragedy

Today you will:

- ▶ understand the conventions of Shakespearean tragedy
- ▶ understand representations of characters, cultures, places, events and concepts in a Shakespearean play.

Resources

Text

Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare

Digital

Video — Tragic hero (3:19)

Video — What is tragedy? (2:00)

Find and prepare

Sheet 5 — Reading journal: Act 1

Key terms

citation conventions, context, oxymoron, paradox, Shakespearean tragedy, soliloquy

For definitions and explanations of terms, please see the **Glossary**.

Lesson

Understanding conventions of Shakespearean tragedy

Shakespeare wrote a lot of tragedies. Tragedy is a form of drama that focuses on human suffering yet paradoxically provokes pleasure in the audience. The essence of tragedy is that it expresses very real possibilities. Defeat, shattered hopes and dreams, and ultimately death, face us all. But this possibility of tragedy in our own lives sits quietly in the back of our minds. By watching a tragedy, we are confronted with it afresh and are strangely intrigued by it. To achieve such a response from the audience, certain conventions are used.

Let's unpack the key features of a tragedy.
Read the following table for an initial summary.



Features of a tragedy	Explanation
tragic hero	a decent, essentially good (although far from perfect) character who suffers from an underlying, yet significant, character flaw or weakness
tragic flaw/hamartia	a flaw of a character, a weakness that leads to a tragic hero's downfall; examples of tragic flaws could be greediness or ambition
the supernatural, fate, fortune and chance	<p>The supernatural can affect characters, providing access to knowledge or haunting characters.</p> <p>Fate, fortune and chance can play a part in shaping the destinies of characters.</p>
protagonist	the central character or characters that drive the action and establish emotional connections with the audience
antagonist	a character (or force) acting in direct opposition to the protagonist, causing problems or obstacles
<p>Dramatic structure</p> <p>Initial disorder</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↕</p> <p>Increasing disorder</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↕</p> <p>Chaos</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↕</p> <p>Some order restored</p>	<p>Exposition: sets the mood, time and place of the play and introduces key characters</p> <p>Rising action: the initial incident or complication that motivates the drama and, in hindsight, leads to tragedy</p> <p>Hamartia: here the flaw/s of the protagonist or tragic hero leads to a set of increasingly tense complications and conflict</p> <p>Climax: this moment of high tension is the turning point of the play, when the protagonist or tragic hero moves steadily towards the final consequences. A sharp reversal in fortune is put in effect</p> <p>Falling action: the events that occur from after the climax, up until the death of the hero</p> <p>Catastrophe: the hero's death</p> <p>Restoration: a glimpse of better times is given to the audience.</p> <p>These elements occur across five acts.</p>

1. Who are the main protagonists in *Romeo and Juliet*? (1 sentence)

2. Who would be considered the antagonist in the play? Why? (1 sentence)

3. Using the table summary on the previous page, write a short paragraph summarising the key elements of a Shakespearean tragedy.

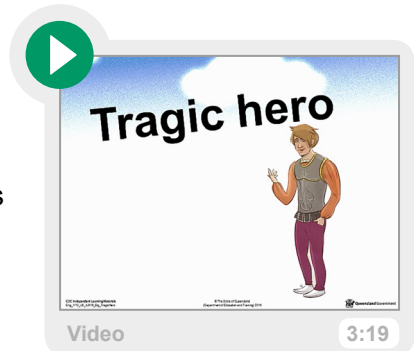
I suppose you are suggesting that I am the flawed, tragic hero?



4. View the **Video — Tragic hero**.

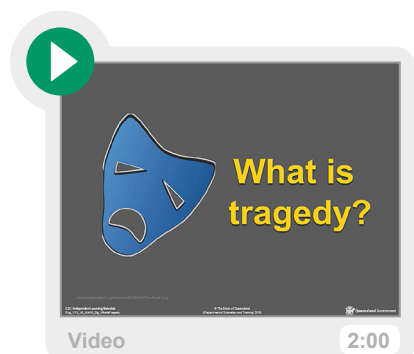
This video is presented as a soliloquy by Romeo Montague; he defines what it means to be a tragic hero!

As explained in the last video, the tragic hero invariably dies in Shakespearean plays. So what makes the death tragic? Is it death alone that makes something a tragedy, or must it be the circumstances around which the death occurs?



5. View the **Video — What is a tragedy?**

This video briefly explains what a Shakespearean tragedy is, including the difference between tragedy and death.



No more dillydallying! It's time to start reading my work.



It is time to begin reading *Romeo and Juliet* in earnest. Make sure you use the tips provided in Lesson 2 to help you make sense of the language. You will read the first act and demonstrate your understanding by completing a reading journal.

Some of the questions you will answer in your reading journal ask you to identify literary devices used by Shakespeare. You will be familiar with some of these, while others will be new to you. Let's look at an example.

oxymoron: the pairing of contradictory words for effect, for example: 'poor little rich girl'

Oxymorons are often patterned as adjective-noun, for example: 'deafening silence'.

Oxymorons highlight paradox and contrast.

paradox: a self-contradictory statement that may be true, for example: 'I always tell lies.'

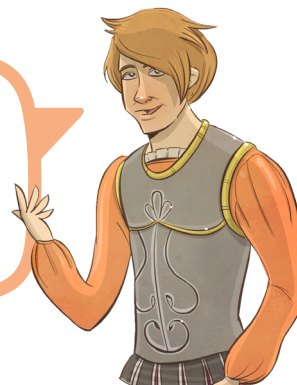
Romeo's speech from act 1 is full of oxymorons that express how love confuses him with complex and contrasting emotion. The bold words are all contradictory, just as love makes him feel.

Why then, O **brawling love**, O **loving hate**!
 O **any thing, of nothing** first create!
 O **heavy lightness**! **Serious vanity**!
Mis-shapen chaos of well-seeming forms!
Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health!
 Still **waking sleep** that is not what it is! (1.1.168–175)

7. Spend the remainder of the lesson reading act 1 of *Romeo and Juliet*.

8. Open **Sheet 5** — [Reading journal: Act 1](#) and answer the questions.

Next lesson, you will need to write a short plot synopsis of what happens in act 1 of our tragic tale. Make sure you are prepared.



Shakespeare, William 1595 *The tragedy of Romeo and Juliet* in *The complete works of William Shakespeare*, The World Library

Reading journal: Act 1

Read act 1 of the play *Romeo and Juliet* and answer the following questions. (Remember to apply citation conventions when required.)

Act 1, scene 1	
<p>Summary (20 words or less):</p>	
<p>Questions</p> <p>What decree is made by the Prince?</p>	
<p>What is wrong with Romeo? What advice does Benvolio give Romeo to aid him?</p>	
<p>Romeo explains his mixed feelings about love using an oxymoron. What is an example of an oxymoron used by Romeo? What is Romeo saying about love?</p>	
Literary term	Definition
oxymoron	the pairing of contradictory words for effect; it highlights paradox and contrast and is often patterned as an adjective–noun, for example: ‘deafening silence’

**Act 1, scene 2**

Summary (20 words or less):

Questions

What arrangement do Paris and Capulet come to?

Why does Benvolio suggest attending Capulet's party?

Find a quote to support the statement: Romeo believes that no-one can compare to Rosaline.

Act 1, scene 3

Summary (20 words or less):

Questions

What is Juliet's opinion of marriage?

How old is Juliet?

Act 1, scene 4

Summary (20 words or less):

Questions

The mood of Romeo contrasts that of his friends. What is the reason for Romeo's mood?

Find a quote to support the statement: Shakespeare uses Romeo's dream to foreshadow tragic events.

Literary term	Definition
foreshadowing	providing subtle hints that indicate what will occur later in a narrative; builds anticipation about what will happen next



Act 1, scene 5

Summary (20 words or less):

Questions

What comparisons does Romeo make in his soliloquy about Juliet? What do these objects have in common? What symbolic meanings do Romeo's statements have?

Literary term	Definition
soliloquy	when a character is alone onstage and talks to themselves, expressing their innermost thoughts and feelings

What is Capulet's opinion of Romeo?

What promise does Tybalt make after seeing Romeo?

What shocking discovery do Romeo and Juliet make at the end of the scene?

Find a quote to support the statement: Romeo is quick to forget his love for Rosaline.

End of act 1 — things to consider

Do you believe in love at first sight? Is Romeo's love legitimate?

What is your opinion of Tybalt?

What messages about love do you think Shakespeare focuses on?

Topic: Shakespearean tragedy

Understanding themes in *Romeo and Juliet*

Today you will:

- understand the underlying themes in *Romeo and Juliet*
- understand how to identify evidence from a text, and explain its significance

Resources

Text

Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare

Digital

Video - The theme of love in *Romeo and Juliet*
(2:51)

Video - The theme of fate in *Romeo and Juliet*
(1:44)

Find and Prepare

Sheet 6 - Variations of Love

Sheet 7 - Prologue Theme Analysis Activity

Sheet 8 - Theme Analysis

Key terms

For definitions and explanations of terms, please see the **Glossary**.

Lesson

What is a theme

In contemporary literary studies, a theme is a central topic or subject within a narrative.



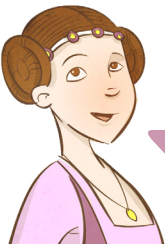
In a nutshell, the theme of a text is:

- the central, underlying, and controlling idea or insight of a work of literature
- the idea the writer wishes to convey about the subject - the writer's view of the world or a revelation about human nature
- abstract, it involves ideas, feelings, and the relationships or conflicts between them (feelings and ideas).

The theme of a text is NOT::

- the purpose of a work
- the moral of the story
- the conflict of the story.

What are the themes in *Romeo and Juliet*?

