



Romeo and Juliet: a revision guide

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-crossed 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, nought 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.



AN
EXCELLENT
conceited Tragedie
OF
Romeo and Iuliet,

As it hath been often (with great applause)
plaid publickely, by the right Hon-
norable the Lord of Hamden
his Seruants.



LONDON,
Printed by Iohn Damer.
1597



Timeline for Romeo and Juliet

Act and Scene	Day	Times	Timeline for Romeo and Juliet Important Events
Act 1	Sun	Morn	Romeo lovesick for Rosaline
Act 1(i)	Sun	PM	A street fight between the Montague and Capulet families
Act 1	Sun	Eve	The Capulets get ready for their masked ball The Montagues gatecrash the ball - Romeo is disguised by a mask. Romeo sees beautiful Juliet - it is love at first sight.
Act 2	Sun	Night	Romeo and Juliet meet and learn they belong to the opposing families of Montague and Capulet. Despite the conflicting loyalties to their families, they swear their love for each other and decide to marry
Act 2	Mon	Morn	Plans are made for the wedding
Act 2	Mon	Early PM	Romeo Montague and Juliet Capulet are married by Friar Laurence The Nurse will help Romeo to climb into Juliet's bedchamber as her husband later that night...
Act 3 (i)	Mon	Late PM	Benvolio (Montague) and Mercutio meet Tybalt (Capulet). Mercutio is killed by Tybalt.
Act 3 (i)	Mon	Early Eve	Romeo revenges the death of Mercutio and kills Tybalt.
Act 3	Mon	Night	Prince of Verona banishes Romeo from Verona. Unaware of the wedding, Capulet arranges for Juliet to marry Paris on Thursday
Act 3	Tue	Dawn	Having spent the night together, the lovers, Romeo and Juliet, part
Act 4	Tue	Morn	Juliet refuses her father's wishes to marry Paris and decides she will commit suicide rather than betray Romeo
Act 4	Tue	PM	Friar Laurence advises Juliet to pretend to take poison and fake her death, allowing her to escape to Romeo. Knowing she will escape Juliet "agrees" to marry Paris. Her delighted father brings the wedding forward to Wednesday

—	Act 4	Tue	Night	Juliet takes the fake potion
—	Act 4	Wed	Morn	The Nurse discovers the "dead" Juliet. The Capulet family learn that their daughter Juliet is dead. The wedding preparations are changed to those of a funeral.
—	Act 5	Wed		Romeo learns of Juliet's death – devastated, he plans to return to Verona to see the dead body of Juliet - he plans to commit suicide
—	Act 5	Thurs	Eve	Romeo looks at Juliet in her coffin. Paris sees him, they fight and Paris is killed. Romeo then takes the poison - just as Juliet awakes. Romeo dies, Friar Laurence enters too late and then Juliet stabs herself to death.
—	Act 5	Thurs	Eve	The tragic love story ends as the Montague and Capulet families end their feud

Notes:

Revision activities suggestions.

1. Make 17 'cards' each with a description of the events – shuffle these and then **reorder** them from memory.
2. Add **key quotations** for each scene (perhaps onto the cards for the activity above).
3. Highlight the above timeline in different colours depending on whether you think **honour** or love is the prime motivation for the characters.
4. Contrast paired characters e.g. Tybalt and Benvolio; Friar Laurence and the Nurse; Paris and Mercutio – which seems to have the greatest impact on the plot?
5. Storyboard the play using the timeline above.

A Shakespearian audience's views

Honour:

Men in Shakespeare's time cared deeply about their **honour**, especially their **horizontal or natural honour**. This was the respect with which their equals treated them – to lose your honour was to lose all respect and reputation. It also could not be regained once lost – this led to a lot of fights (duels) over insults to your honour. It only mattered among equals – this is why Lord Capulet isn't bothered by Romeo being at his party, while Tybalt is. Lord Capulet is socially superior to Romeo, while Tybalt and Romeo are equals socially speaking. It is why Tybalt has to fight Mercutio once Mercutio insults him ("rat catcher") otherwise he would lose face. This is also why Lord Capulet insists Juliet marry Paris – Capulet has promised this; if he failed and was "forsworn" he would lose honour.

To us this seems perhaps over the top – to challenge somebody to a duel over an insult – but Shakespeare's audience would have understood that the characters had little choice but to act as they do in order to preserve their honour.

