

UNLOCKED

ROMEO AND JULIET TEACHERS' PACK

Shakespeare Unlocked brings Shakespeare's most popular plays to life for young people by showing how actors and directors work to interpret and take ownership of Shakespeare's text.

There are 12 short films for each play: 3 scenes filmed in colour, in the theatre and 8 workshops, filmed in black and white, with actors and directors exploring those scenes. There is also a short film about this theatre production.

These films and the teachers' pack build on the approach developed in the RSC's [Stand up for Shakespeare manifesto](#). We know that children and young people can experience Shakespeare in ways that excite, engage and inspire them. We believe that young people get the most out of Shakespeare when they, like actors, experience and explore the plays actively. We want young people to: Do it on their feet, See it live and Start it earlier.



RSC/Elle Kurtz

The Teachers' Pack is aimed at the teaching of Key Stage 3 and 4 English. It can also be used for Key Stage 5 and Theatre Studies. It includes:

- An introduction to each of the three scenes
- Suggestions for ideas to consider with your students before and after watching each scene and workshop film.
- Activities to further students' understanding of the play. These require a cleared space to work in.

The [scene text](#) which is needed for several activities is on the BBC Shakespeare Unlocked web pages. bbc.co.uk/shakespeare

Curriculum targets

The activities in this pack support students' understanding of:

- Character and motivation
- Themes and ideas
- The author's craft
- Plays in performance
- Speaking and listening

ROMEO AND JULIET

This production of *Romeo and Juliet*, directed by Rupert Goold, opened on the 12 March 2010 in The Courtyard Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon.

Shakespeare Unlocked focuses on the following scenes and characters:

Act 2 Scene 2
THE BALCONY



Act 3 Scene 1
THE FIGHT



Act 3 Scene 5
THE FAMILY ARGUMENT



These three scenes show the most important relationships and turning points in the play: Romeo and Juliet deciding to marry in secret; Tybalt killing Mercutio, which leads to Romeo killing Tybalt; and the Capulet's arranged marriage for their daughter Juliet. They show three different uses of passionate language: love, death and family arguments.

ROMEO AND JULIET

Film title and chapters	Description	Pack page	Film duration
Act 2 Scene 2 <u>BALCONY SCENE</u>	Romeo steals into the Capulet orchard to find Juliet on her balcony, talking to herself. Romeo makes his presence known. Overcome with love, they agree to marry, despite the feud between their families.	4	9'46
<u>ROMEO'S SOLILOQUY</u>	Actor Sam Troughton discusses how Romeo has no plan for if he's discovered in the Capulet orchard. He explores Romeo's language and how Juliet is compared to sources of light and an angel.	6	5'20
<u>JULIET'S SOLILOQUY</u> What's the problem? Juliet's solution	Actors Mariah Gale and Sam Troughton explore the problem of Romeo's name and Juliet's solution: should Romeo change his name, or should he marry her so that she can change hers?	8	6'41
<u>LOVERS UNITE</u> A dangerous place Who's chasing who?	Romeo has put his life in danger by entering the Capulet orchard. Mariah Gale and Sam Troughton discuss their characters' response to this danger and explore differing ways of playing the scene.	10	6'36
Act 3 Scene 1 <u>FIGHT SCENE</u>	Young men from the Montague and Capulet families fight with tragic consequences. Romeo attempts to stop the brawl but Tybalt fatally wounds Mercutio. Mercutio dies cursing both their families.	12	6'16
<u>SPOILING FOR A FIGHT</u> Peacemaker?	The company discuss Shakespeare's language and the reason for the fight. Mercutio plays with words, making Tybalt feel foolish. Romeo attempts to be a peacemaker which disarms Tybalt and infuriates Mercutio.	14	6'14
<u>DEATH OF MERCUTIO</u> Showing bravado Showing fear	Assistant Director Michael Fentiman discusses ambiguity in Shakespeare's text. Does Tybalt intend to kill Mercutio? Actor Jonjo O'Neil explores ways of delivering Mercutio's dying scene: playing bravado and then showing fear.	16	9'17
Act 3 Scene 5 <u>FAMILY SCENE</u>	Lady Capulet tells Juliet she must marry Paris. Following a dramatic argument Juliet pretends to go along with the marriage plans, before arranging to see Friar Laurence.	18	7'38
<u>AN ARRANGED MARRIAGE</u> Wedding plans Answering back Pleading with mother	Mariah Gale as Juliet repeats the most important words from Lady Capulet's speech. The actors discuss how Juliet feels trapped by the arranged marriage, and try different ways of interpreting the text.	20	6'29
<u>A FAMILY ARGUMENT</u> Juliet sidesteps Capulet explodes	Richard Katz explores Lord Capulet's emotions, discussing how he switches from loving father to violent rage when Juliet disobeys his wishes.	22	5'37
<u>JULIET IS ABANDONED</u>	The actors look at how Juliet becomes increasingly isolated, from her mother, her father, and finally her nurse.	24	5'10
<u>ABOUT THE 2010 RSC PRODUCTION</u>	The cast discuss acting, directing and props, and explore how the choice of weapons, accent and costume affect how they interpret their characters.	26	7'15

ROMEO AND JULIET

Act 2 Scene 2: THE BALCONY

THE STORY SO FAR...

