

Term 5 Year 10 - Romeo and Juliet

Assessment Question: Starting with this conversation, explore how Shakespeare presents **aggressive male behaviour** in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Context - Core Knowledge - Must know

“Romeo and Juliet” was written in 1597 in The Elizabethan Era and is one of Shakespeare’s earliest plays.

“Romeo and Juliet” is a tragedy. A tragedy is a specific kind of play which has certain conventions:

- The characters are powerful people with a high status.
- The tragic hero acts; they don’t just let things happen to them.
- Whatever a tragic hero does, it makes their situation worse.
- There is something exceptional about the tragic hero.
- Tragedies follow a specific structure of obstacles followed by a crisis, followed by catastrophe.

In Elizabethan England, sons were supposed to obey their fathers and defend the family honour through fighting and violence.

In Elizabethan England, daughters had to obey their fathers and marry to join families together to consolidate power.

Violence and aggression were both used as a way to consolidate and gain power.

Elizabethan men and women were expected to conform to society’s expectation of masculinity and femininity.

Context - Facilitating Knowledge - Good to know

Tragedy emerged as a dramatic form in Ancient Greece. The experience of following a character’s suffering was thought to invoke a feeling of catharsis.

Shakespeare wrote many tragedies including *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, *Othello* and *Hamlet*.

Shakespeare wrote 154 sonnets and often played with the poetic form in his plays.

Elizabethan audiences had different expectations of plays to audiences today. They would often know how a play ends before going to see it and wouldn’t be surprised to be told the entire plot in the prologue. There was more of an emphasis on *how* events unfolded rather than on what events would take place.

Women were allowed to be married at 12 in Elizabethan England. It was more common for wealthy daughters to marry young. This is a reflection of how life expectancy has risen and attitudes towards childhood and marriage have changed over the centuries. Whilst Juliet is young to be marrying, Elizabethans would not have seen this as problematic.

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Characters Core Knowledge - Must know

Prologue 'Ancient grudge' ...

Lord Capulet (Capulet) – 'disobedient wretch' ...

'She will be ruled In all respects by me.'

Abram (Montague servant) 'Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?' ...

Romeo '*O brawling love, O brawling hate!*' ...

Tybalt - Boy,turn and draw' "I hate all Montagues'

Samson – 'Tis true, and therefore women, being the weaker vessels, are ever thrust to the wall'

Mercutio (Montague) - Romeo's friend. Killed by Tybalt. "*A plague a'both your houses!*"

Prince Escalus (no family) Ruler of Verona. Wants to bring peace to the city. "*If ever you disturb our streets again, Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace.*"

Key words

tragic prologue sonnet feud shrine the status quo obstacle soliloquy hyperbole tragic flaw exile (vb.) foreshadow catastrophe thesis

Language and Structure - Facilitating knowledge - Good to know

Shakespeare chooses sexual imagery to represent men and fighting = masculinity '*my naked weapon is out*'

Shakespeare show the male characters throwing insults with each other '*I will bite my thumb at them*'

Shakespeare shows the characters fighting with words as well as weapons

Shakespeare presents men talking about raping and decapitating women

'Ay, the heads of the maids, or their maidenheads.

Take it in what sense thou wilt'

Shakespeare chooses to begin the play with a fight scene to show that young men are quick to anger and often arguing, fighting and brawling.

The stage direction add humour.

Shakespeare chooses words like 'Sir' to convey a sense of mock civility.

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Plot - Core Knowledge - Must know

The Prologue outlines the main conflict in the play and warns the audience of the tragic fate of Romeo and Juliet.

The Montagues and Capulets fight in the streets of Verona. Prince Escalus swears that any further fighting will be punished by death.

Paris asks Lord Capulet about marrying his daughter Juliet. Capulet tells Paris to wait as she is too young.

Lady Capulet advises Juliet to agree to marry Paris.

At the Capulet's masked ball, Romeo sees Juliet and falls in love with her. They talk, kiss, and fall in love. As they depart, they learn they are from **feuding families**.

In the balcony scene, Romeo and Juliet fall deeper in love. They agree to get married.

Romeo asks Friar Lawrence to marry him and Juliet. Lawrence agrees, thinking it will **unite the warring families**.

Friar Lawrence marries Romeo and Juliet.

Montagues and Capulets fight in the streets. Tybalt kills Mercutio; Romeo kills Tybalt. Prince Escalus decides to banish Romeo from Verona.

Lord Capulet tells Paris that he can marry Juliet in three days' time.

After their wedding night, Romeo leaves Juliet for the last time. They have a vision of the other's death. After **Romeo leaves**, **Lord Capulet orders Juliet to marry Paris, threatening to disown her if she disobeys**.

Friar Lawrence comes up with a plan: Juliet must pretend to be dead and then escape Verona with Romeo. She agrees to the plan.

Romeo does not learn of Friar Lawrence's plan. He sneaks back into Verona and visits Juliet's tomb. He thinks she is dead, and kills himself with poison. Moments later, Juliet wakes up. She finds Romeo's body and kills herself with his dagger. **The two families agree to end their feud**.

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Procedural Knowledge - Techniques – Golden Rules and steps – DO

- How to comment on literary theory.
- Literary conventions can structure a text.
- How to analyse the structure of a play.
- How to evaluate the language characters use.

Exploratory – you show that you can explore the way concepts and ideas are presented.

Well structured - Begin with a thesis statement; your essay or response has a key idea or argument. Each paragraph has a point which explores the way male aggression is presented in the play.

Conceptualised – you explore the way ideas are developed within key scenes and across the play

Judicious - You select the right quotes to support your argument.

Perceptive – You make detailed links between the task, context and text.