Women's honour meanwhile was dependent on their chastity – remaining a virgin until their marriage. However if a woman lost her honour so would her family.

Time and the theatre:

Shakespeare's theatre was open to the sky and had no lighting: hence the characters have to constantly refer to the day of the week ("what day is it?") and time of day ("it is the lark") for the benefit of the audience.

Potions and poisons:

Elizabethan's were superstitious people who believed in magic and witchcraft. The idea of anaesthetic as a medical procedure was unknown, so Friar Laurence's potion would seem magical to them, evil perhaps (note how the Apothecary Romeo buys the poison takes a risk in selling it). Another reason why Friar Laurence would have come across as unnatural and untrustworthy to a Shakespearean audience.

Family:

Despite there being a Queen (Elizabeth 1) on the throne when Shakespeare wrote Romeo and Juliet, men were the masters. Their wives and children were theirs to command, their daughters in particular their property to "give" to whomever they pleased. Capulet therefore seems decidedly liberal when he tells Paris that Juliet may have a "choice" in whom she married; he also seems perfectly normal when claimed that "she will be ruled" by him and agree to marry Paris.

Posh families also often employed a Wet Nurse to breastfeed their children – the Nurse had that role, which is why she feels like a mother to Juliet .

Example questions

Suggested activities

1. Highlight the **key words** in each question. Using these key words write introductory and concluding sentences that will demonstrate you have answered the question.
2. **Mind map** these questions, adding key events and quotations.

Character questions:

- What do we learn about the character of Juliet as the play progresses?
- How central is the character of Friar Laurence to the play's conclusion?
- Whose role is more important: Paris or Tybalt?
- Which character could have best prevented the tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet*?

Theme questions:

- The contrast of youth and old age is important in this play. How far do you agree with this statement?
- *Romeo and Juliet* is really a play about honour. How far do you agree with this statement?
- Violence is the central cause of the events of *Romeo and Juliet*. How far do you agree with this statement?
- Is it true to say that *Romeo and Juliet* is critical of the idea of 'family'?