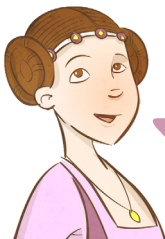


There are multiple themes throughout the play; however, these can really be boiled-down to three main themes:

- Love
- Violence / Conflict
- Fate

However, some of the others that can be considered are:

- Death
- Youth
- Marriage
- Family / Friendship
- Hierarchy

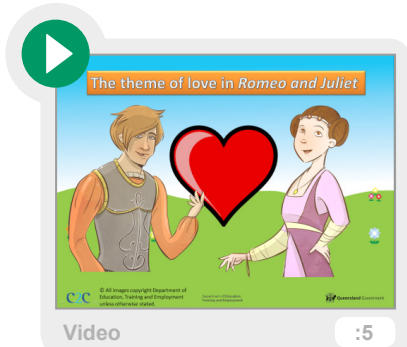


For the purpose of this unit, we will be focusing on the main three: love; violence and conflict; and fate.

Theme of Love

1. View the **Video — The theme of love in *Romeo and Juliet***.

This video discusses some common themes in Shakespeare's plays. It focuses particularly on the theme of love in *Romeo and Juliet* and how it has the power to cause people to make both good and bad decisions.





Given that *Romeo and Juliet* represents one of the world's most famous and enduring love stories, it seems obvious that the play should spotlight the theme of love.

The play focuses on romantic love, specifically the intense passion that springs up at first sight between Romeo and Juliet. In *Romeo and Juliet*, love can be a violent, ecstatic, overpowering force that supersedes all other values, loyalties and emotions.

Through *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare deals with the idea of love - its meaning, its causes and its impact - both positive and negative, and its goal. In the play, we see many different types of love and their impact on individuals, families, friendships and the wider society of Verona.

Romeo and Juliet centers on the developing relationship of the title characters and how it impacts on other characters and relationships. Even though Shakespeare's play is about a pair of 'star-crossed lovers', Shakespeare has also examined the other types of love and how love can sometimes consume us, in a positive and negative way.

2. Read **Sheet 6 - Variations of Love** and complete the next activity.
3. Complete the below **Love Activity**. Below are a list of statements that in some way refer to or reflect the concept of love. For this activity, you need to identify whether or not you agree or disagree with each statement, and give a reason behind your choice. The first one has been done for you as an example.

Statement	Agree/ Disagree	Explanation
<i>Love occurs between people who have identical preferences and beliefs.</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Love can occur between people who are extremely different and who believe in different things. As the saying goes, 'opposites attract'.</i>
Love is patient and kind; it is never rude or boastful.		
Love is only possible with the acceptance of friends, relatives, and the wider community.		
Love is inevitably connected to disaster and suffering.		

Statement	Agree/ Disagree	Explanation
Love has nothing to do with reason or analytical thinking.		
Love makes every other aspect or part of life irrelevant or insignificant.		

Theme of Violence and Conflict

In Shakespearean tragedies such as *Romeo and Juliet*, there is a lot of violence and death and these themes are always connected to passion, whether that passion is love or hate. These violent delights have violent ends, says Friar Lawrence in an attempt to warn Romeo, early on in the play, of the dangers of falling in love too hard or too fast.

Violence and conflict is a central theme in the play. Shakespeare presents the theme of conflict through two warring families: the Montague's and the Capulet's. The two families have had hatred for the other instilled through generations and this impacts on the family members and the citizens of Verona. The citizens of Verona are an unwilling part of the conflict as they witness the ongoing battles between the two families - battles which often result in death.

Where conflict is presented, whether between families or individuals, the struggle for power and control is also apparent.

Violence and conflict is shown in *Romeo and Juliet* through:

- the two warring families: Montagues and Capulets
- Juliet's inner conflict when she discovers Romeo is a Montague
- conflict between Tybalt and Romeo
- conflict between Juliet and her father
- Romeo and Juliet's fight against fate.



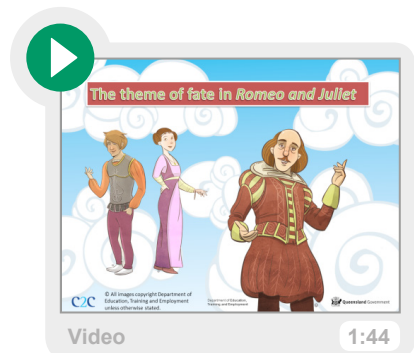
4. Complete the below **Violence and Conflict Activity**. Below are a list of statements that in some way refer to or reflect the concept of violence and conflict. For this activity, you need to identify whether or not you agree or disagree with each statement, and give a reason behind your choice. The first one has been done for you as an example.

Statement	Agree/Disagree	Explanation
<i>Victims of violence can never be reconciled with offenders</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>I believe that victims of violence can choose to forgive those who offend them if the offender demonstrates remorse and commitment to changing their behavior. However, it is the choice of the victim whether they reconcile with their offender.</i>
Violence is never justified.		
Violence is justified when you are defending someone's honour or safety.		
Violence harms the person who undertakes it, as well as its victim.		
Conflict is a natural and beneficial process within any society, allowing it to move forward.		
Conflict always benefits the powerful, never the weak.		

Theme of Fate

5. View the **Video — The theme of fate in *Romeo and Juliet***.

This video discusses the theme of fate in *Romeo and Juliet*, particularly how it leaves the audience pondering over whether Romeo and Juliet's fate is unavoidable or if there are opportunities to change it.





Who decides our destiny? Is it fate or choice? If you knew what was going to happen, would you still make the same choices? Good or bad.

There's no real agreement among Shakespearean scholars about the role of fate in *Romeo and Juliet*. Were the 'star-cross'd lovers' doomed from the start, their tragic futures determined before they even met? Or are the events of this famed play a matter of bad luck and missed chances.

While religion was a powerful force that shaped society in Elizabethan times, many people still believed that fate (destined or fortune) was the main controlling force in life. Fate is based on the belief that this is a preordained, fixed order to the universe; all things in the universe are interconnected.

It was believed that a person cannot alter that which is 'written in the stars'. Astrology was often used as a method of predicting fate's influence over people's lives. Folklore and superstition were as important to people as the official religious beliefs taught by the Church.

The play considers whether fate predetermined Romeo and Juliet's course or whether they had the freedom to consider their own path. The young lovers challenge their fate and defy their parents' expectations.

For example, in the opening lines of *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare allows the audience to hear his characters' destiny. We learn early on what is going to happen to the title characters: "a pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life" (Prologue, Line 6). As a result, the idea of a preordained ending is already on the audience's mind as the story plays out.

Many of the tragic events in the play are not seen as mere coincidences, but rather manifestations of fate that help bring about the unavoidable outcome of the young lovers' deaths.



6. Complete the below **Fate Activity**. Below are a list of statements that in some way refer to or reflect the concept of fate. For this activity, you need to identify whether or not you agree or disagree with each statement, and give a reason behind your choice. The first one has been done for you as an example.

Statement	Agree/ Disagree	Explanation
<i>Fate can be challenged or fought against</i>	Agree	<i>People have the free will to choose their path in life and should never feel like they have no choice in what happens to them in life.</i>
Fate is always associated with negative outcomes.		
Only significant or powerful individuals have fates, ordinary people do not.		
Fate means that everything is always in balance. Where there are good outcomes, there are bad outcomes (karma).		
You cannot control your fate/destiny, you have no say over what happens to you.		
The idea of fates makes life ultimately monotonous, because every consequence or result is already mapped out.		

Theme identification and analysis

The three main themes that have been discussed this lesson are first presented in the prologue of *Romeo and Juliet*, and are continued and reinforced throughout the play.

7. Examine the prologue on **Sheet 7 - Prologue Theme Analysis Activity**. It includes both the Shakespearean version as well as a 'modern' translation. In this activity you will identify examples of where links (either direct or indirect) to the themes have been presented. This activity will serve as a practice to develop your theme analysis skills.

Theme Analysis

The assessment that you are working towards for this unit will require you to examine the themes in both the original play, as well as their development within the film adaptation by Baz Luhrmann.

8. As you read through the play in the next few lessons, use **Sheet 8 - Theme Analysis** to note key evidence for each of the themes, as this will help you collect evidence for your assessment.

Variations of Love in *Romeo and Juliet*



There are several different variations of love within *Romeo and Juliet*. These include:

Shallow Love (also referred to as 'puppy love' or courtly love)

Some characters fall in and out of love very quickly in *Romeo and Juliet*. For example, Romeo is in "love" with Rosaline at the beginning of the play, but it is presented as an immature infatuation. Today, we might use the term "puppy love" to describe it. Romeo's love for Rosaline is shallow and nobody really believes that it will last.

Similarly, Paris' love for Juliet is borne out of tradition, not passion. He has identified her as a good candidate for a wife and approaches her father to arrange the marriage. Although this was the tradition at the time, it also says something about Paris' serious, unpassionate attitude toward love.

Friendly Love

Many of the friendships in the play are as sincere as Romeo and Juliet's love for one another. The best example of this is in Act Three Scene One, where Mercutio and Romeo fight Tybalt. When Romeo attempts to bring peace, Mercutio fights back at Tybalt's insult of Romeo. It is out of friendly love for his companion that Mercutio acts out in defense of Romeo's honour.

Romantic Love

The classic idea which is expressed in *Romeo and Juliet*. In fact, maybe it is *Romeo and Juliet* that has influenced our definition of the concept. The characters are deeply captivated by one another, so committed to being together that they defy their respective families. Perhaps Romeo and Juliet's love is fate; their love is given a cosmic significance, which suggests that the universe plays a role in the creation of deep romantic love. Despite their love being forbidden by the Capulet and Montague households, they inevitably - and irresistibly - find themselves drawn together.

Juliet: "Prodigious birth of love it is to me / That I must love a loathed enemy" (Act One, Scene Five)

All in all, Shakespeare presents romantic love as a force of nature, so strong that it transcends expectations, tradition and, through the combined suicides of lovers who cannot live without one another, life itself.