Romeo and Juliet are the children of two feuding families, the Montagues and the Capulets. The Capulets have just held a party which Romeo attends in disguise. Romeo and Juliet meet and instantly fall in love. Only afterwards does Juliet discover that Romeo is a Montague and therefore an enemy of her family.



WHAT HAPPENS?

This is one of Shakespeare's most famous scenes: Juliet on her balcony, Romeo in the orchard below, the physical setting highlighting the challenges these young lovers face. For a couple so desperate to be together, the play shows them constantly separated by physical objects, geography and events.

The staging deliberately contrasts the private space of a bedroom with the open outdoor space of the orchard. The first enables Juliet to speak freely, thinking she is alone on her bedroom balcony; the second provides the tension of the scene: Romeo is trespassing in the garden and in danger throughout the scene.

The scene also highlights themes that run throughout the play, particularly light and dark, love and hate. The young lovers' speeches are rich with imagery underpinned by these contrasts and themes.

Events in the play move at breathtaking speed with the action taking place over a matter of days. In the previous scene Romeo and Juliet meet for the first time, against the backdrop of the Capulet party. That same evening they meet alone for the first time, declare their love, and agree to marry. Shakespeare's skill as a writer is to convince the audience that Romeo and Juliet's love may be sudden, but it is undoubtedly genuine.

ROMEO AND JULIET

IDEAS TO USE WITH:

THE BALCONY

Before watching the scene

- **Light, dark and lighting**

Ask students in pairs to read through Romeo's speech from Act 2 Scene 2, lines 1 to 5.
What clues are in this short section of text about the time of day?
How does Romeo describe Juliet in this section?

Ask students to look at how the scene they are about to watch is staged. How is it lit?
Ask them to note the ongoing references to light and dark, the sun and moon.

After watching the scene

- **Light, dark and lighting**

Ask students in small groups to reflect on their observations from watching the scene.
What did they notice about the references to light and dark, sun and moon?

What did they notice about the lighting? Why does Shakespeare set this scene at night?
What effect does this setting have on the scene? Could the scene work in daylight?

- **Staging**

As a whole class discuss how the staging of this scene reflects the themes of the play.
Where is Juliet? Where is Romeo? What separates them? This is the first scene where Romeo and Juliet are alone together – why might Shakespeare have chosen to stage it in this way?

*"But, soft, what light
through yonder window
breaks?*

*It is the east, and Juliet
is the sun."*



ROMEO AND JULIET

IDEAS TO USE WITH:

ROMEO'S SOLILOQUY

Sam Troughton discusses how Romeo has no plan once he is discovered in the Capulet garden. He explores Romeo's language and how Juliet is compared to sources of light and an angel.

Before watching the workshop

- **Who is Romeo?**
Ask students to write a quick checklist of what we as the audience already know about Romeo before this scene starts. Ask them to watch out for additional clues about Romeo's character as this workshop unfolds.

After watching the workshop

- **Who is Romeo?**
Ask students to discuss what extra information they discover about Romeo from watching this workshop, both in terms of what Romeo actually does and says, and from what the actors and assistant director say about him.

Ask students to look at all the information they have gathered about Romeo. What does this tell us about Romeo? For example, he climbs a tall orchard wall – what does that tell us about him? That he's strong? Brave? Reckless?

What picture can they build of Romeo based on this analysis?
- **Romeo's language**
The actor playing Romeo suggests that Romeo is moved by Juliet's beauty. In pairs ask students to read through Romeo's soliloquy, from lines 1 to 24. Ask them to create a list of the different ways Romeo describes or suggests Juliet's beauty.



"I think if Juliet didn't open her mouth, then Romeo would probably be going back to the orchard every night and hiding in the bushes and creating a fantasy Juliet."

ROMEO AND JULIET

ACTIVITY (20 MINUTES):

EXPLORING THE LANGUAGE OF ROMEO'S SOLILOQUY

In the workshop the actor playing Romeo talks about his use of language: Romeo comparing Juliet to the sun and how he wants to be like a glove, touching her cheek. This activity allows students to explore the ways Shakespeare uses images and antithesis.

