

CONTEXT		SIGNIFICANT CHARACTERS		LITERARY/DRAMATIC TERMINOLOGY
Courtly Love: a medieval tradition of love between a knight and an unattainable noblewoman common in European literature of the time. The love of the knight for his lady was regarded as an overwhelming passion and the relationship was typically one sided.		Romeo Montague	Intense, intelligent, quick witted, and loved by his friends.	<p>PROLOGUE: a separate introductory section of a literary, dramatic, or musical work. In <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>, the prologue summarises the events of the play, informing the audience that the protagonists (main characters) 'take their life' at the end. This then colours the audience's view from the start, as they know that the play is a tragedy.</p> <p>FORESHADOWING: a warning or indication of a future event.</p> <p>DRAMATIC IRONY: a literary technique, originally used in Greek tragedy, by which the full significance of a character's words or actions is clear to the audience or reader although unknown to the character. This is particularly apparent once the lovers are married as the majority of the characters have no idea that this has happened.</p> <p>BAWDY HUMOUR: Bawdy describes humour that is off-colour: about sex or other vulgar topics.</p> <p>MONOLOGUE: a long speech by one actor in a play, although there can be other characters present on stage.</p> <p>SOLILOQUY: an act of speaking one's thoughts aloud when by oneself or regardless of any hearers, especially by a character in a play.</p> <p>OXYMORON: a combination of words that have opposite or very different meanings</p> <p>METAPHOR: a thing regarded as representative or symbolic of something else.</p> <p>SIMILE: a figure of speech that compares two things by using the words 'like' or 'as' something else. They are compared indirectly.</p> <p>IMAGERY: to use figurative language (similes, metaphors and personification) to represent objects, actions and ideas in such a way that it appeals to our physical senses.</p> <p>IAMBIC PENTAMETER: a line of verse with five metrical feet, each consisting of one short (or unstressed) syllable followed by one long (or stressed) syllable, for example <i>Two households, both alike in dignity.</i></p> <p>JUXTAPOSITION: the fact of two things being seen or placed close together with contrasting effect.</p> <p>TRAGEDY: a play dealing with tragic events and having an unhappy ending, especially one concerning the downfall of the main character.</p> <p>PROTAGONIST: the leading character or one of the major characters in a play, film, novel, etc</p> <p>ANTAGONIST: a person who actively opposes or is hostile to someone or something; an adversary.</p> <p>BLANK VERSE: verse without rhyme, especially that which uses iambic pentameters.</p> <p>SONNET FORM: composed of three quatrains (4 line stanzas) and a final couplet in iambic pentameter with the rhyme pattern abab cdcd efef gg. Traditionally associated with romance and love poetry.</p>
Duelling and the concept of honour: Honour was hugely important at the time, and maintaining the honour of your family name was crucial. If you were challenged to a duel and you refused, you would be deemed a coward, thus damaging your honour and the status of your family.		Juliet Capulet	Naïve and sheltered at the beginning, develops into a woman with strength. Grounded.	
The role of women in a patriarchal society: Elizabethan England was a society controlled by men. Women were seen as the weaker sex and were expected to be ruled over by men. Women needed to be meek and mild, and most importantly, obedient to their fathers and later their husbands.		Mercutio	Romeo's close friend. Wild, playful and sarcastic	
Arranged marriages: Marriages amongst the wealthy were arranged by parents, and were not about love. Mostly the marriages were arranged for the purposes of status and power, and improving the social standings of families.		Tybalt	Juliet's cousin. A hothead consumed by issues of family honour. Hates the Montagues.	
The Catholic setting of the play: The play is set in Italy which is a Catholic country. Religion was extremely important, and marriage vows were sacred – once made, they could not be broken.		Benvolio	Romeo's cousin, less quick witted than Romeo and Mercutio, tries to keep the peace.	
The Globe Theatre: had different areas for those of all social backgrounds. The theatre was the main form of entertainment for all people. Plays were performed during the day (open air) and heckling was common.		Friar Lawrence	A Franciscan monk and a friend to both Romeo and Juliet.	