Prologue Theme Analysis Activity



Romeo and Juliet Prologue excerpt

ORIGINAL TEXT

*Enter **CHORUS***

CHORUS

Two households, both alike in dignity
(in fair Verona, where we lay our scene).
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny.
Where civil blood makes civil hands
unclean.
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
A pair of star-scrossed lovers take their life.
Whose misadventured piteous overthrows
Doth with their death bury their parents'
strife.
The fearful passage of their death-marked
love
And the continuance of their parents' rage.
Which, but their children's end, naught
could remove.
Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage -
The which, if you with patient ears attend.
What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to
mend.

Exit.

MODERN TEXT

*The **CHORUS** enters.*

CHORUS

In the beautiful city of Verona, where our story takes place, a long-standing hatred between two families erupts into new violence, and citizens stain their hands with the blood of their fellow citizens. Two unlucky children of these enemy families become lovers and commit suicide. Their unfortunate deaths put an end to their parents' feud. For the next two hours, we will watch the story of their doomed love and their parents' anger, which nothing but the children's deaths could stop. If you listen to us patiently, we'll make up for everything we've left out in this prologue onstage.

*The **CHORUS** exits.*

https://www.sparknotes.com/nofear/shakespeare/romeojuliet/page_2/

Prologue Theme Analysis Activity

Theme	An example/quote from the prologue	How does the quote demonstrate the theme?
Fate	<i>"A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life"</i>	<i>The words "star-crossed" implies that the relationship was 'written in the stars' and that is was pre-destined. This could also imply that the relationship was out of their control and that the end of the play was inevitable from the start. It generally associates events on earth with the heavens, which is something that was (in the context of Christian beliefs) valued or significant.</i>
Violence and Conflict		
Love		
Fate		

Theme Analysis: Love

Evidence

Identify quotes (and the Act/Scene where they appear) which address the theme.

Theme Description

- *How do the ideas or actions of the main characters reflect different aspects of the theme?*
- *Does the theme develop or change over the course of Romeo and Juliet? If so, how?*

Theme Analysis: Violence and Conflict

Evidence

Identify quotes (and the Act/Scene where they appear) which address the theme.

Theme Description

- *How do the ideas or actions of the main characters reflect different aspects of the theme?*
- *Does the theme develop or change over the course of Romeo and Juliet? If so, how?*

Theme Analysis: Fate

Evidence

Identify quotes (and the Act/Scene where they appear) which address the theme.

Theme Description

- *How do the ideas or actions of the main characters reflect different aspects of the theme?*
- *Does the theme develop or change over the course of Romeo and Juliet? If so, how?*



Year 10 Unit 4

Topic: Shakespearean tragedy

Reading and comprehending, Part 1

Today you will:

- ▶ understand representations of characters, cultures, places, events and concepts in a Shakespearean tragedy
- ▶ understand how to justify interpretations of Shakespearean texts using textual evidence.

Resources

Text

Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare

Find and prepare

Sheet 9 — Reading journal: Act 2

Key terms

citation conventions, hyperbole, literary devices, metaphor, Shakespearean tragedy, thematic message

For definitions and explanations of terms, please see the **Glossary**.

Lesson

Read and comprehend a Shakespearean tragedy

I hope that you enjoyed act 1 of my play *Romeo and Juliet*!



In the previous lesson, you read act 1 of the play *Romeo and Juliet* and started to form an understanding of the conventions of Shakespearean tragedy. There has been plenty of action in the play so far, including feuding families, a fight, a party and the meeting of the two love-struck teenagers, Romeo and Juliet.

Let's see if you can summarise what has happened in the play so far ...



1. Summarise act 1 of the play *Romeo and Juliet* by choosing words from the list on the next page to complete the paragraph below.

Act 1 synopsis

The _____ reveals that in the city of Verona a long-standing _____ exists between two dignified families, the _____ and the Capulets. It is also revealed that two lovers from these families will die and end the conflict. After finding members of the two _____ openly fighting in the streets of Verona, the Prince issues a decree: 'If ever you disturb our streets again, / Your _____ shall pay the forfeit of the _____' (1.1.83–84). Meanwhile, the love-sick Romeo tells his cousin Benvolio he is upset because the object of his affections, _____, cannot love him back as she has taken a vow of chastity. Romeo learns of a _____ party Rosaline is invited to. Benvolio suggests attending to compare Rosaline with others. The boys head to the party. Reluctant to attend, Romeo mentions a foreboding _____ he had. Mercutio dismisses Romeo's concerns. Romeo Montague and _____ Capulet meet at the party and are attracted to each other but learn their families are _____. Tybalt, Juliet's cousin, is _____ by Romeo's attendance.

Word list			
Rosaline	enemies	Capulet	dream
peace	insulted	lives	prologue
feud	Montagues	households	Juliet

Let's find out what happens in act 2. As you read act 2, you will complete a reading journal. This time, your completed journal will be sent in to your teacher for monitoring.



2. Open **Sheet 9** — [Reading journal: Act 2](#).

3. Read act 2 aloud and summarise the main events of each scene on **Sheet 9** as you read.



Hot tip

As you read, remember to look up the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases using the modern translation in a text or online version of the play. Read aloud and use voice effects to express meaning more clearly. Aim to bring the script to life. Avoid reading lines in isolation and instead consider the entire sentence — follow the cues provided by the punctuation. Watch for stage directions. A common error is to read the stage directions as if they are part of the dialogue.

Look out for brackets and italics that indicate stage directions. Read them to yourself to help understand the action on stage.

As you read, Shakespeare's talent for using language will become more apparent to you. Romeo's description of Juliet in act 2 uses both metaphor and hyperbole. Here are some examples of each, as well as their effects.

metaphor: a descriptive connection made from one object, person, place or event to another, which can help the reader apply qualities of one to the other to provide insight or new knowledge; when one thing is said to be something that it is not; it is not meant to be taken literally

For example: 'Juliet is the sun' (2.2.2). Romeo suggests Juliet's beauty makes her stand out in the night

hyperbole: an obvious exaggeration for effect or an extravagant statement not intended to be taken literally

For example: 'The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars, as daylight doth a lamp' (2.2.19–20). Romeo refers to the colour of Juliet's cheeks and again continues the idea that Juliet stands out against the dark night.

Make interpretations



Let's analyse the main ideas of act 2 by completing the exercises in your reading journal.

4. Complete the exercises on **Sheet 9**.

Student name:



Reading journal: Act 2

Read act 2 of the play *Romeo and Juliet* and answer the following questions. (Remember to apply citation conventions when required.)

Prologue
Summary (20 words or less):
Questions What has 'bewitched' Romeo (prologue, line 6)? What might this say about his love for Juliet? (1–2 sentences)
Find a quote to support the statement: Juliet does not have very much control over her life.
Act 2, scene 1
Summary (20 words or less):
Question Why are Benvolio and Mercutio unable to find Romeo? (1–2 sentences)

Act 2, scene 2

Summary (20 words or less):

Questions

Romeo uses metaphor and hyperbole to describe Juliet. Find examples of each and explain their effects.

Literary term	Definition
metaphor	a descriptive connection made from one object, person, place or event to another, which can help the reader apply qualities of one to the other to provide insight or new knowledge; when one thing is said to be something that it is not; it is not meant to be taken literally
hyperbole	an obvious exaggeration for effect or an extravagant statement not intended to be taken literally

What is the significance of Juliet's line: 'What's in a name? That which we call a rose / By any other name would smell as sweet:' (2.2.43–45)? (2–3 sentences)

Find a quote to support the statement: Romeo admires the physical beauty of Juliet.

Refer to evidence from the scene to refute the statement: Romeo and Juliet decide to get married after careful planning. (1–2 sentences)

Student name:



Sheet

9

Act 2, scene 3

Summary (20 words or less):

Questions

Does Friar Laurence believe Romeo is in love? Refer to evidence. (2–3 sentences)

Why does Friar Laurence agree to perform a marriage ceremony for Romeo and Juliet?
(1–2 sentences)

What advice does Friar Laurence give Romeo in the scene? Is Romeo likely to take this advice?
(2–3 sentences)

Find a quote to support the statement: Romeo wants to marry Juliet as soon as possible.

Student name:

Act 2, scene 4

Summary (20 words or less):

Question

Mercutio paints an image of Tybalt as lacking substance and being more concerned with chasing fashion than posing a threat. Do you agree? (1–2 sentences)

Act 2, scene 5

Summary (20 words or less):

Question

Why is Juliet concerned at the beginning of the scene? (1–2 sentences)

Act 2, scene 6

Summary (20 words or less):

Question

What is Friar Laurence's advice to Romeo. Why do you think he offers this advice? (1–2 sentences)

Student name:



Sheet

9

Find a quote to support the statement: Friar Laurence believes Romeo must not get too carried away in his relationship with Juliet.

End of act 2: things to consider

1. At the beginning of scene 6, the Friar offers a sombre prayer (2.6.1–8).

Friar Laurence

‘So smile the heavens upon this holy act ,
That after hours with sorrow chide us not!’

Romeo

‘Amen, amen! But come what sorrow can,
It cannot countervail the exchange of joy
That one short minute gives me in her sight.
Do thou but close our hands with holy words,
Then love-devouring death do what he dare; It is enough I may but call her mine.’

Why might Shakespeare have the Friar say this prayer? (2–3 sentences)

2. Consider Romeo’s response to the Friar’s prayer — is this believable? If you consider the end of the play, is Romeo’s response an instance of foreshadowing? Explain. (2–3 sentences)

How was your student able to complete the activity?

No assistance required Some assistance required A lot of assistance required Not able to do this task

Comments:

Topic: Shakespearean tragedy

Reading and comprehending, Part 2

Today you will:

- ▶ understand representations of characters, cultures, places, events and concepts in a Shakespearean tragedy
- ▶ understand how to justify interpretations of Shakespearean texts using textual evidence.

