

Unit Title/Topic: *Romeo and Juliet*

Subject: Yearlong English 9

Target Grade Level: 9

Lessons 1-3

Estimated Time per Lesson: 70 minutes

Standards:

- 9-10.RL.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
- 9-10.W.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- 9-10.SL.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and organization, development and substance and style are appropriate to purpose, audience and task.

Lesson Objectives:

- Students will work in groups to analyze themes and support ideas with the text
- Students will demonstrate understanding of theme on a poster
- Students will present knowledge to class
- Students will connect themes in Romeo and Juliet to modern life

Differentiation:

Students who are excelling will have the opportunity to take leadership roles in this assignment. Students who are struggling to understand these concepts will be able to discuss them in depth with their group and participate in the group work by writing or presenting the work the group produces. Everyone should be able to participate in this activity in some way.

Assessment Plan:

Poster and Presentation worth 30 points

Literacy Strategies:

- Writing to think about concepts
- Representing learning with graphic organizers and presentations

Materials:

Posters

Pens

Romeo and Juliet

Rubric:

Romeo and Juliet - Theme Poster Rubric

Names:

	Limited (5-6)	Meets (7-8)	Exceeds (9-10)
Poster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes most of the required elements Poster layout shows little effort Titles and captions are difficult to read Project is messy Picture is not related to the theme Conventions are poor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes all of the required elements The poster is well organized Titles and captions are clear & readable Project is neat and in good condition Picture accurately demonstrates the theme Minimal errors in conventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes all of the required elements The poster is artistic and well organized Titles and captions are clear, readable and free of error Project is neat and in good condition Picture is artistic and demonstrates excellent understanding of theme Very few errors in conventions
Theme Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The theme is not obvious Examples do not show clear understanding of how the theme is used in <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> Questions are somewhat accurate Quote does not have obvious connection to the theme Connection to modern life is unclear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The theme is obvious Examples demonstrate understand of how the theme is used in <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> Most questions are answered accurately Quote shows an obvious connection to the theme There is a clear connection to modern life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The theme is obvious Examples demonstrate excellent depth of understand of how the theme is used in <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> Questions are answered accurately and insightfully Quote shows insightful connection to the theme There is a strong connection to modern life
Group Work and Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperation is sometimes evident Group discussion is focused on project some of the time Some of the group members are doing most of the work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some of the group members participate in the presentation Presenters are not easily understood Presenters lack organization and do not offer clarification when it is needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperation is evident Group discussion is mostly focused on the project Work is split evenly amongst members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most group members participate in presentation Presenters speak clearly Presenters present information in an organized manner and offer clarification when it is needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent cooperation Group discussion is productive and focused on the project Work is split evenly amongst members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All members participate in presentation Presenters speak clearly and are easily understood from the back of the room Presenters present information in an organized and engaging manner and offer clarification when it is needed

Lesson 1:

10 min: Journal (*prompt from Rachel*)

Monday: Will Romeo & Juliet's love last? Why or why not?

5 min: Pre-assessment

On a blank piece of paper, please answer the following:

1. What is a theme statement
2. List any themes you can think of in Romeo and Juliet
3. Pick one of those themes and list one example of that theme in Romeo in Juliet

10 min: Intro Posters

- Powerpoint on Theme
- Briefly demonstrate expectations and review rubric and instructions
- Show example Poster (using Love as a theme)
- Hand out directions, theme questions, theme poster rubric, pens and poster paper

20 min:

- Students will work in groups to make a Poster that will include the following:
 - **The topic being examined**

- **A theme statement**

- At least two examples (in your own words) of how this theme is demonstrated in the book with Act and Scene numbers
- Answers to all of the questions on the theme paper
- A quote that demonstrates this theme in the text with Act and Scene numbers

- **A connection of this theme to modern life**

- **A picture that demonstrates the theme as it is portrayed in *Romeo and Juliet***

*Students will work on the bolded parts of this list today.