		Nurse	Juliet's best friend and confidante, and in many ways is more her mother than Lady Capulet is.	
		Prince Escalus	Leader of Verona, concerned with keeping order between the warring families.	
PLOT		KEY THEMES		
Act 1	In Italy two noble families, the Montagues and Capulets, have much bad blood between them. Romeo, son of old Montague, is in love with Rosaline, who disdains his love. As a result, Romeo is depressed. To cure him of his love, his friend Benvolio induces him to attend a masked ball at the Capulets, where he could encounter other beauties and forget Rosaline. At the ball, Romeo is attracted by a girl who he learns is Juliet, daughter of the Capulets. They seal their love with a kiss.	Love- The love Romeo and Juliet share is beautiful and passionate. It is pure, exhilarating, and transformative, and they are willing to give everything to it. But it is also chaotic and destructive, bringing death to friends, family, and to themselves.		
Act 2	Romeo lingers in Capulet's garden, standing in the orchard beneath Juliet's balcony. He sees Juliet leaning over the railing, hears her calling out his name, and wishes that he were not a Montague. He reveals his presence, and they resolve, after an ardent love scene, to be married secretly.	Fate- No matter what the lovers do, what plans they make, or how much they love each other, their struggles against fate only help fulfill it. But defeating or escaping fate is not the point. No one escapes fate. It is Romeo and Juliet's determination to struggle against fate in order to be together, whether in life or death, that shows the fiery passion of their love, and which makes that love eternal.		
Act 3	Tybalt encounters Romeo returning from Friar Lawrence's cell. Romeo, softened by his newfound love and his marriage to Juliet, refuses to be drawn into a quarrel with Tybalt, now his kinsman by marriage. Mercutio grapples with Tybalt and is killed. Aroused to fury by the death of his friend, Romeo fights with Tybalt and kills him and takes shelter in the Friar's cell.	Individuals v society- Because of their forbidden love, Romeo and Juliet are forced into conflict with the social world around them: family, friends, political authority, and even religion.		
Act 4	In despair, Juliet seeks Friar Lawrence's advice. He gives her a sleeping potion, which for a time will cause her to appear dead. Thus, on the day of her supposed marriage to Paris, she will be carried to the family vault. By the time she awakens, Romeo will be summoned to the vault and take her away to Mantua.	Language and word play- Romeo and Juliet constantly play with language. They pun, rhyme, and speak in double entendres. All these word games may seem like mere fun, and they are fun. The characters that pun and play with language have fun doing it. But word play in <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> has a deeper purpose: rebellion. Romeo and Juliet play with language to escape the world.		
Act 5	The Friar's letter fails to reach Romeo. When he hears of Juliet's death Romeo procures a deadly poison from an apothecary and secretly returns to Verona to say his last farewell to his deceased wife and die by her side. At Juliet's side, Romeo drinks the poison and dies. When Juliet awakens from her deep sleep, she realises Romeo's error and kills herself with his dagger. The Capulets and Montague decide to reconcile as a result of the deaths of their children.	Violence and conflict – Conflict is one of the key driving forces in the play and it occurs between a range of characters – within families; within friendship groups; between warring households and between members of the communities. This conflict results in a huge amount of violence – violence opens the play in scene one and it also concludes the play with the deaths of the two lovers.		
KEY SPELLINGS		ASSESSMENT TASKS		
Romeo Montague Juliet Capulet Mercutio Benvolio Tybalt Friar Lawrence Prince Escalus Verona Patriarchy Duelling/duel Elizabethan Character	Scene Foreshadowing society Prologue Violence Metaphor Simile iambic pentameter Foreshadowing Tragedy Monologue Sonnet	Writing assessment: Write an article for your local newspaper about youth violence and the impact that it can have on communities. (this can be based on the events of the play if you wish)	Reading Assessment: Read Act... Scene... and answer the following questions: A) How does Shakespeare use language to present love at first sight in this scene? B) How and why is love and marriage important in the play as a whole? You may refer to context here.	