Resources

Text

Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare

Find and prepare

Sheet 10 — Reading journal: Act 3

Key terms

citation conventions, irony, literary devices, thematic message, verbal irony

For definitions and explanations of terms, please see the **Glossary**.

Lesson

Read and comprehend a Shakespearean tragedy

Last lesson, you read and analysed act 2. Let's see if you can summarise what has happened in the play so far.



1. Summarise act 2 of the play *Romeo and Juliet* by completing the following paragraph by choosing from the word list below.

Act 2 synopsis

At the beginning of act 2, the _____ reveals that Romeo
 is no longer in love with _____ but rather he now loves
 _____ — a member of the _____
 Capulet household. During the famous _____ scene (scene 2)
 Juliet ponders, ‘What’s in a _____ ? That which we call a
 _____ / By any other name would smell as
 _____’ (2.2.45–46). She reasons that a person’s name or label
 is not indicative of their actual worth. Juliet realises the senselessness of the long-
 standing hatred between the Montague and Capulet households. Romeo consults with
 _____ Laurence, whom he asks to perform his
 _____ to Juliet. The Friar concedes to marry Romeo and Juliet
 as he believes their alliance may turn the _____ between the
 Montague and Capulet households into ‘pure _____’.

Word list			
marriage	Friar	rival	balcony
Rosaline	name	sweet	rose
Juliet	love	hatred	Chorus

Now it's time to continue reading to find out what happens to Juliet and me in act 3.



2. Open **Sheet 10** — [Reading journal: Act 3](#).
3. Read act 3 aloud and summarise the main events of each scene on **Sheet 8** as you read.



Hot tip

As you read, remember to:

- look up the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases
- read aloud
- read the entire sentence — follow the cues provided by the punctuation
- watch out for stage directions.

One of the things that makes Shakespeare's language so moving and meaningful is his use of literary devices. Let's take a look at Shakespeare's use of verbal irony.

verbal irony: when the actual meaning of a statement is significantly different to what is literally or explicitly stated; when someone says something but really means something else

For example:

Your parents may make the following remark about your messy room — 'It's nice to see that you're looking after your room'. Obviously your parents don't think you've been doing a great job of looking after your room. They are, in fact, hinting that you have not been looking after your room.

In act 3, Mercutio uses verbal irony as he is dying when he says: '... a scratch, a scratch' (3.1.89). Mercutio says he has received only a scratch from Tybalt but we see the wound is much more significant. His irreverent humour in his final moments may be considered brave or foolish.

Make interpretations



Let's analyse the main ideas of act 3 by completing the exercises in your reading journal.

4. Complete the exercises on **Sheet 10**.

Reading journal: Act 3

Read act 3 of the play *Romeo and Juliet* and answer the following questions. (Remember to apply citation conventions when required.)

Act 3, scene 1
<p>Summary (20 words or less):</p>
<p>Questions</p> <p>What causes Mercutio's death? Who is to blame? (1–2 sentences)</p>
<p>Find an example of verbal irony used by Mercutio as he is dying. What is the effect of this? What is revealed about his character?</p> <p>Example</p>
<p>Effect</p>

Act 3, scene 1 (continued)

Explain Romeo's statement 'I am fortune's fool'. (3.1.132) Do you agree with Romeo's statement? Why / why not? (3–4 sentences)

What is Romeo's punishment for his role in the fight? (1–2 sentences)

Find a quote to support the statement: Romeo believes he has bad luck.

Use evidence from the scene to refute the statement: Bad luck is responsible for the dire turn of events in this scene. (1–2 sentences)

Act 3, scene 2

Summary (20 words or less):

Questions

Why does Juliet eagerly await the night? (1–2 sentences)

Shakespeare uses figurative language to emphasise Juliet's impatience. Find an example and explain its effects.

Find a quote to support the statement: Dealing with Romeo's banishment is even worse than dealing with the death of her family members.

Act 3, scene 3

Summary (20 words or less):

Questions

What is Romeo's response to news of his banishment? (1–2 sentences)

Friar Laurence attempts to offer Romeo some advice or 'philosophy' (3.3.55–57). What is Romeo's response? What does this say about Romeo? (3–4 sentences)

What is Friar Laurence's plan to reunite Romeo and Juliet? (1–2 sentences)

Find a quote to refute the statement: Friar Laurence is completely sympathetic to Romeo's extreme expressions of sadness.

Act 3, scene 4

Summary (20 words or less):

Questions

What does Capulet decide for his daughter in this scene? (1–2 sentences)

How does this event serve as a complication for the plot? (3–4 sentences)

Find a quote to refute the statement: Capulet has great authority over his daughter.

Act 3, scene 5

Summary (20 words or less):

Questions

Juliet explains a foreboding vision of Romeo in lines 54–57. What is this vision and what does it hint at? (3–4 sentences)

What is Juliet's reaction to the news that she will be wed to Paris? What does Capulet have to say about this? (2–3 sentences)

What does Juliet see as her only two options by the end of the scene? (1–2 sentences)

Find a quote to support the statement: Juliet believes fortunes can swiftly change.

Act 3, scene 5 (continued)

Refer to evidence from the scene to refute the statement: The nurse is the only person Juliet feels she can depend on. (3–4 sentences)

End of act 3: things to consider

The experiences of Romeo and Juliet change significantly in act 3. How are these experiences reflected in the emotional states of the characters? (3–4 sentences)

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: 'Fortune or fate plays a role in the events for Romeo and Juliet'? Explain. (3–4 sentences)

Topic: Shakespearean tragedy

Reading and comprehending, Part 3

Today you will:

- ▶ understand representations of characters, cultures, places, events and concepts in a Shakespearean tragedy
- ▶ understand how to justify interpretations of Shakespearean texts using textual evidence.

Resources

Text

Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare

Find and prepare

Sheet 11 — Reading journal: Act 4

Sheet 12 — Reading journal: Act 5

Key terms

citation conventions,
Shakespearean tragedy, thematic
message

For definitions and explanations of
terms, please see the **Glossary**.

Lesson

Read and comprehend a Shakespearean tragedy

Show your understanding
of the events of act 3 by
taking the quiz that follows.



1. Select the best answer for each question.
 - a. True or false — Romeo initially refuses to fight Tybalt.
True False
 - b. How does Mercutio die in act 3, scene 1?
Tybalt stabs Mercutio when Benvolio intervenes to stop the fight.
Tybalt stabs Mercutio when Romeo intervenes to stop the fight.
Tybalt stabs Mercutio after Mercutio refuses to fight.
 - c. After Mercutio dies, Romeo exclaims, 'O sweet Juliet, / Thy beauty hath made me effeminate' (3.1.104–105), meaning:
he believes loving Juliet has made him strong.
he believes loving Juliet has made him less masculine.
he believes loving Juliet has made him confused.
 - d. After killing Tybalt, Romeo is:
not a suspect.
condemned to death.
exiled from Verona.
 - e. True or false — Romeo fears what Juliet will think of him after killing Tybalt, so he threatens to stab himself.
True False
 - f. When Capulet is told it is Monday, he organises for Paris to marry his daughter Juliet on:
Wednesday Thursday Friday.
 - g. Juliet's refusal to marry Paris causes her father, Capulet, to:
threaten to disown her.
threaten to send her to a convent.
accept her decision.
 - h. At the end of act 3, Juliet ultimately decides to:
run away with Romeo
marry Paris
get help from the Friar or she will take her life.

It's time to continue reading to find out what happens to Juliet and me in act 4.



2. Read act 4 aloud and summarise the main events of each scene on **Sheet 11** — [Reading journal: Act 4](#) as you read.



Hot tip

As you read, remember to:

- look up the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases
- read aloud
- read the entire sentence — follow the cues provided by the punctuation
- watch out for stage directions.

Make interpretations

Let's analyse the main ideas of act 4 by completing the exercises in your reading journal.



3. Complete the exercises on **Sheet 11**.

The word 'death' features 75 times in the play *Romeo and Juliet*. Pay attention to how death is personified by Romeo in act 5, scene 3 as all-consuming.

personification: attributing human characteristics to something that is not human, such as objects, concepts and forces

We're almost at the end of the play, so let's find out what happens to my character in the final act.



4. Read act 5 aloud and summarise the main events of each scene on **Sheet 12** —[Reading journal: Act 5](#) as you read.

5. Complete the exercises on **Sheet 12**.

I hope you enjoyed reading and analysing the most famous of my plays, *Romeo and Juliet*. I will be interested to get more of your thoughts on this play in future lessons. In the next lesson, you will have the chance to review your learning so far.



Reading journal: Act 4

Read act 4 of the play *Romeo and Juliet* and answer the following questions. (Remember to apply citation conventions when needed.)

Act 4, scene 1
<p>Summary (20 words or less):</p>
<p>Question</p> <p>What plan does Friar Laurence develop? (3–4 sentences)</p>
<p>Find a quote to support the statement: Juliet is desperate to avoid marriage to Paris.</p>
<p>Refer to evidence from the scene to refute the statement: Friar Laurence's plan is carefully thought out. (1–2 sentences)</p>

**Act 4, scene 2**

Summary (20 words or less):

Question

Why do you think Juliet plays the role of obedient child for her parents when she returns from Friar Laurence? (3–4 sentences)

Act 4, scene 3

Summary (20 words or less):

Question

What worries does Juliet have immediately before taking Friar Laurence's potion? (3–4 sentences)

Find a quote to refute the statement: If Friar Laurence's plan doesn't work, Juliet accepts she will have to marry Paris.

Act 4, scene 4

Summary (20 words or less):

Question

How does this scene contrast with scene 3 and scene 5? (3–4 sentences)

Act 4, scene 5

Summary (20 words or less):

Question

How does Friar Laurence help advance the plan in this scene? (2–3 sentences)

**End of act 4: things to consider**

Who is more deserving of sympathy: Romeo or Juliet? Explain. (3–4 sentences)

What is your opinion of the Friar's plan? (3–4 sentences)

Reading journal: Act 5

Read act 5 of the play *Romeo and Juliet* and answer the following questions. (Remember to apply citation conventions when needed.)