Add notes and quotes to these pages to illustrate the character

How ROMEO changes throughout the play

Act 1

Act 2

Act 3

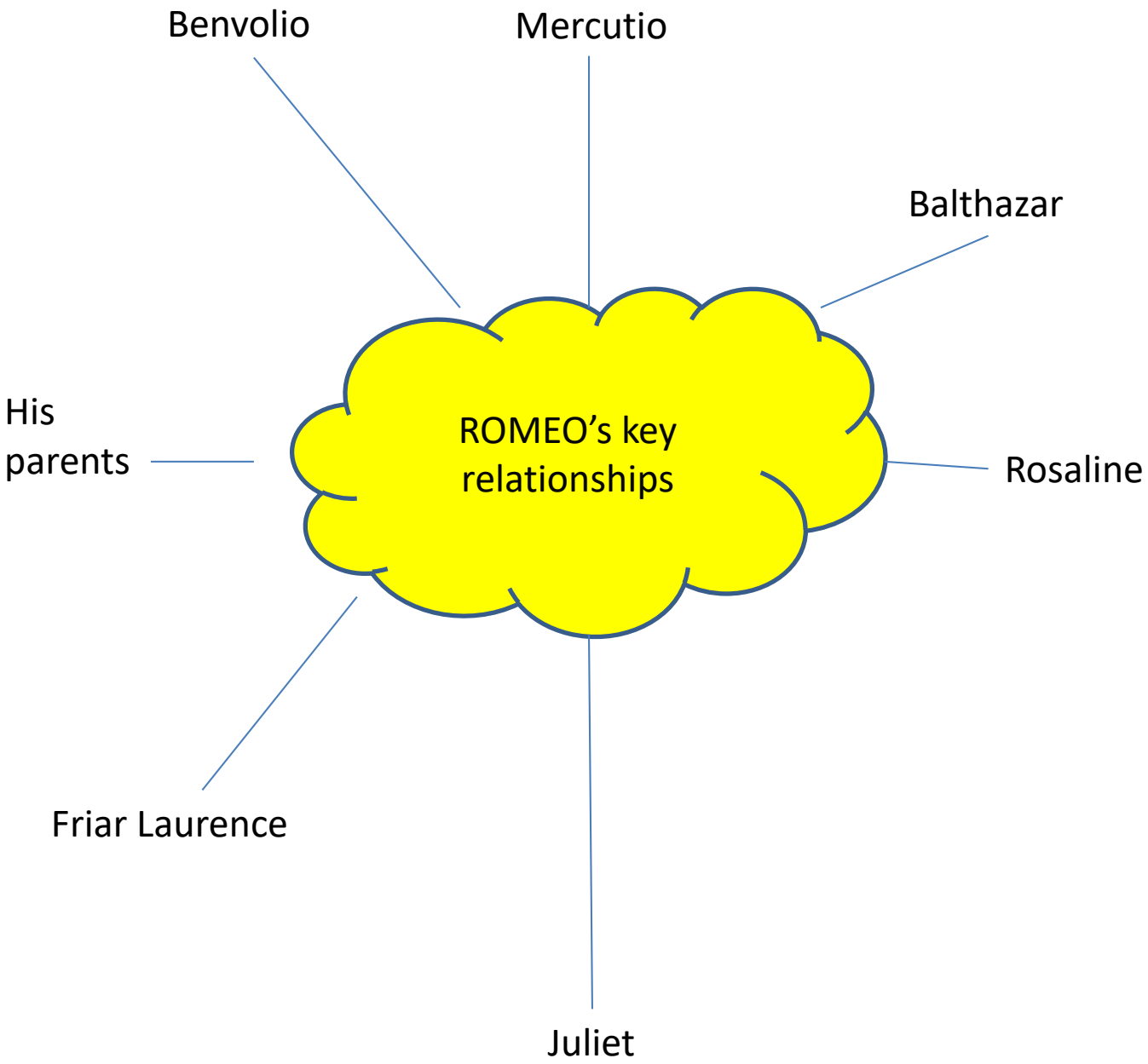
Act 4

Act 5

Romeo's views on love

Romeo's views on FATE (the idea that your life is decided for you)

