

Plot

- Act 1** Set in Verona, Italy. There is a brawl between the Capulet and Montague families who hate each other. Romeo Montague and Juliet Capulet meet at a masked party and fall in love. Juliet's cousin, Tybalt, is angry that Romeo has come.
- Act 2** Romeo and Juliet confess their love in the balcony scene. Romeo persuades Friar Laurence to marry them in secret. The only other character to attend the wedding is Juliet's Nurse.
- Act 3** Tybalt and his friends taunt the Montagues in the street. Mercutio defends Romeo when he refuses to fight Tybalt. Tybalt kills Mercutio accidentally. Romeo kills Tybalt in revenge and is sentenced to banishment in Mantua, but spends the night with Juliet first. The next day Juliet's father forces her to marry Paris within a week.
- Act 4** Juliet tells Friar Lawrence she will kill herself instead. He gives her a sleeping potion so everyone will believe she is dead. 48 hours later she will wake and she and Romeo will be together.
- Act 5** Romeo doesn't know about the plan and thinks that Juliet is dead. He sees her body in the tomb and commits suicide by drinking poison. Juliet wakes and stabs herself. The families are reconciled over their children's deaths.

Themes

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| Love | Parents/children | Violence |
| Conflict | Hatred | Responsibility |
| Family | Fate | Revenge |
| Relationships | Gender | Death |

Assessment Objectives

AO1, AO2 and AO3 are equally weighted for this question

Read, understand and respond to texts. Students should be able to:

- use textual references, and quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations.
- maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response.

Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.

Characters

- Romeo Montague** The main character. Loves and marries Juliet. Kills Tybalt. Thinks he is a victim of Fortune. Approx 16 years old.
- Juliet Capulet** Loves and marries Romeo. Distant from her mother but has a close relationship with The Nurse. Is willing to defy her parents for love.
- Tybalt Capulet** Juliet's cousin. Loves violence and wants to keep the feud with the Capulets alive. Killed by Romeo. Nickname is Prince of Cats.
- Mercutio** Romeo's best friend. A joker and witty character. Dies defending Romeo's honour. His death sends the play into tragic mode.
- Friar Lawrence** Plays the role of a father and confidante to Romeo. Agrees to marry them in the hope of ending the feud and reconciling the families.
- The Nurse** Plays the role of a confidante to Juliet. She knows Juliet's secrets and is heartbroken by her death.
- Prince Escalus** Ruler of Verona. Passes a death sentence for the next person to fight in the town but changes it to banishment as Romeo killed Tybalt in revenge for Mercutio's murder.
- Benvolio** Romeo's cousin. A peace keeper who tries to stop Mercutio from fighting. A foil to Tybalt.
- Lord and Lady Montague** Romeo's parents. Lady Montague dies of grief when Romeo is banished. Lord Montague, with the Capulets, erect a statue of the couple.
- Lord and Lady Capulet** Lord Capulet tries to force Juliet to marry Paris and is furious when she disobeys. With Lord Montague, they erect a statue of the couple.

Vocabulary

- Tragedy
- Irony
- Blank Verse
- Prose
- Hyperbole
- Metaphor
- Pathetic Fallacy
- Simile
- Sonnet
- Foreshadowing
- Rhyming Couplets
- Puns
- Humour
- Gender
- Soliloquy
- Rhyme/Rhythm
- Hamartia
- Prologue

Structure and Form

Written in five Acts. Until the death of Mercutio in Act 3, the play has aspects of comedy. Act 3 is the pivot that sends the play into tragedy.

The deaths of the eponymous characters occur in Act 5.

The entire action of the play takes place in less than four days.

Types of love

Courtly love – Romeo's idealistic and unrequited love for Rosaline.

Passionate love – the love of Romeo and Juliet which overcomes boundaries, restrictions and family feuds.

Physical love/Lust – Romeo and Juliet's consummation of their marriage: the bawdy jokes at the opening of the play; The Nurse's comments about sex.

Family love – distant relationship between Juliet and her mother compared with her close bond with the Nurse. Similar relationship with Romeo and Friar Lawrence

Arranged marriages – common in Shakespeare's time. At first, Lord Capulet believes that an arranged marriage between Juliet and Paris should be entered into too quickly. He later changes his mind and when she refuses, he threatens to banish Juliet

Tips

- Support points with reference to characters and events and refer back to the question set.
- Know the text in detail.
- Show understanding and appreciation of the language used by Shakespeare and explain the effect of the words he has chosen.