Act 5, scene 1
<p>Summary (20 words or less):</p>
<p>Questions</p> <p>What is meant by 'Juliet, I will lie with thee tonight' (5.1.36)? (3–4 sentences)</p>
<p>Refer to evidence from the scene to refute the statement: Romeo's actions are slow, considered and well thought out. (2–3 sentences)</p>

Act 5, scene 2

Summary (20 words or less):

Question

What hindered Friar Laurence's plan? Is this due to chance or human agency? (2–3 sentences)

Find a quote to support the statement: Ill fortune has affected Romeo and Juliet.

Act 5, scene 3

Summary (20 words or less):

Questions

How does Romeo use personification to represent death? What are the effects? (2–3 sentences)

Literary term	Definition
personification	attributing human characteristics to something that is not human, such as objects, concepts and forces

What does Friar Laurence mean when he says, 'A greater power than we can contradict / Hath thwarted our intents.' (5.3.159–160)? Do you agree? (1–2 sentences)

How are the families reconciled at the conclusion of the play? (1–2 sentences)

End of act 5: things to consider

Who or what is most responsible for the tragedy of the play?

- society
- Juliet's parents
- the nature of youth
- the violent nature of people
- fate or fortune
- Romeo
- Juliet
- Friar Laurence
- Mercutio
- Tybalt

List examples of situations from the play where Shakespeare foreshadows the tragedy of the final scene.

What might Shakespeare's message to his audience be if Romeo and Juliet had survived?



Topic: Interpretations of Shakespearean tragedy

Interpreting plot and characters

Today you will:

- ▶ understand aspects of plot and characterisation in a Shakespearean text
- ▶ understand how paragraph structures can develop and extend ideas to support or refute interpretations of literature.

Resources

Text

Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare

Digital

Slideshow — Character relationships map

Find and prepare

Sheet 13 — Plot graph

Sheet 14 — Interpretations of *Romeo and Juliet*

Key terms

characterisation, paragraph, plot of Shakespearean tragedy, Shakespearean tragedy

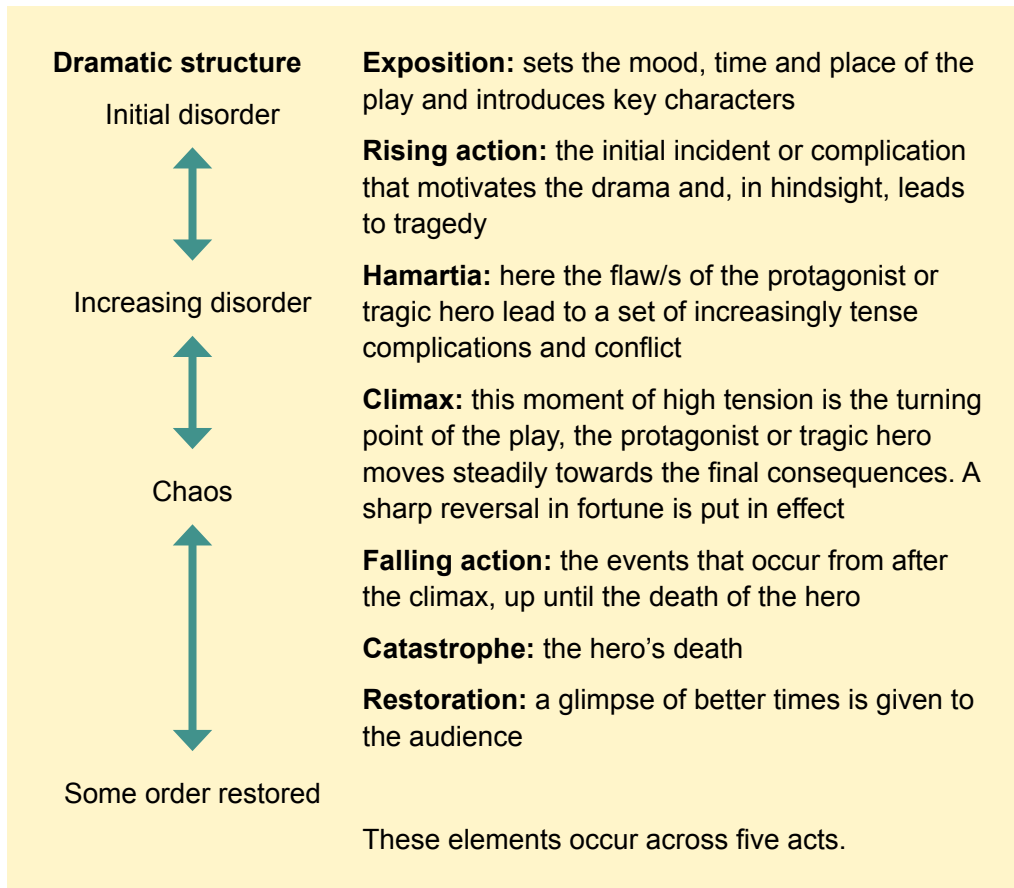
For definitions and explanations of terms, please see the **Glossary**.

Lesson

Synthesise understandings of plot and characterisation



You will remember that in Lesson 3 you were introduced to some of the key features of tragic texts. One of these features was the dramatic structure common to Shakespearean tragedy.



Let's see if you can identify this dramatic structure in my play *Romeo and Juliet*.



1. Open **Sheet 13** — [Plot graph](#) and complete the plot diagram. Each key dramatic feature is already mapped on the diagram. Your job is to identify what action happens at each stage of the plot.

Another way to synthesise your understanding of the play is by clarifying the characters and their relationships.



2. View the **Slideshow — Character relationships map** and complete the activity. You need to describe the key characters and identify the significant actions of selected characters.

Character relationships map

The relationships map is a summary document that:

- provides a brief description of each character
- explains the nature of the connected characters' relationship
- explains the actions of characters towards each other
- shows how the direction of arrows affects the relationships.

Slideshow

Note

Save a copy of the **Slideshow — Character relationships map** into a folder on your computer so that you can complete the activity. Call it **Eng_Y10_U4_CharacterRelationshipMap_YourName**.

3. Look at the following image that depicts the final scene in *Romeo and Juliet*.



Leighton, Frederic C1850s, *The Reconciliation of the Montagues and the Capulets over the dead bodies of Romeo and Juliet*, commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Frederic_Leighton_-_The_Reconciliation_of_the_Montagues_and_the_Capulets_over_the_Dead_Bodies_of_Romeo_and_Juliet.jpg

4. Who is shaking hands behind the dead bodies of Romeo and Juliet? What does this handshake represent? (1–2 sentences)

5. Who also lies dead beside Romeo and Juliet? (1 sentence)

6. Friar Laurence is depicted on his knees, looking to heaven as though praying. Why might he be depicted in this way? (1–2 sentences)

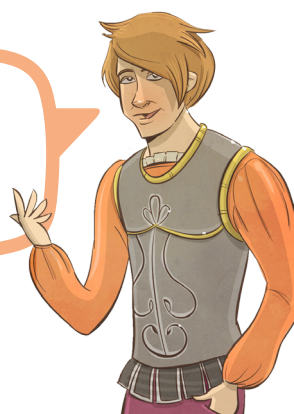
Make interpretations of plot and characterisation

Sometimes it helps to read other interpretations of a text when you are trying to formulate your own interpretation. Being able to support or refute other interpretations will enhance your understanding.



You are about to read two different interpretations of my play *Romeo and Juliet*. You will be asked to respond to these in paragraph form as practice for your final assessment.

Clear, concise paragraphs are so important to good writing! Let's revise paragraph structure now.



Topic sentence: The first sentence presents the central idea of the paragraph — the subject matter or argument to be discussed throughout. The sentences that follow should all relate to this central idea.

Elaboration: Sentences that provide discussion of ideas and present evidence or facts that support or validate the topic sentence. All sentences should support the central idea raised in the topic sentence.

Closing sentence: When writing a single paragraph, the closing sentence should summarise information in such a way that the central idea of the paragraph is emphasised.



Let's take a look at two different interpretations of our tragic story and complete the activity that follows using correct paragraph structure.