You will need:

- [Copies of Act 2 Scene 2](#): Romeo's speech from lines 1–33
- A cleared classroom or hall

Structure of the activity:

1. Ask students to stand in a circle and collectively read aloud Romeo's speech, from lines 1 to 33. Ask them for observations on the speech. Are there any words that are repeated? Did they notice the references to light or sources of light? What are the sources of light mentioned? What is Romeo saying about Juliet?
2. Now divide students into three groups. Ask one group to read aloud Romeo's speech as before. Ask the second group to quietly echo any words that refer to light or sources of light (sun, moon, etc). Ask the third group to gently echo any words that refer to Juliet's face or hands.
3. Ask students for observations on what this tells us about Romeo's soliloquy. How many times does Romeo compare Juliet to sources of light? How many times does he make reference to Juliet's face and hands? What does this tell us about Romeo? What is the overall effect of this speech on us, the audience? Do we believe that Romeo's love for Juliet is real?
4. Ask students to discuss the imagery: the comparisons made between Juliet and the moon, the sun and the stars. What does this imagery suggest in terms of Romeo's feelings for her? What does it suggest about Juliet's visual appearance on the balcony? Why might Shakespeare suggest such contrasts between Juliet/light and the evening/dark? How might this contrasting imagery be important to the play?
5. Now go back to the text, as the actor does, and repeat the speech collectively, noticing when the references occur.
How has students' understanding of the soliloquy changed from doing this activity?

"She's framed by the light of her room that makes her look like an angel in silhouette."



ROMEO AND JULIET

IDEAS TO USE WITH:

JULIET'S SOLILOQUY

Mariah Gale and Sam Troughton explore the problem of Romeo's name and Juliet's solution: should Romeo change his name, or should he marry her so that she can change hers?

Before watching the workshop

- **Public and private spaces**

Ask students in small groups to discuss how they behave in public. How is it different to how they behave in private?

Ask them to consider the context for this scene, and its staging. Juliet has just been attending her family's extravagant and probably very noisy party. She's now on the balcony of her bedroom; she thinks she is in private. How might she be feeling? How does that affect how she speaks, moves and behaves?

After watching the workshop

- **Juliet's speech as soliloquy**

In the workshop the actor playing Juliet tries delivering her speech directly to Romeo. Ask students to consider how this would change what Juliet says. Why does Shakespeare write the speech as a soliloquy? What does it allow Juliet to say?

What changed when Juliet delivered her speech directly to Romeo? How did it differ from speaking alone into the night? What changed in the meaning?



"She's found something with Romeo that she's never experienced before. I think she is going somewhere private."

ROMEO AND JULIET

ACTIVITY (30-40 MINUTES):

JULIET'S PROBLEM AND SOLUTIONS

In the workshops the company explore Juliet's perception of the problem she faces by falling in love with a Montague. In this activity students will be able to explore how Juliet's soliloquy summarises the problem and Juliet's solution.

Structure of the activity:

1. Divide the class into four groups. Ask two groups to go through Juliet's soliloquy and underline any references to what Juliet thinks the problem is. Ask them to write a list of Juliet's problems, in their own words. Ask the remaining two groups to do the same, but this time they are to look for what solutions Juliet proposes.
2. When all the groups have finished ask the 'problem' groups to sit or stand on one side of the room, but as two separate groups. Ask the 'solution' groups to sit or stand on the other side of the room, again separately.
3. Ask for a volunteer to be Juliet. Explain that Juliet will go back and forth between the groups on either side of the room. She will start by asking one of the 'problem' groups, 'What's the problem?'. She will then run to the other side of the room and ask one group 'What's the solution?'. This group has to come up with a solution from their list that best solves the problem Juliet faces. Once this has been done Juliet goes to the next 'problem' group and repeats the process. Each time Juliet arrives at a group they have to come up with a new problem or new solution, until all the problems and solutions have been dealt with.
4. Ask half the group to stand and read aloud Juliet's speech one last time. Ask the other group to call out loud 'problem' or 'solution' wherever they appear in Juliet's speech.
5. Ask students to reflect on this activity. Were there more problems or solutions? What did they notice about the way the speech is structured? Is Juliet in control of this process? How do they know? What does the focus on the problem and the coming up with solutions tell us about Juliet? If they were Romeo, would they be convinced by her solutions? Why?

You will need:

- [Copies of Act 2 Scene 2](#): Juliet's speech from lines 39 to 50
- Different coloured pens
- A cleared classroom or hall

"By the end, she has come up with a very good argument and says 'Romeo doff thy name'."



ROMEO AND JULIET

IDEAS TO USE WITH:

LOVERS UNITE

Romeo has put his life in danger by entering the Capulet orchard. Mariah Gale and Sam Troughton discuss their characters' response to this danger and explore different ways of playing the scene.

Before watching the workshop

- **A dangerous place**
Ask students in pairs to list the dangers Romeo faces by being in the Capulet orchard.
- **A private speech overheard**
Ask students to note what the actress playing Juliet says about Romeo overhearing Juliet's speech. Why might Juliet be embarrassed? How does Juliet's declaration of love change things?

