

Plot		Character		Themes
Act 1  <p>In Italy two noble families: Montague and Capulet, these families are rivals. The Montagues and Capulets enter a violent brawl. Romeo, son of old Montague, is in love with Rosaline, however she does not return Romeo's love. As a result, Romeo is depressed. To cure him of his love, his friend Benvolio convinces him to attend a masked ball at the Capulet's, where he could encounter other beauties and forget Rosaline. At the ball, Romeo is attracted to a girl who he learns is Juliet, the daughter of the Capulets. They seal their love with a kiss.</p>	Romeo Montague Intense, intelligent, quick witted, and loved by his friends.	Juliet Capulet Naïve and sheltered at the beginning, develops into a woman with strength.	Love: The love Romeo and Juliet share is beautiful and passionate, but it is also chaotic and destructive, bringing death to friends, family, and to themselves. Alternative attitudes to love are offered through Mercutio's comedic value in Act One, and the Nurse's references to her experiences. Familial love can be explored, especially with Juliet's relationship to her parents. 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. 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 2  <p>Romeo lingers in Capulet's garden, standing beneath Juliet's balcony. He sees Juliet leaning over her balcony, calling out his name, and wishes that he were not a Montague. He reveals his presence, and they decide to be married secretly.</p>	Mercutio Romeo's close friend. Wild, playful and sarcastic.		Tybalt Juliet's cousin. A hothead consumed by issues of family honour. Hates the Montagues.
Act 3  <p>Tybalt encounters Romeo returning from Friar Lawrence's cell. Romeo, who is now happily married to Juliet, refuses to be drawn into a quarrel with Tybalt, now his kinsman by marriage. Mercutio fights with Tybalt and is killed. As his best friend has been murdered, Romeo fights with Tybalt and kills him. Romeo then runs and takes shelter in Friar Lawrence's cell.</p>	Benvolio Romeo's cousin, less quick witted than Romeo and Mercutio, tries to keep the peace.	Friar Laurence A Franciscan monk and a friend to both Romeo and Juliet.	Individuals v Society: Due to their forbidden love, Romeo and Juliet are forced into conflict with the social world around them: family, friends, political authority, and even religion. Language and Word Play: Romeo and Juliet constantly play with language. They pun, rhyme, and speak in double meanings. The characters that pun and play with language have fun doing it, however word play in <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> has a deeper purpose: rebellion. Romeo and Juliet play with language to escape the conflicting world they live in. Violence / Conflict: The play opens in a violent street fashion. The blood feud between the two families features in the prologue. The romance between Romeo and Juliet brings many deaths until the eventual death of the two protagonists.	
	Act 4  <p>In despair, Juliet seeks Friar Lawrence's advice. He gives her a sleeping potion, which for a time will cause her to appear dead. After taking the potion, on the day of her arranged marriage to Paris, she will be carried to the family vault, supposedly dead. By the time she awakens, Romeo will be summoned to the vault and take her away to Mantua.</p>			Nurse Juliet's best friend and in many ways is more her mother than Lady Capulet is.
Act 5  <p>The Friar's letter fails to reach Romeo. When he hears of Juliet's death, Romeo buys a deadly poison from an apothecary and secretly returns to Verona to die by Juliet's side. On entering the tomb, Romeo sees Paris outside, fights him and kills him. At Juliet's side, Romeo drinks the poison and dies. When Juliet awakens from her deep sleep, she realises that Romeo is now dead and so she takes his dagger and kills herself. The Capulets and Montagues decide to reconcile as a result of the deaths of their children.</p>	Paris Nobleman given permission to woo Juliet, then to marry her after Tybalt's death. Killed by Romeo outside Juliet's tomb.	Lord Capulet Juliet's father. Arranges marriage for Juliet, quick to anger when disobeyed.	Context Courtly Love: A medieval tradition of love between a knight and an unattainable noblewoman common in 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. Shakespeare's Theatre: Theatres like 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).	