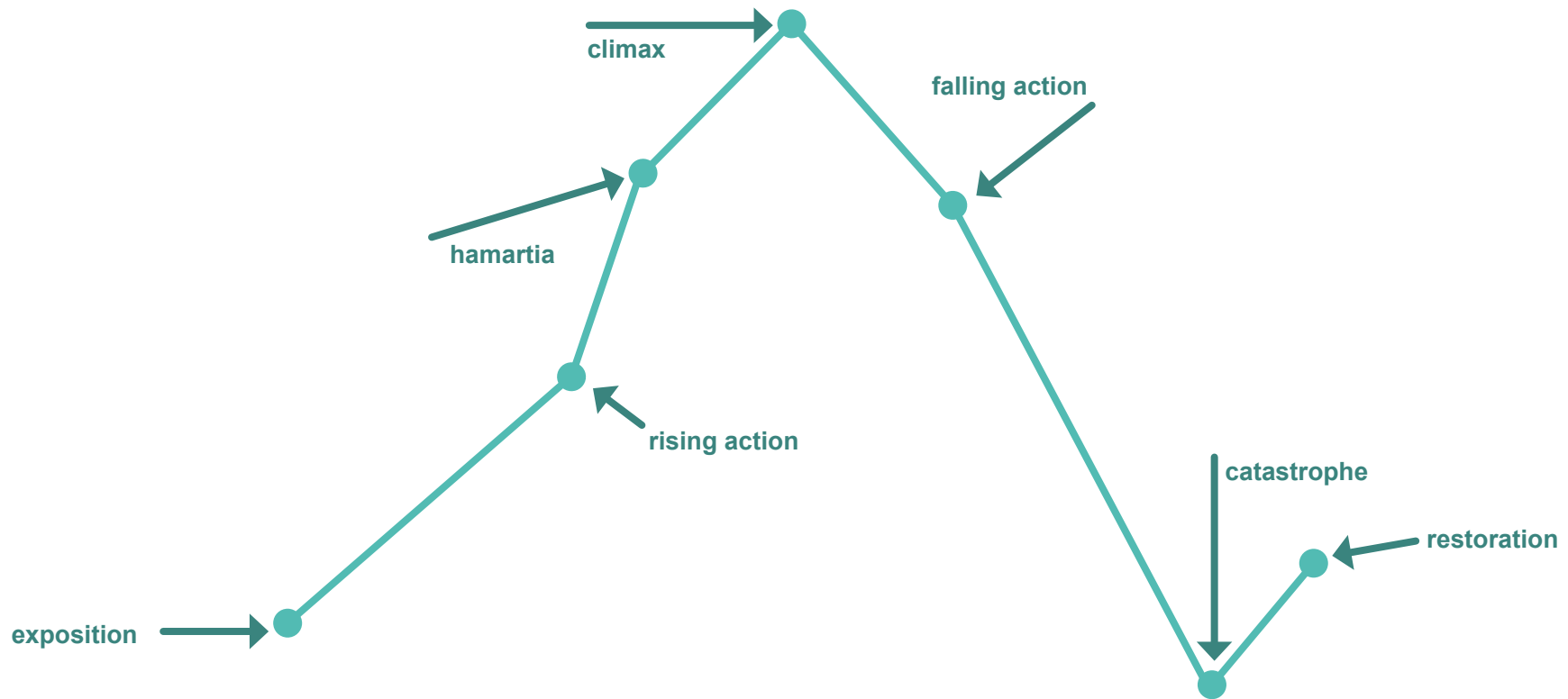
7. Open **Sheet 14** — [Interpretations of *Romeo and Juliet*](#). After reading each interpretation provided, complete the activities.
8. Use the editing checklist below to refine your paragraph on **Sheet 14**.

Editing checklist	
Have you:	Tick
• used a topic sentence that refers to the main idea of the paragraph?	
• elaborated on the main idea?	
• referred to further evidence from the play when responding to the interpretation?	
• used appropriate citing conventions?	
• concluded your paragraph with a closing sentence?	
• used correct spelling, grammar and punctuation?	
• used analytical language?	
• established whether you support or refute the ideas developed throughout the interpretation and, in turn, established a purpose for your paragraph? (For example: Have you accurately chosen and controlled appropriate content to support or refute the interpretations based on what you know about a particular character, the themes in the play and/or the values, assumptions and beliefs of the Elizabethan era?)	
Write one positive point about your response.	
How could you improve your response?	

Plot graph

Record evidence and examples along the plot diagram provided, to explain what specific actions happen at each stage of the plot of *Romeo and Juliet*.

Reviewing the plot of a Shakespearean tragedy



Interpretations of *Romeo and Juliet*

Read the following two interpretations of *Romeo and Juliet* and decide whether you agree or disagree with them. Complete the activity on the pages that follow and send this sheet to your teacher for feedback.

Interpretation 1

The plot of *Romeo and Juliet* reflects the Elizabethan belief in fortune and constructs fate as an overwhelming force that results in the final tragedy of the play. This is made immediately clear in the prologue, which gives the audience a view of an impending future where ‘A pair of star-cross’d lovers take their life’ (line 6). In addition to reflecting the Elizabethan belief that human destinies are controlled by supernatural forces, it compels the audience to view the play knowing that it will end in the deaths of the young lovers. It is made immediately clear to viewers that there is nothing Romeo or Juliet can do to avoid their ultimately tragic fate. Furthermore, the plot is punctuated with moments of misfortune, beyond the characters’ control, that propel them towards tragedy: Romeo and Benvolio finding out by chance that Rosaline will be at the Capulet Masque, Tybalt slaying Mercutio, Capulet’s sudden decision to wed Juliet to Paris, and the disastrous delay of Friar Laurence’s letter to Romeo in Mantua, are key examples of situations beyond the characters’ control, which stimulate a sequence of events leading to the final calamity of the play. As the play closes, the audience clearly recognises there is no conceivable scenario that can avert the final tragedy of the play. Moreover, the audience sympathises with Romeo and Juliet as they are not responsible for any of the catastrophic circumstances that bring about their untimely deaths.

Interpretation 2

The character of Romeo is emotionally unstable and this character trait, or hamartia, leads directly to the tragedy of the play. Our first impression of Romeo demonstrates that he is given to extremes of emotion. His response to Rosaline’s rejection of his romantic interests prompts him to seek isolation from friends and family as he weeps constantly and restricts himself to his room. Interestingly, one look at Juliet is enough to radically reverse Romeo’s attitudes and behaviour. Upon seeing Juliet, he questions himself (1.5.50), ‘Did my heart love till now?’ and within hours he has risked death to see her, pledged his eternal love and planned to marry her. When we consider how quickly Romeo forgets about Rosaline and how rapidly he shifts his emotional and romantic energies towards Juliet, the underlying nature of his character is obvious. Romeo is revealed as a character with intense, unstable emotions. These extreme emotions stimulate the climax of the play, Tybalt’s death, and lead to the final catastrophe. In act 3, Romeo greets a challenge from Tybalt with ‘love’ and refuses to enter into combat with the Capulet. However, this love soon turns to ‘fire-eyed fury’ (3.1.119) and, in a rage, Romeo slays Tybalt. Of course, this leads to Romeo’s banishment, which ultimately creates a scenario that affects the tragic ending of the play. As we watch the final scenes, the audience is given the opportunity to ponder the idea that if Romeo had not been as prone to sudden, powerful shifts in emotion, tragedy may have been avoided.

Student name:

Activity

- a. Evaluate the interpretations you just read. In the table below, identify the main argument in each interpretation, list the evidence provided and then decide if you agree or disagree.

Interpretation 1
Main argument
Evidence
Agree/Disagree
Interpretation 2
Main argument
Evidence
Agree/Disagree

Student name:



- b. Write a paragraph that responds to one of the interpretations, indicating whether you support or refute the ideas developed throughout. You might refer to further evidence from the play to support your response.

How was your student able to complete the activity?

No assistance required Some assistance required A lot of assistance required Not able to do this task

Comments:



Year 10 Unit 4

Topic: Interpretations of Shakespearean tragedy

Interpreting thematic messages

Today you will:

- ▶ understand how thematic messages are advanced by choices in plot, characterisation and language use
- ▶ understand similarities and differences in structures and social and cultural purposes of 'tragic' narratives from different cultural contexts.

Resources

Text

Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare

Digital

Audio — *The butterfly lovers* (4:14)

Find and prepare

Sheet 15 — Comparing tragedies

Key terms

context, plot of Shakespearean tragedy, Shakespearean tragedy, thematic message, values (attitudes), assumptions and beliefs

For definitions and explanations of terms, please see the **Glossary**.

Lesson

Reflect on thematic messages of a Shakespearean tragedy

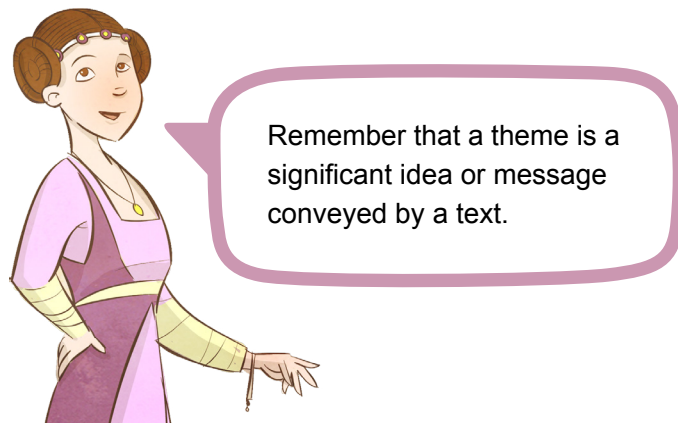


Now you have read and interpreted my work, *Romeo and Juliet*, it is time to consider what messages I might be communicating to my audience through the use of themes in the play.

There are many themes at work in *Romeo and Juliet* and each theme works to reveal information about the social context (time and place) in which the play was written. But to what extent do the themes of the play impart a specific message to audiences? This question can be answered by reflecting on the thematic messages of *Romeo and Juliet*. You will need to consider both the positive and negative aspects of how each theme features in the play before explaining its possible message to the audience.

Major themes in *Romeo and Juliet*

- violence and conflict
- love
- fate



1. Identify messages communicated through the themes in *Romeo and Juliet* by completing the table below. The major themes and one possible message have already been analysed for you.

Theme	Negative aspects	Positive aspects	Possible message
violence and conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The older generation's 'ancient grudge' ends in the tragic death of the young lovers. • Tybalt's want for a fight with Romeo results in the death of Mercutio, with Romeo avenging his friend by killing Tybalt. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The death of Romeo and Juliet leads to the families reconciling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violence only leads to greater violence and can only end in tragedy.

Theme	Negative aspects	Positive aspects	Possible message
love			
fate			

Compare aspects of Shakespearean tragedy to narratives from other social, historical and cultural contexts

The butterfly lovers is a tragic love story from China about a pair of lovers, Zhu Yingtai and Liang Shanbo. It is considered an important story in Chinese culture and there have been many other stories, plays and films based on *The butterfly lovers*.

2. Listen to the **Audio** — [The butterfly lovers](#) (4:14).

The butterfly lovers

At one time in Imperial China there lived a wealthy family who had nine children — there were eight boys and only one girl. As the youngest child and only daughter in the family, Zhu Yingtai was especially pampered by her father. Yet there was one thing that upset Zhu Yingtai's father about her — she wanted to go to school. It was quite unacceptable at this time for girls to attend school but the young girl was very persistent and pleaded with her father to let her go.