After watching the workshop

- **Who's chasing who?**
The actors tried two different ways of exploring the dynamics of the scene (the rhythm, pace and energy) by trying Romeo chasing Juliet, and the other way around. Ask students in small groups to discuss what worked, or didn't, about each version? What comments did the actors make about the possibilities presented by playing the scene in different ways?
- **Young lovers**
Ask students to discuss, in small groups, whether or not they believe in love at first sight. What's the youngest they think it's possible to fall in love? How old do they think Romeo and Juliet are meant to be? What's in the text that suggests their love is real and not a teenage infatuation?



"Juliet's much more 'get out of the orchard! What are you doing?!' Whereas Romeo has a kind of space-cadet streak to him."

ROMEO AND JULIET

ACTIVITY (30 MINUTES):

A DANGEROUS PLACE

In the workshops, the actors explore the danger that Romeo faces and how Juliet's love makes him feel invincible. In this exercise students explore how the sense of danger affects the atmosphere of the scene.

You will need:

- [Copies of Act 2 Scene 2](#)
- A cleared class room or hall

Structure of the activity:

1. Ask students to work in pairs and give them copies of Act 2 Scene 2 from lines 59 to 145.
2. Ask them to read aloud the extract, with one saying Romeo's lines, the other Juliet's.
3. Ask them to go through the extract again and this time highlight any words that refer to death or murder, light or dark.
4. Ask them to stand and take it in turns to read aloud just the highlighted words. Now ask them to come up with a still image for each of the highlighted words.
5. What do these words and images tell us in terms of the dangers that Romeo faces? How might these dangers affect the way the characters speak and move?
6. Ask students to think about ideas for ways to play the scene that highlight the sense of danger. Might Romeo and Juliet be whispering, afraid of being overheard? Might they be nervous? The actor playing Romeo suggested Juliet's love made him feel reckless so they could explore Romeo as reckless, Juliet trying to quieten him down. Ask students to act out the scene trying at least two different ways of highlighting the danger.
7. Ask for some volunteers to share their versions. Ask students for their observations. What does this activity highlight in terms of the dangers Romeo faces? How does it affect the atmosphere of the scene? How does this scene link to the themes of the play?

"She's really embarrassed. It's like saying out loud in the middle of the night that you fancy someone and them going, 'I heard that!' It's a teenage girl's worst nightmare!"



ROMEO AND JULIET

Act 3 Scene 1: THE FIGHT

THE STORY SO FAR...

This scene marks a major turning point in the play. Up until now we have witnessed the animosity between the houses of Capulet and Montague but it's been overshadowed by the optimism of the young lovers. In the previous scene Romeo and Juliet marry in secret, creating a sense of hope that their love might unite the two families and bring to an end the feuding.



WHAT HAPPENS?

There are parallels between this scene and the earlier brawl in Act 1 Scene 1, which both start with verbal sparring leading into a fight. The parallels perhaps lull the audience into a false sense of security. Maybe this scene will follow the same pattern as before: argument and fight, but ultimately no one getting hurt. Therefore it's all the more shocking when Mercutio is killed.

As a scene in performance it allows for interesting choices. At what point does the atmosphere change from verbal sparring to something much more sinister? Are Mercutio and Tybalt fighting to demonstrate their skills or fighting to kill? Does Tybalt intend to kill Mercutio or is it an accident? Shakespeare's ambiguity on these questions allows each theatre company to make their own choices about the staging of the scene.

The death of Mercutio erases all previous optimism and sets off a series of tragic events that happen quickly, leading swiftly to Romeo and Juliet's death. Mercutio's curse is both shocking – because he damns the Montagues as well as the Capulets – and prophetic..

ROMEO AND JULIET

IDEAS TO USE WITH:

THE FIGHT

Before watching the scene

- **A public space**

Explain to students that the scene they are about to watch takes place on the streets. Ask them to consider, as the events unfold, how the public nature of the scene impacts on the characters.

- **Contrasting scenes**

Ask students in small groups to look briefly at the preceding scene, the marriage of Romeo and Juliet. Ask students to summarise the mood of that scene. How are the characters feeling? What effect does that scene have on us, as audience?

As they watch the film ask them to jot down observations about the mood of this scene. How does it contrast with the preceding scene? What impact does the unfolding scene have on the audience?

Ask students to write down any other contrasts they're aware of between the two scenes.

After watching the scene

- **Contrasting scenes**

In small groups ask students to share their observations. Why does Shakespeare choose to put these two scenes right next to each other? What effect does this juxtaposition have on the audience?

- **Playing Mercutio**

In small groups ask students to discuss how the character of Mercutio is interpreted in this production. Is Mercutio a joker? Is he spoiling for a fight? How did the staging of the scene, and the staging of the fight, support this interpretation?