You are advised to spend about 20 minutes on this question,
Read the extract below. Then answer the following question:
What does the extract show an audience about Juliet's thoughts and feelings at this point in the play? Refer closely to details from the extract to support your answer. [15]

Juliet:

What if it be a poison which the Friar
Subtly hath ministered to have me dead,
Lest in this marriage he should be dishonoured,
Because he married me before to Romeo?
I fear it is, and yet methinks it should not,
For he hath still been tried a holy man.
How if, when I am laid into the tomb,
I wake before the time that Romeo
Come to redeem me? There's a fearful point!
Shall I not then be stifled in the vault,
To whose foul mouth no healthsome air breathes in,
And there die strangled ere my Romeo comes?
Or if I live, is it not very like
The horrible conceit of death and night,
Together with the terror of the place –
As in a vault, an ancient receptacle,
Where for this many hundred years the bones
Of all my buried ancestors are packed,
Where bloody Tybalt, yet but green in earth,
Lies fest'ring in his shroud, where, as they say,
At some hours in the night spirits resort –
Alack, alack, is it not like that I,
So early waking – what with loathsome smells,
And shrieks like mandrakes' torn out of the earth,
That living mortals hearing them run mad –
O, if I wake, shall I not be distraught,
Environèd with all these hideous fears,
And madly play with my forefathers' joints,
And pluck the mangled Tybalt from his shroud,
And in this rage, with some great kinsman's bone,
As with a club, dash out my desp'rate brains?

Sample answer

In this extract, Juliet is contemplating taking the potion given to her by Friar Lawrence. The potion would put her in a state that will appear like she is dead. She requested the potion as Lord Capulet has demanded she marry Paris, something she does not want to do.

In the extract, it is shown to the audience that Juliet is conflicted about whether or not to take the potion the Friar has given her. The line 'what if it be a poison' demonstrates how Juliet is conflicted as she is doubting the Friar's intentions. Juliet goes on to say 'which the Friar subtly hath ministered me to have me dead.' Juliet is doubting the Friar's intentions and is beginning to worry that he intended to kill her as 'he should be dishonoured' due to having married Juliet to Romeo. To an audience, Juliet here is presented as doubtful and untrusting due to her thoughts of the Friar's intentions. The impression of her being conflicted is further supported in the line 'yet methinks it should not...he hath still been tried a holy man'. This supports the idea of her being conflicted as she is shown to have to reassure herself about the type of man the Friar is.

Later in the extract, to an audience Juliet is shown to be terrified of waking up in the tomb before Romeo arrives to get her. This is shown in the line 'I wake before the time Romeo come to redeem me?' The use of the rhetorical question demonstrates how Juliet is in search of an answer to reassure her and to calm her fear. Juliet then says the line 'stifled in the vault', the use of the word 'stifled' suggest being trapped and unable to breathe which alludes to the audience the fear that is rising in Juliet. Juliet's rising terror is further shown to the audience as she begins to think about how she will be trapped with her 'buried ancestors'. Juliet is shown to be terrified of the thought of being surrounded by the dead.

In the next part of the extract, Juliet is shown to the audience as being petrified of seeing Tybalt's corpse, shown through the use of graphic imagery. The line 'lies festering in the shroud' creates grotesque imagery through the word 'festering' as it presents the image of a battered and mangled corpse. This highlights to the audience the overwhelming panic and fear Juliet is feeling.

At the end, Juliet is shown to be hysterical and overwhelmed. Juliet's hysteria is shown in the quotes 'madly play' and 'pluck the mangled Tybalt from his shroud'. The use of the word 'madly' demonstrates Juliet's hysteria as she is suggesting she herself will go mad trapped in the vault. Juliet continues to say 'in this rage' and the word 'rage' here signifies the madness that she worries will befall her. Finally, the height of her hysteria is shown to the audience in the line 'dash out my desp'rate brains?' The use of the rhetorical question here signifies her spiral into hysteria. The word 'dash' suggests urgency and desperation which again demonstrates hysteria.

Shakespeare presents Juliet's thoughts and feelings here in a monologue with many over-running lines to present to the audience how Juliet's fear quickly rises and becomes overwhelming and hysterical.

Commentary

AO1 There is sustained focus on the task with thoughtful and developed points. Ideas are conveyed with coherence and with a wide range of details from across the extract. There is a secure understanding of key aspects of the extract with well chosen direct references, including quotations.

AO2 The response discusses and increasingly analyses Shakespeare's use of language and form. Appropriate terminology is used and there are thoughtful references to meanings and effects of stylistic features.

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