Zhu Yingtai's father made a deal with his daughter — if she was able to find a school willing to accept her then he would support her decision. Zhu Yingtai's father was confident that no school would admit a female student. However, the young girl was clever and, dressed as a boy, she managed to gain admission to a school in a nearby city. Every day for the next four years Zhu Yingtai managed to fool everyone at the school that she was actually a boy as she went about completing her studies. It was during this time that she met and fell in love with a young man and fellow student named Liang Shanbo. At first Zhu Yingtai and Liang Shanbo were only good friends. Liang was a studious young man and didn't notice that his best friend was in fact really a girl and that she loved him.

Zhu Yingtai came up with a plan to finally reveal herself to Liang and hoped that then he would fall in love with her also. She had recently received a letter from her parents informing her that she must return home after her education was complete. Zhu Yingtai made Liang promise that he would come to visit her at her home. Liang indeed did promise that he would come to visit his friend once he had saved up enough money to be able to do so.

Months later, Liang travelled to Zhu Yingtai's city to visit his friend. Seeing him coming down the road, Zhu Yingtai rushed out to greet Liang as she had very much missed him during their time apart. Liang, however, did not immediately recognise Zhu Yingtai because she was no longer dressed as a boy.

'Do you know who I am? I'm your good friend from school,' said Zhu Yingtai. She promptly professed her love for Liang who was quite taken aback at this revelation. Suddenly it all made sense to Liang and he realised why he felt such a strong love for his friend. The young couple then fell in love and Zhu Yingtai and Liang promised themselves to each other. They went to tell Zhu Yingtai's father that they wished to be married. The father, however, informed the young lovers that he had already arranged for Zhu Yingtai to be married to a wealthy businessman. Liang was devastated by the news and became quite lovesick. Forlorn, he left Zhu Yingtai's city and on the long walk home he died.

Weeks later, Zhu Yingtai's wedding day to the other man had arrived but Zhu Yingtai could not stop herself from thinking about her love for Liang. As the marriage ceremony commenced a powerful whirlwind enveloped the city, delaying the wedding. Zhu Yingtai took the opportunity to leave and to try to find Liang, not knowing he had already died. Unfortunately, she discovered Liang's grave. Realising her true love had died, Zhu Yingtai was overcome with grief — she cried out to the gods to open Liang's grave so that she could see him one more time. Immediately the ground opened and Zhu Yingtai fell in. The young girl's relatives, rushing behind her, reached the gravesite but there was no sign of Zhu Yingtai, only an empty grave. Moments later out flew two butterflies flitting together in the air in a beautiful dance, together at last.

c. What type of social effect might these narratives have had on their original audiences?

d. What values might be encouraged or discouraged by each story?



Congratulations! You are now an expert on thematic messages in 'tragic' narratives. In the next lesson, you will be learning about language choices that are of importance for your assessment.

Comparing tragedies

Features of tragedy	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>The butterfly lovers</i>	Similarities	Differences
Climax				
Catastrophe				

Features of tragedy	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>The butterfly lovers</i>	Similarities	Differences
Restoration				
Characterisation				

Features of tragedy	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>The butterfly lovers</i>	Similarities	Differences
Thematic message				



Year 10 Unit 4

Topic: Analytical responses

Understanding language features and text structures of literary analysis

Today you will:

- ▶ understand how nominalisation, technicality, modality and particular clause combinations can be used in analytical writing
- ▶ understand how choices in nominalisation, technicality, modality and particular clause combinations can increase the strength of arguments in literary analysis.

Resources

Text

Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare

Digital

Slideshow — Integrating citations

Find and prepare

Sheet 16 — Text connectives

Key terms

clause, cohesion, complex sentence, compound sentence, foreshadowing, hyperbole, irony, literary devices, metaphor, modality, nominalisation, nouns and noun groups/phrases, oxymoron, paradox, paragraph, personification, plot of Shakespearean tragedy, Shakespearean tragedy, simile, simple sentence, soliloquy, text connectives, verbal irony, verbs and verb groups/phrases

For definitions and explanations of terms, please see the **Glossary**.

Lesson

Review common language features of literary analysis

In this lesson, you are going to review the features common to literary analysis in preparation for your assessment. You will review:

- nominalisation
- technical language
- modality
- clauses and complex sentences.

Review use of nominalisation in analytical writing

The first thing to review is the use of nominalisation in analytical writing.

nominalisation: a process for forming nouns from verbs, adjectives or clauses

For example:

- nouns from verbs ('excitement' from 'excite')
- nouns from adjectives ('height' from 'high')
- noun groups/phrases from clauses ('their exit from the building' from 'they exited the building')

Nominalisation can be used to condense information in analytical writing. By collapsing a clause into a noun or noun group, writing can become more concise and more refined. Nominalisation is a common feature in literary analysis because it lends itself to the clear, concise writing that is required.



Let's look at some examples of nominalisation to see how it condenses the writing.

Description 1:

- 'When Romeo decides to kill Tybalt, intending to avenge Mercutio, he begins a series of events that culminates in the final tragedy of the play.'

Description 2:

- 'Romeo's **decision** to avenge Mercutio is **the catalyst** that culminates in the final tragedy of the play.'

Notice how in the first description the focus is on recounting the actions of Romeo. In literary analysis, it is important not to just recount events from the text, they must be analysed. An easy way to ensure this happens is to use nominalisation. This changes the description into a focus on abstract and thematic concepts, which is necessary in literary analysis. See how, instead of recounting the action, the sentence analyses the effect of Romeo's decision to avenge Mercutio.

Revise technical language appropriate to analysis of Shakespearean texts

In literary analysis, it is also important to use technical language appropriate to analysis of Shakespearean texts. Remember that in Lesson 3 you were introduced to the conventions of a tragedy. These include:

- tragic hero
- hamartia (tragic flaw)
- the role of fate, fortune and chance
- the antagonist
- the protagonist
- dramatic structure.

When you refer to these features in *Romeo and Juliet* in your assessment response, be sure to use the correct technical term.

Other technical terms that you have been introduced to throughout your reading of *Romeo and Juliet* include literary devices, such as:

- oxymoron
- foreshadowing
- soliloquy
- hyperbole
- paradox
- personification
- verbal irony
- metaphor.

These terms all refer to different language features that Shakespeare uses to deliver his tale. If you refer to an example of these, make sure you use the correct technical term.

1. Complete the crossword by using some of the terms on the previous page and the clues supplied to review language features of Shakespearean tragedy.

CROSSWORD

Down

1. Attributing human characteristics to something that is not human such as objects, concepts, forces.
3. The pairing of contradictory words for effect.
4. When a writer hints at future events that will occur in a plot.

Across

2. An exaggeration used to emphasise a point or to achieve literary effects.
5. A monologue where a character reveals thoughts without directly addressing anyone. The character speaks to himself or herself.
6. When one thing is said to be something that it is not. It is not meant to be taken literally.
7. A self-contradictory statement that may be true.

Without checking the glossary, see if you can answer the following revision questions.



2. The following is an example of which literary device — simile, metaphor or oxymoron? Choose your answer and explain.

Romeo:

O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!

It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night

Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear,

Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear! (1.5.42–45)

3. The following is an example of which literary device — foreshadowing, hyperbole or verbal irony? Choose your answer and explain.

Romeo:

Her eyes in heaven

Would through the airy region stream so bright

That birds would sing and think it were not night. (2.2.20–22).

4. Shakespeare foreshadows events in the play, expressing the idea that fate and fortune have already decided the future for Romeo and Juliet. Find three examples of foreshadowing in the play. Take your time until you find really good examples of foreshadowing.

Example 1:

Example 2:

Example 3:

5. Using one example of foreshadowing from Task 4, write a paragraph that explains what is foreshadowed and what this might suggest about who or what is to blame for the tragedy in the play. (3–4 sentences)

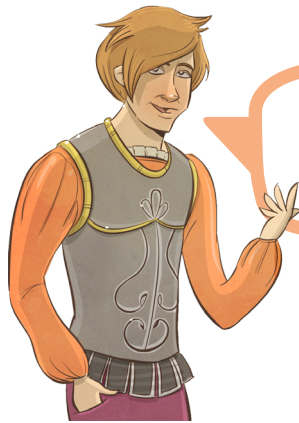
Examine how choices in modality can be used to strengthen interpretations of literature

When developing logical arguments you should avoid statements or generalisations that reflect overly high degrees of certainty (how likely something is to happen) or usuality (how often something happens). When using high modality, make sure your point is well thought out.

You will find statements that use high modality are often easy to disagree with and this is not ideal in a literary analysis, for example:

*Shakespeare **definitely wants** the audience to accept the idea that Juliet is affected by forces beyond her control, which ultimately lead to her doom. This is, **without a doubt, completely undeniable** as there are **certainly never** any instances where Juliet's own decisions influence the tragedy of the final act.*

This statement is over the top and because of the high degree of certainty that is expressed, it is easier to refute. The idea is to reduce the level of modality, which will allow you to express a more tentative and measured argument that is harder to disagree with.



Use some of the following tips to help you adjust the modality of your statements.

The following phrases can be used to adjust the certainty of statements:

- it could be argued
- it is probable
- it is likely
- it would seem
- it could be the case
- a possible interpretation is

The following phrases can be used to adjust statements of usuality:

- in some cases
- at some points
- during various stages
- at times
- there are particular instances where
- from time to time

The following adverbs can be used in statements that reflect low or medium levels of certainty:

- arguably
- probably
- seemingly
- possibly

The following adverbs can be used in statements that reflect low or medium levels of usuality:

- intermittently
- occasionally
- sometimes

6. Rewrite the following statement with a reduced level of modality:

Shakespeare **definitely wants** the audience to accept the idea that Juliet is affected by forces beyond her control, which ultimately lead to her doom. This is, **without a doubt, completely undeniable** as there are **certainly never** any instances where Juliet's own decisions influence the tragedy of the final act.