- **Love and hate**

Remind students that the contrasting themes of love and hate run through the play. How are they highlighted in this scene? Ask students to look at the exchange between Tybalt and Romeo starting from the line "Romeo, the love I bear thee...". Why does Romeo say that he loves Tybalt? What is the effect of Romeo's use of the word 'love' on the scene? And on Mercutio?

"Will you pluck your sword out of his pilcher by the ears? Make haste, lest mine be about your ears ere it be out."



ROMEO AND JULIET

IDEAS TO USE WITH:

SPOILING FOR A FIGHT

The company discuss Shakespeare's language and the reason for the fight. Mercutio plays with words, making Tybalt feel foolish. Romeo attempts to be a peacemaker which disarms Tybalt and infuriates Mercutio.

Before watching the workshop

- **The language of Mercutio and Tybalt**

In the following workshop Mercutio is described by one actor as a "wordsmith" while the actor playing Tybalt suggests Tybalt speaks more "in bullet points". As students watch the workshop ask them to write down their own observations about how both these characters speak. How long are their sentences? What sorts of words does each use: short, direct words or longer, more complex words?

After watching the workshop

- **The language of Mercutio and Tybalt**

Ask students to work in small groups and share their observations of how Mercutio and Tybalt speak. Did any particular words or exchanges stand out?

Ask them to create two lists, one headed Mercutio and one headed Tybalt. Ask them to recall as many words or phrases said by each of these two characters and record them on the relevant list.

What do the two lists tell us about these two characters? How are they similar and how are they different? Do they agree with the description of Mercutio as a wordsmith?

- **Why does Mercutio choose to fight?**

Remind students that Tybalt has come looking for a fight with Romeo. Ask your students to discuss why they think Mercutio chooses to fight in Romeo's place. What does this tell us about the character of Mercutio?

"Mercutio is the real spark for this brawl.... he starts going 'come on, come on'."



ROMEO AND JULIET

ACTIVITY (20-30 MINUTES):

USING WORDS AS WEAPONS

In the workshop the actors talk about how Mercutio uses words as weapons. In this activity students will be able to explore the language chosen during the fight scene and experiment with how to speak words as if they were weapons.

You will need:

- [Copies of Act 3 Scene 1](#)
- A cleared classroom or hall

Structure of the activity:

1. With the whole group, discuss how Mercutio plays with words. For example, the word 'consortest' could have an innocent meaning but Mercutio chooses to interpret it as an insult, as if Tybalt is suggesting Romeo and Mercutio are in some sort of relationship.
2. In small groups ask students to go through the scene from lines 1 – 40 and highlight any words that are obviously meant to insult – for example, 'villain'.
3. Now ask students to go through the scene and highlight any words that *could* be innocent or *could* be insulting. For example, the word 'boy' could be entirely innocent but the way Tybalt says it to Romeo is meant to be insulting.
4. Ask students to choose between five and ten words to experiment with. They must decide how to say these words in the most insulting tone of voice they can find, as if they want to stab the others with their words; as if words could indeed be weapons. Add in suitable actions as needed
5. Now ask them to meet up with another group and take it in turns to say their words to the other group, using the agreed tone of voice, as if they were fighting the other group but with their words rather than weapons.
6. Ask students to reflect on this activity. What did it tell them about the language that Tybalt and Mercutio use? What did they learn about how tone of voice can change the impact of a word?

*"You going to let
him say that to you?
If someone speaks to you
like that you stand up
and punch them."*



ROMEO AND JULIET

IDEAS TO USE WITH:

DEATH OF MERCUTIO

Michael Fentiman discusses ambiguity in Shakespeare's text. Does Tybalt intend to kill Mercutio? Jonjo O'Neil explores ways of delivering Mercutio's dying scene: playing bravado and then showing fear.

Before watching the workshop

- **Intentional or accidental murder**

Explain to students that there is nothing in the text that tells us whether Tybalt means to kill Mercutio, or whether Mercutio's death is an accident. As they watch the workshop ask students to observe how the actors stage the fight. How is the fatal wounding of Mercutio staged? What do the actors say about the staging of Mercutio's death?

After watching the workshop

- **Dying in public**

This scene not only takes place in a public place, but is staged with the audience on three sides, as if it is a real courtyard that they are looking onto. Ask students to discuss what effect this staging might have on Mercutio? What does the actor playing Mercutio say about how it feels to be dying in public?

- **Playing the fear versus showing bravado**

In small groups ask students to jot down their observations about the three different ways the actor played Mercutio's death: showing bravado; playing the fear; and doing both. What did each interpretation highlight? Which interpretation did they think was most effective and why?

*"We've got to front up
because otherwise we are
not going to get respect."*



ROMEO AND JULIET

ACTIVITY (30 MINUTES):

STAGING THE FIGHT

The actor Jonjo O'Neill, playing Mercutio, talks about how the public nature of this scene affects Mercutio, giving him an audience even as he's dying. In this activity, students will stage the scene and explore for themselves how dying in such a public way affects not only Mercutio but the others around him.