Themes →	Love	Conflict	Fate	Death	Honour and Family
Romeo	<p>"O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!" (1.5)</p> <p>"Did my heart love till now? Forswear it sight, for I ne'er saw true beauty till this night." (1.5)</p> <p>"It is the east, and Juliet is the sun" (2.2)</p>	<p>"Mercutio's soul is but a little way above our heads, staying for thine to keep him company." (3.1)</p> <p>"Either thou or I, or both, must go with him" (3.1)</p>	<p>'O, I am fortune's fool!' (3.1)</p> <p>"I defy you stars." (5.1)</p>	<p>"Ha, banishment! Be merciful, say "death".(3.3)</p> <p>"Well, Juliet, I will lie with thee tonight" (5.1)</p> <p>"Thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die." (5.3)</p>	<p>"My life is my foe's debt" (1.5)</p> <p>"And so, good Capulet – which name I tender as dearly as my own – be satisfied." (3.1)</p>
Juliet	<p>"What's in a name? That which we call a rose by another name would smell as sweet." (2.2)</p>	<p>"My only love sprung from my only hate; too early unknown and known too late." (1.5)</p> <p>"I must love a loathed enemy." (1.5)</p>	<p>"Methinks I see thee, now thou art below, As one dead in the bottom of a tomb." (3.5)</p> <p>"O Fortune, Fortune, all men call thee fickle." (3.5)</p>	<p>"My grave is like to be my wedding bed." (1.5)</p> <p>"This is thy sheath; there rust, and let me die." (5.3)</p>	<p>"'Tis but thy name that is mine enemy. Thou art thyself, though not a Montague." (2.2)</p> <p>"I have learn'd me to repent the sin of disobedient opposition to you" (4.2)</p>
Friar Laurence	<p>"Wisely and slow. They stumble that run fast." (2.4)</p>	<p>"These violent delights have violent ends." (2.6)</p>	<p>"Unhappy fortune!" (5.2)</p>		<p>"For this alliance may so happy prove, To turn your households' rancour to pure love." (2.4)</p>
The Nurse	<p>"Peace, I have done. God mark thee to his grace! Thou wast the prettiest babe that e'er I nursed..." (1.3)</p>	<p>"His name is Romeo, and a Montague; The only son of your great enemy." (1.5)</p>		<p>"She's dead, deceased, she's dead; alack the day!" (4.5)</p>	<p>"I think it best you married with the County. O he's a lovely gentleman." (3.5)</p>
Mercutio	<p>"You are a lover; borrow Cupid's wings, And soar with them above a common bound." (1.4)</p> <p>"f love be rough with you, be rough with love" (1.4)</p>	<p>"Tybalt, you rat-catcher, will you walk?" (3.1)</p>	<p>"dreamers often lie" (1.4)</p> <p>"A plague o'both your houses" (3.1)</p>	<p>"Ask for me tomorrow and you shall find me a grave man." (3.1)</p>	<p>"O calm, dishonourable, vile submission!" (3.1)</p>
Lord Capulet	<p>"But saying o'er what I have said before: My child is yet a stranger in the world;..." (1.2)</p> <p>"She's the hopeful lady of my earth" (1.2)</p>	<p>"What noise is this? Give me my long sword, ho!" (1.1)</p> <p>"My sword, I say! Old Montague is come, And flourishes his blade in spite of me." (1.1)</p>	<p>"Death is my son-in-law, death is my heir, my daughter he hath wedded." (4.5)</p>	<p>"As rich shall Romeo's by his lady's lie, poor sacrifices of our enmity." (5.3)</p>	<p>"Unworthy as she is, that we have wrought so worthy a gentleman to be her bride?" (3.5)</p> <p>"An you be mine, I'll give you to my friend an you be not, hang, beg, starve, die in the streets." (3.5)</p>
Tybalt		<p>"What, drawn, and talk of peace! I hate the word," (1.1)</p> <p>"Romeo, the hate I bear thee can afford No better term than this,—thou art a villain." (3.1)</p>	<p>"I will withdraw, but this intrusion shall now seeming sweet, convert to bitterest gall" (1.5)</p>	<p>"Come thee Benvolio, look upon thy death." (1.1)</p>	<p>"Now by the stock and honour of my kin To strike him dead I hold it not a sin." (1.5)</p> <p>"Thou wretched boy...shalt with him hence" (3.1)</p>
Other			<p>(Prologue)</p> <p>"A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life;"</p>	<p>(Prologue)</p> <p>"The fearful passage of their death marked love..."</p>	<p>"A dog of the house of Montague moves me." (1.1)</p> <p>"I will bite my thumb at them which is a disgrace to them if they bear it." (1.1)</p>