Examine common clause combinations in literary analysis

Although you already know about the use of clause and sentence structure to improve cohesion and readability in a literary analysis, it is always helpful to revise so that their use is in the forefront of your mind when you begin your assessment.

Sentence types	
simple sentence	A simple sentence has the form of a single clause. For example: 'Shakespeare wrote <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> .'
compound sentence	A sentence with two or more main clauses of equal grammatical status, usually marked by a coordinating conjunction such as 'and', 'but' or 'or'. For example: 'Fate contributes to the tragedy of <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> yet social forces assure the tragedy of the play.'
complex sentence	A complex sentence consists of a main clause and one or more subordinate clauses. For example: 'Although fate contributes to the tragedy of <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , social forces also play a part.'

Clauses	
main clauses	Main clauses are groups of words that can stand alone and make sense. They contain a verb and subject.
subordinate clauses	Subordinate clauses cannot stand alone; they rely on a main clause to have meaning. A subordinate clause will begin with a subordinating conjunction or relative pronoun.
embedded clauses	An embedded clause occurs within the structure of another clause, often as a qualifier to a noun group. In literary analysis, embedded clauses can be applied to present condensed information about subject matter. For example: 'Romeo, who frequently acts impetuously, immediately decides to avenge Mercutio.'

Apply language features of literary analysis

Text connectives are commonly used in literary analysis to add cohesion.

7. Open **Sheet 16** — [Text connectives](#) to revise these.

8. Write two statements about *Romeo and Juliet* using a complex sentence and a text connective, for example:

Although fate contributes to the tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet*, social forces also play a part.

Complex sentence 1:

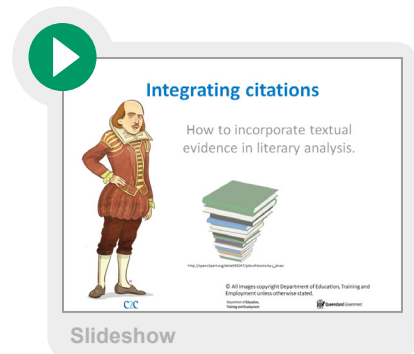
Complex sentence 2:

Arranging clauses to integrate textual references from literature

Sometimes it can be hard to include a quote in your sentences. How do you express your point and then provide the evidence in a cohesive and concise sentence?

9. View the **Slideshow — Integrating citations**.

This slideshow provides tips on how to integrate citations when writing a literary analysis, such as rearranging the sentence and clause patterns to better incorporate quotations.



Let's practise integrating quotations into our own paragraph response. Focus on the theme of love and make some statements about it that include quotes from *Romeo and Juliet*.

10. The theme of love is prevalent throughout *Romeo and Juliet*.

‘Shakespeare doesn’t portray love in pretty, dainty terms. In fact, he portrays love as savage and powerful, capable of generating deep pain and suffering in the one afflicted. Love is revealed by Shakespeare to be an emotion that pits individuals against the world and even themselves.’

Agree or disagree with this statement using evidence from the play. (1–2 paragraphs)



When you write your literary analysis for your assessment, remember to try to incorporate quotations using the tips provided in the **Slideshow — Integrating citations**.

Review your writing to ensure you have used clause combinations accurately when integrating quotes. Make sure to refine and edit your paragraph if you have to.



Text connectives

Text connectives provide the reader with a signal that the text is developing in a particular way. For this reason, they are sometimes called ‘signal words’. Text connectives can be placed in various positions in a sentence, for example, if a writer wants to indicate a cause or result of an action, the text connectives *as a result* or *due to* can be used:

- *As a result* of all the exercise I did on the weekend, my muscles are sore.
- My sore muscles are *due to* all the exercise I did on the weekend.

The following is a list of commonly used text connectives.

Clarifying	Showing cause/result	Indicating time
in other words I mean to put it another way for example for instance to be more precise or rather in particular in fact as a matter of fact that is namely to illustrate	so therefore then consequently as a consequence as a result for that reason due to owing to accordingly because of this in that case	then next afterwards at the same time before that in the end finally soon after a while at this point meanwhile at this moment later previously earlier until then
Sequencing ideas	Adding information	Condition/concession
firstly/first in the first place first of all to start with to begin for a start second/third/fourth at this point to get back to the point then in short all in all briefly to summarise / to sum up finally a final point to conclude in conclusion given the above points in light of the above	too in addition indeed apart from that also furthermore on top of that and besides above all along with what’s more again let alone as well likewise moreover similarly equally in the same way	in that case otherwise if not however nevertheless despite this besides yet on the other hand on the contrary anyhow/anyway instead still even so all the same in any case at least though

Source: Derewianka, B. 1998. *A grammar companion for primary teachers*. Primary English Teaching Association, Sydney NSW. (pp. 110-111) Used with permission.



Topic: Analytical responses

Using language to respond to interpretations of literature

Today you will:

- ▶ understand how language can be used to support or refute interpretations of literature.
- ▶ understand how to collect evidence and explain its significance in relation to an argument
- ▶ understand how to complete the planning for the assessment (Checkpoint 1)

Resources

Text

Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare

Find and prepare

Unit 4 Assessment Task Sheet - Checkpoint 1
(Teacher to send out)

Key terms

For definitions and explanations of terms, please see the **Glossary**.

Lesson

Preparing for the assessment



The assessment that you have been working towards in this unit is a feature article in which you will compare a theme from *Romeo and Juliet* that has been represented in both the original play script and a film adaptation. This style of assessment is grounded in literary analysis, as you are first analysing the text and identifying evidence to support your interpretation about how the theme has been represented.

For this task, the themes that you can choose from are Love, Violence and Conflict, and Fate.



Completing Checkpoint 1

The purpose of Checkpoint 1 is to collect evidence from the play script on the theme that you have selected so that you can prepare to complete the assessment for this unit.

To start your analysis, you need to:

1. Identify quotes or examples from the text (in this case, the play script) that address your selected theme.

For example: For the theme of fate, you could use the following quote from the prologue, 'A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life; / Whose misadventured piteous overthrows / Doth with their death bury their parents' strife.' (Prologue Lines 6-8)

2. Interpret the quote or example, and put it into your own words (essentially translate the quote into 'modern' English) to demonstrate your understanding of the quote.

For example: This phrase refers to Romeo and Juliet whose relationship is destined to fail because it was written in the stars that it is from their deaths that their parents stop their feud.

3. Explain how the quote or example positions the audience to view the theme/concept, in other words you are making it clear how the texts 'works' to create and channel certain meanings.

For example: This phrase appears in the opening prologue and it signals to the audience from the start that the relationship between the title characters will inevitably end in tragedy because it was believed at the time of the play that the stars controlled human destiny.

4. Identify and explain the cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and/or beliefs that are present within the quote. This means that you need to consider the underlying messages within the text. Consider how the world outside and around the text affects how it works and what it means.

For example: The term 'star-crossed lovers' reflects a belief that the stars, their arrangement and movement influence the lives of people on Earth. The happiness or tragic sadness of those lives might be determined by the relationship to the stars, rather than their free will or choices.

5. Combine your notes and ideas into a paragraph, remembering the TEEL structure.

For example:

Topic sentence - Shakespeare represents fate as an inescapable force which controls the lives of the people of Elizabethan times.

Elaboration - This theme is first introduced in the prologue of the play and sets the tone for the events that will happen later.

Evidence - The prologue states, 'A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life; / Whose misadventured piteous overthrows / Doth with their death bury their parents' strife.' (Prologue, l. 6-8)

Explanation - These lines signal to the audience that the relationship between the title characters will inevitably end in tragedy because it was believed at the time of the play that the stars controlled human destiny. The term 'star-crossed lovers' reflects a belief that the stars and their arrangement and movement influence the lives of people on Earth. The happiness or tragic sadness of those lives might be determined by a relationship to the stars rather than their free will or choices.

Link - This representation is further shown later in the play when 'fate' supposedly prevents Romeo from receiving the letter advising him of Friar Lawrence's plan.

Flashback to Lesson 1

- **cultural assumptions:** beliefs or attitudes about such things as gender, religion, youth, age, disability, sexuality, social class and work that are taken for granted as being part of the fabric of the social practices of a particular culture. Cultural assumptions underlie cultural expressions in texts and may also be embedded in texts in various ways. It is an idea that is common throughout a sub culture.
- **attitudes:** mental and emotional positions towards things (people, places, actions, and events) that arise from the values, beliefs, and experiences of an individual. A way of thinking or feeling with regards to someone or something.
- **values:** ways of expressing a view of how things should be, by placing importance on different things or believing that things should be done in a particular way. These are often the key ideas and beliefs in a text. They may be reflected in characters, through what they do and say; through the setting of the text, reflecting particular social views; and through the narrative voice of the text, perhaps through authorial comment. Values are specific to individuals and groups, and a text may contain a number of conflicting values.
- **beliefs:** ideas that are taken to be 'true' by individuals and, therefore, not subject to question. Beliefs often are assumptions and convictions we hold to be true based on past experiences. An idea that is accepted as true without facts. A belief can underpin messages in texts.

At this point in the lesson, complete Part A of Checkpoint 1.

Writing an analytical paragraph

The second part of Checkpoint 1 requires you to take the evidence that you collected in Part A and construct an analytical paragraph using the TEEEL structure. For this task, you are responding to the following prompting question:

"How does Shakespeare position his audience to view the theme/ concept of _____ in his play *Romeo and Juliet*?"

Your response to this section of the task only needs to be between 200-300 words. You must remember to include direct connections/references to the text, citing sources using appropriate conventions where required.

At this point in the lesson, complete Part B of Checkpoint 1.

Thinking ahead

Next lesson you will start the second half of this unit in which you will watch a film adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* and use your developing knowledge of film codes and text analysis to compare the representation of the theme that you have chosen for your assessment (between the original text and the film adaptation).