You will need:

- [Copies of Act 3 Scene 1](#)
- A cleared classroom or hall

Structure of the activity:

1. Explain to students that you are going to collectively stage the fight scene, with everyone involved.
2. Ask for four volunteers to be Romeo, Mercutio, Benvolio and Tybalt. Divide the remaining students into three groups: supporters of the Montagues; supporters of the Capulets; and innocent bystanders.
3. Ask students to consider where the scene is set. We know it's a public scene but ask them to be specific in its setting.
4. Now start staging the scene. Ask students to agree where Mercutio, Benvolio and Tybalt might be in the space at the point when Romeo enters. Now ask students to agree where the two sets of supporters should be, and where the innocent bystanders should be. Ask everyone to take up their positions and create a still image.
5. Ask the actor playing Mercutio to say out loud 'I am hurt'. Ask everyone to consider their response to Mercutio's words. What do they want to do? Get closer so that they can see what's happening? Run away? Ask them to move or respond to Mercutio's words and then silently hold their new positions.
6. Now ask the student playing Mercutio to say out loud 'A plague o'both your houses'. Again, ask everyone how they might respond when they hear Mercutio say those words.
7. Ask the students for feedback on the activity. What did they learn about the scene? What is the impact of this scene taking place in such a public space – on Mercutio, Romeo, others, the audience?

"There's a sense of an agreement amongst them that they are going to ignore what is happening."



ROMEO AND JULIET

Act 3 Scene 5: FAMILY ARGUMENT

THE STORY SO FAR...

Romeo and Juliet have secretly married. The wedding is swiftly followed by the death of Mercutio with the consequence of Romeo killing Tybalt, Juliet's beloved cousin. Romeo is banished by the Prince and the lovers spend their one and only night together before he flees.



WHAT HAPPENS?

This scene is rich in contrasts and critical in terms of showing us Juliet's rapidly changing circumstances.

Juliet starts the scene having just left the warmth of her marriage bed. In stark contrast, the end of the scene sees her totally isolated: Romeo has fled; her parents have abandoned her; and even her nurse is no longer an ally.

A further contrast is the violence of Lord Capulet's language. We have already witnessed many examples of violent language and behaviour, but they have all taken place between men, on the streets, in public places. The contrast here is that we see it in a domestic setting, directed against a young girl.

The end of the scene is characteristic of the speed of events throughout the play. Juliet has rapidly assessed her situation, realised she is totally isolated from her family and quickly decided to go along with the arranged marriage in order to buy herself some time and seek Friar Laurence's help. The play now races towards her tragic death.

ROMEO AND JULIET

IDEAS TO USE WITH:

FAMILY ARGUMENT

Before watching the scene

- **Lord and Lady Capulet**

Ask students to write down what they already know about Lord and Lady Capulet. What do they imagine they might look like? How might they behave towards each other? Towards Juliet? As they watch the film, ask them to think about how this Lord and Lady Capulet compare with their ideas. Ask them to note if anything surprises them about how they are played in this production?

- **A domestic setting**

Remind students that in the text, this scene is set in Juliet's bedroom. As they observe the workshop ask students to look at how and where the scene is staged in this production.

After watching the scene

- **Lord and Lady Capulet**

In small groups ask students to share their observations of Lord and Lady Capulet. Did anything surprise them? If so, what?

- **A domestic setting**

As a whole group, ask students for their observations on the setting. What does setting this scene around the breakfast table change? What is the effect of having servants present?

- **Juliet's grief**

Ask students what they noticed about Juliet at the very beginning of the scene. Why does she appear sad and/or tired? Why does Lady Capulet think Juliet is sad? What other reasons does Juliet have to be grieving? How did the production highlight Juliet's sadness and her youth? What impact does it have on us, the audience, to see Juliet eating the chocolate bar?

*"Ay, sir, but she will none,
she gives you thanks.
I would the fool were
married to her grave."*



ROMEO AND JULIET

IDEAS TO USE WITH:

AN ARRANGED MARRIAGE

The actor playing Juliet repeats the most important words from Lady Capulet's speech. The actors discuss how Juliet feels trapped by her marriage, and try different ways of interpreting the text.

Before watching the workshop

- **Lady Capulet's attitude to the arranged marriage**
As they watch the workshop ask students to observe Lady Capulet. What does she say about the arranged marriage? Ask them to look out for the two very different ways the actress playing Lady Capulet plays this scene. How do these differences change the interpretation of Lady Capulet?

After watching the workshop

- **Mother and daughter**
In pairs ask students to discuss their observations of the relationship between Lady Capulet and Juliet. What do we learn from the way they speak to each other? Did the students impressions of the relationship change with the different approaches the actors took?