Romeo's views on his family



Add notes and quotes to these pages to illustrate the character

How JULIET changes throughout the play

Act 1

Act 2

Act 3

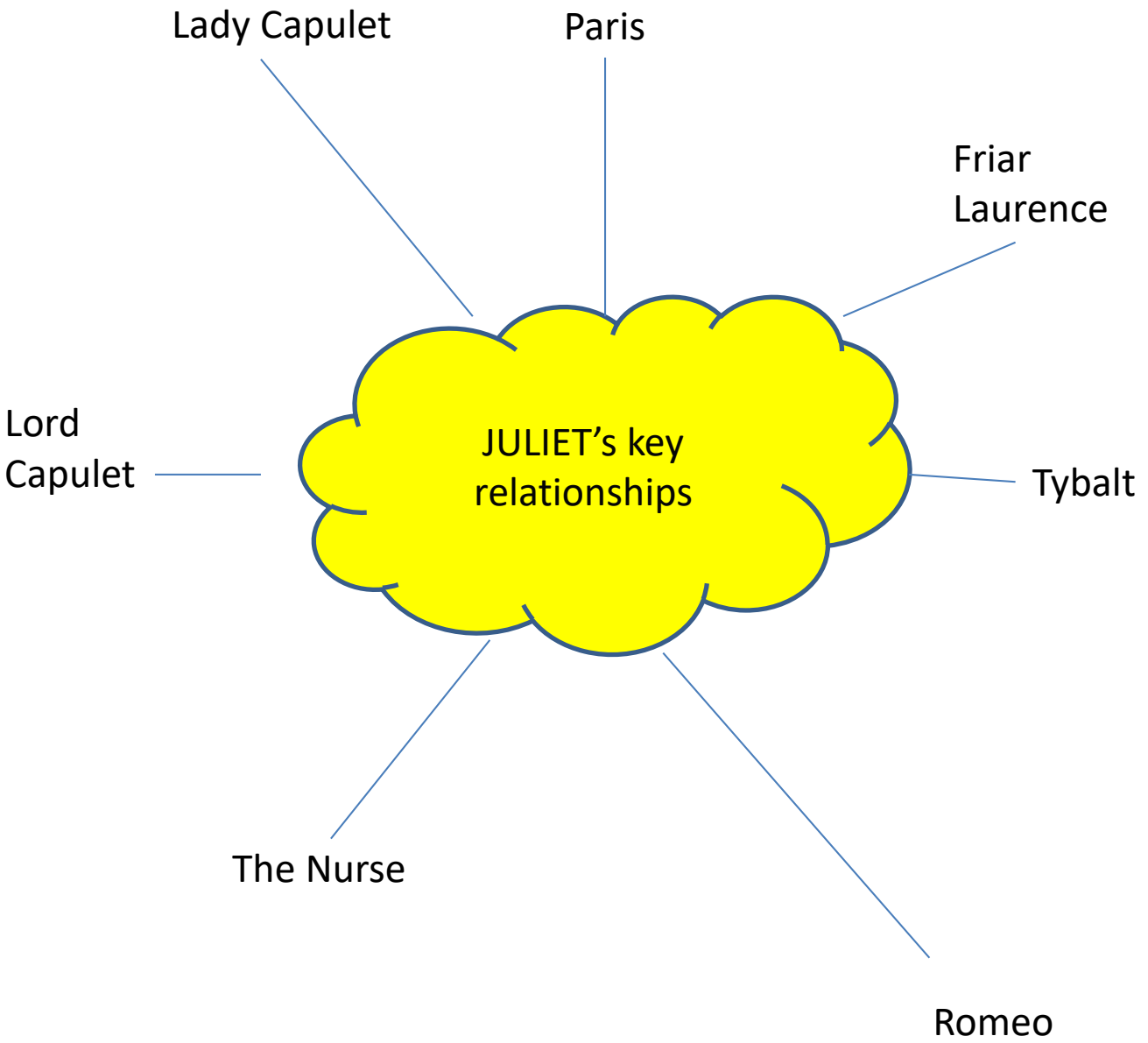
Act 4

Act 5

Juliet's views on love

Juliet's views on HONOUR

Juliet's views on her family



Does PARIS really love Juliet?

Is PARIS honourable?

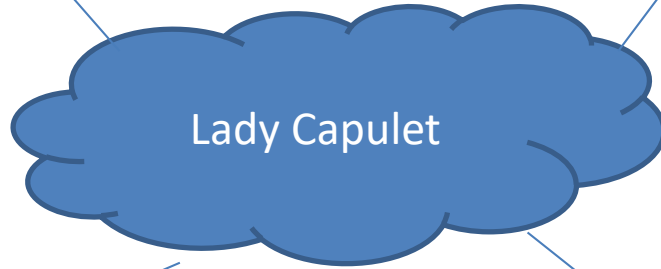
A modern audience would think...

A Shakespearean audience would think...

Paris as a **contrast** to Romeo

Capulet

Tybalt



Juliet

The Nurse

Mind map Lady Capulet and Lord Montague's relationships with these characters

Benvolio

Romeo



Prince

Lord
Capulet

How does Capulet talk about Juliet in:

Act 1 Scene 2 – to Paris

Capulet's views on honour
(especially the feud)

Act 3 Scene 5 – to Juliet and Lady Capulet

Capulet's attitude towards **family**...

How does this make us feel about a) Capulet and b) Juliet?

Capulet as a **contrast** to Tybalt...

How does BENVOLIO feel about his family?

What are Benvolio's views on **violence**?

A modern audience would think...

Benvolio as a **contrast** to Tybalt and Mercutio

A Shakespearean audience would think...

TYBALT'S views on HONOUR

Tybalt's views on FAMILY

A modern audience would think...

Tybalt on HATE

A Shakespearian audience would think...

Add notes and quotes to these pages to illustrate the character

Tybalt

Mercutio as a
contrast to

Romeo

What Mercutio causes to happen.

Act 1

Act 2

Act 3

Mercutio as a source of **HUMOUR**

Mercutio's attitude towards **honour**.

Add notes and quotes to these pages to illustrate the character

What The NURSE helps happen.

Act 1

Act 2

Act 3

Act 4

How does The Nurse deceive people?

The Nurse's views on LOVE

The Nurse as a source of HUMOUR

Add notes and quotes to these pages to illustrate the character

What FRIAR Laurence helps happen.

Act 2

How does Friar Laurence deceive people?

Act 3

Friar Laurence's views on LOVE

Act 4

Friar Laurence's views on FATE

Act 5

Friar Laurence's views on VIOLENCE (including self-harm)

Other **characters**. Think about their relevance to:

- The **feud** between the Capulets and Montagues
- Themes of **violence, honour** and **family**
- The way they assist (or not) Romeo and Juliet
- Themes of **loyalty** and **deception**

Prince

Lady Montague

Balthazar

Abraham, Gregory and Samson

Friar John

Paris' page

Peter