"I think Lady Capulet would think, 'Why on earth does she hate Paris? More than Romeo, who has just killed your cousin?'"

ROMEO AND JULIET

ACTIVITY (20-30 MINUTES):

INTERPRETIVE CHOICES

In the workshop we see the actors explore possible choices: Lady Capulet joyful that Juliet will marry Paris; Juliet trying to be reasonable. This activity allows students to explore their own choices for playing the scene and gain insights into the characters of Juliet and her mother.

You will need:

- [Copies of Act 3 Scene 5](#)
- A cleared classroom or hall

Structure of the activity:

1. Remind students that in the workshop we see the actors explore possible choices for playing the scene. Ask students to brainstorm other ways of playing the scene: perhaps Lady Capulet is bored or exhausted; perhaps Juliet is pleading with her mother, or confused.
2. Now ask students to work in pairs, with one as Juliet and one as Lady Capulet.
3. Ask them to try out the scene, from lines 1 to 22, choosing one of the possible ways of playing Juliet and Lady Capulet. Ask them to try another way and, if possible, a third way.
4. Ask for some volunteers to share their interpretations.
5. Ask students what insights they gained from these different versions. What did each interpretation offer in terms of understanding Lady Capulet? What might explain her behaviour in each interpretation? How does playing Lady Capulet in a certain way affect Juliet? And vice versa?

"She's trapped, as are many girls in this country and all over the world, trapped by their mum and dad."



ROMEO AND JULIET

IDEAS TO USE WITH:

A FAMILY ARGUMENT

Richard Katz explores Lord Capulet's emotions, discussing how he switches from loving father to violent rage when Juliet disobeys his wishes.

Before watching the workshop

- **An you be mine, I'll give you to my friend**
In small groups ask students to look at Lord Capulet's speech from lines 75 – 95, in particular the line "An you be mine, I'll give you to my friend". What does this speech tell us about the place of girls and women in the world of the play? How does this fuel Lord Capulet's anger when Juliet says she won't marry Paris?

After watching the workshop

- **Capulet explodes**
Richard Katz talks about how Shakespeare could have structured the scene differently, with Lord Capulet going 'crazy' straight away. But instead, Richard Katz observes that: "I think it's really interesting to see before man goes crazy [the sense of] ... you're my baby. I'll do anything for you".

In small groups ask students to discuss this observation. What would be missed if we didn't see Capulet as loving father first? What insights do we gain by seeing these two contrasting aspects of his character?



"My fingers itch', has got to be something about hitting her. 'My fingers itch' is as close as an acting note as I've ever had."

ROMEO AND JULIET

ACTIVITY (20-30 MINUTES):

CAPULET AS LOVING OR VIOLENT FATHER

You will need:

- [Copies of Act 3 Scene 5](#)
- A cleared classroom or hall

In this production we see Lord Capulet as a loving father at the beginning of this scene, hugging and comforting his daughter. The actor playing Capulet explains that he finds this an interesting choice because it offers such a stark contrast to the eruption of violence later in the scene. In this activity students explore that contrast for themselves.

Structure of the activity:

1. Ask the whole class for observations on the playing of Lord Capulet in this production. What does the actor do to convey Lord Capulet initially as a loving father? Now ask them for their observations on Capulet in the latter part of the scene. How does the actor convey Capulet's anger?
2. In pairs ask students to create two images. In the first Capulet is a loving father towards Juliet; in the second they need to capture Capulet's anger towards Juliet.
3. Refer students to the text. Are there any other ways of playing the earlier part of the scene? How else might Capulet be? Tired? Irritated? Angry? Ask students to create alternative images that could summarise Capulet and Juliet's relationship at the beginning.
4. Ask for some volunteers to share their images. Ask some pairs to show their image of Capulet as loving father followed by the image of Capulet's anger. Ask others to show one of their alternative images followed by the image of Capulet's anger.
5. Ask students for their feedback. What is the effect of seeing Capulet as loving father first? What does it add to the scene? Was it the most effective choice or were there alternative images that worked just as well? How were they different?

"I try to come into the scene as open and free and happy as I can."



ROMEO AND JULIET

IDEAS TO USE WITH:

JULIET IS ABANDONED

The actors look at how Juliet becomes increasingly isolated, from her mother, her father, and finally her nurse.

Before watching the workshop

- **Switching allegiances**
In pairs, ask students to write a short list of the ways in which the Nurse has helped Romeo and Juliet before this scene. Ask students to consider why the Nurse now switches allegiances. Ask them to look out for what the actress playing the Nurse says about this change during the workshop.

After watching the workshop

- **Lady Capulet**
In small groups ask students to look at the exchange between Lady Capulet and Juliet immediately after Lord Capulet angrily departs (Act 3 Scene 5 lines 99 – 103).
Ask them for their thoughts on Lady Capulet's response to Juliet's pleading. What suggestions did the actress playing Lady Capulet give for her behaviour? Can the students think of any other reasons?



“If your dad says you’re going to be exiled, hanged, no, why would you do that? Marry Paris. We’ll sort out the Romeo stuff later.”

ROMEO AND JULIET

ACTIVITY (20-30 MINUTES):

JULIET ALONE

In the workshop the actor playing Juliet talks about feeling isolated and abandoned. In this exercise students will explore this idea further.

You will need:

- [Copies of Act 3 Scene 5](#)
- A cleared classroom or hall

Structure of the activity:

1. Ask students to work in small groups. Explain to them that they are going to look at how Juliet is abandoned first by Lord Capulet, then Lady Capulet, and finally the Nurse.
2. Ask them to look at what Lord Capulet says that shows his anger towards Juliet. Ask students to highlight any words or phrases (but no more than a line) taken from his two main speeches.
3. Then ask them to look at what Lady Capulet says to Juliet on lines 99 to 100, and highlight words or phrases that show her abandoning Juliet. And finally ask them to highlight anything the Nurse says (in her speech from lines 105 to 116) that shows she no longer supports Romeo and Juliet's marriage.
4. Ask each person in the group to choose one of their groups' highlighted words or phrases. Each person must choose a different set of words to the rest of the group.
5. Now ask everyone to stand in two lines facing each other, far enough apart that one person can easily walk down the middle.
6. Now ask for one volunteer to be Juliet and ask them to stand between the two lines at one end. Explain that they are going to 'visit' everyone in turn, zigzagging their way down the lines. As Juliet 'visits' each person standing in the lines, ask them to say their chosen word or phrase to her.
7. When the student playing Juliet reaches the end ask them how it felt to hear all these things said to them. What words or phrases particularly stood out?
8. Ask students to reflect on what this activity tells us about what happens to Juliet in the scene.

"Juliet is going down these train tracks now, she's going to go to the ends of the earth for Romeo."



ROMEO AND JULIET

IDEAS TO USE WITH:

ABOUT THE 2011 RSC PRODUCTION

The cast discuss acting, directing and props, and explore how the choice of weapons, accent and costume affect how they interpret their characters.

Before watching the clip

- **Lady Capulet**

Thinking about any ideas your students have already formed of Lady Capulet, ask them how they would imagine Lady Capulet to dress and how the costume would affect her manner. To develop this, ask the students to look out for when the actress playing Lady Capulet talks about how design choices helped her to interpret her character.

After watching the clip

- **Design and production choices**

In small groups ask students to discuss the design choices made for this production.

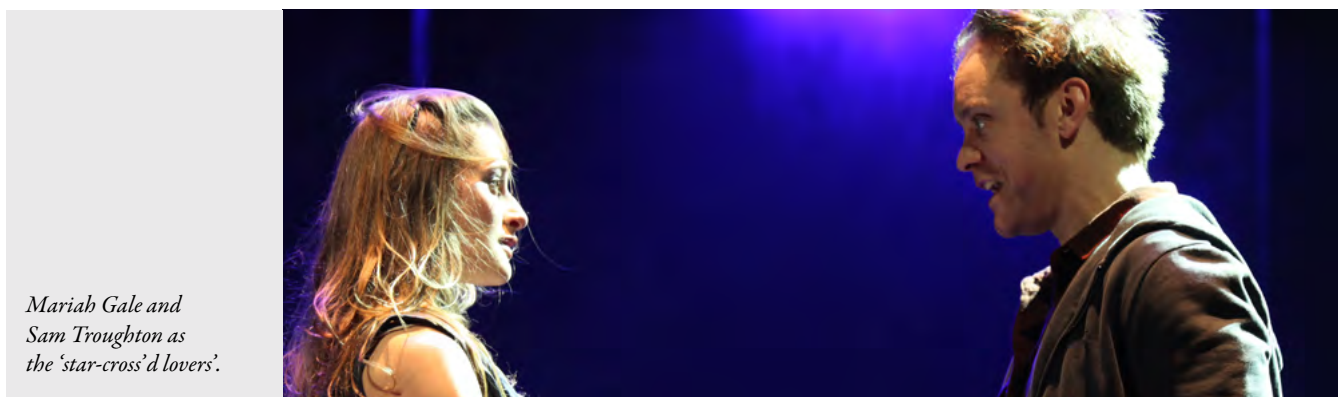
Ask them to consider some or all of the following:

- Romeo and Juliet in different period dress to everyone else
- Choice of weapons
- Choice of accents
- Setting Act 3 Scene 5 as a breakfast scene.

What effect do these choices have on us, the audience?

Can they imagine different choices?

How would different choices change the audiences' response to the play or characters?



RSC/Ellice Kurtz

*Mariab Gale and
Sam Troughton as
the 'star-cross'd lovers'.*