20 min:

Act out play 2.4-2.6 - did not get to this

Lesson 2:

10 min: Journal (*prompt from Rachel*)

Wednesday: Describe a person who has had a positive influence on you (like the Nurse to Juliet or the Friar to Romeo).

Discuss

20 min:

Review lesson objectives

“Theme or No Theme” Competition

Power Point Review

40 min:

Continue working on Poster with an emphasis on the bold parts of the list today.

- The topic being examined
- A theme statement
- **At least two examples (in your own words) of how this theme is demonstrated in the book with Act and Scene numbers**
- **Answers to all of the questions on the theme paper**
- **A quote that demonstrates this theme in the text with Act and Scene numbers**
- A connection of this theme to modern life
- A picture that demonstrates the theme as it is portrayed in *Romeo and Juliet*

Lesson 3:

10 min:

Review reading to this point

Act out play 2.3

10 min: Journal (*prompt from Rachel*)

Thursday: Is the Friar's decision to marry Romeo & Juliet a good one? Why or why not?

10 - 20min:

Review Lesson Objectives and Presentation Requirements
Finishing touches on posters and/or rehearse presentation

40 min:

Share posters with class - each group gets 5 minutes to share and 2 minutes for questions.

Hand out:

Each group will receive the directions, one topic and a rubric, and a Theme Statement Handout.

Theme Posters

Your group will be creating a poster of a theme that is present in *Romeo and Juliet*. Each group will work with a different theme and you will share your theme with the class on Thursday. Your poster should include the following:

Day One

- 1. The topic you are examining, written in large letters**
- 2. A theme statement**
- 3. Some connections to modern life**
- 4. A picture that shows how this theme is portrayed in *Romeo and Juliet***

Day Two

- 5. At least two examples of how this theme is shown in the book**
- 6. A quote from *Romeo and Juliet* that demonstrates the theme and a brief explanation of how the quote demonstrates the theme - Include act and scene numbers**
- 7. The answers to at least two of the questions on the theme paper**

Theme Statement Handout

What is a theme?

A theme is a central message of a literary work. Themes are the general ideas or insights that a story reveals.

What is the difference between a subject and a theme?

A subject can be expressed in a word or two: courage, survival, war, pride, love, etc. A theme is the idea the author wished to convey about the subject. It is expressed in a sentence and is a general statement about life or human nature.

Subject: Pride

Thematic statement: Pride can be the downfall of the greatest people.

OR

Pride, when not taken to extremes, is necessary for people to be successful.

- Is NOT a topic or subject: Love, Hate, Humanity, Suffering
- Is NOT a moral or an order: “Be nice to elderly people” or “Live like you are dying”
- Is NOT a trite saying: “Absence makes the heart grow fonder” or “Love hurts”
- It does NOT refer to the specific names in the story but uses general terms like “parents” or “society”
- Themes avoid absolute terms such as “all” or “everything” or “none”

Adapted from *Writing Thematic Statements* at HYPERLINK "<http://www.txclassics.org>" www.txclassics.org.

Theme Explanations and Questions for Poster:

<http://www.shmoop.com/romeo-and-juliet/exile-theme.html>

Romeo and Juliet Topic of Exile

Romeo and Juliet is not necessarily a political work, and so, in the play, exile is a purely personal matter. Romeo and Juliet, the children of warring families, carry out a clandestine love affair. They have just been secretly married when Romeo is banished from Verona, their home city, for violating an order of the Prince. The prospect of Romeo's exile is unbearable to both of the lovers. Exile, for them, is no less than death, simply because exile means separation from each other. "Heaven is here, / Where Juliet lives; and every cat and dog / And little mouse, every unworthy thing, / Live here in heaven and may look on her; / But Romeo may not," Romeo says in frustration. Romeo and Juliet's passionate interpretation of exile as separation from a loved one would make an interesting contrast to political accounts of exile.

Questions About Exile

1. Why is Romeo banished from Verona, exactly? Is it his fault?
2. Lord Capulet threatens to disown Juliet and throw her out on the street. Why does he do this?
3. Does Romeo's exile have a symbolic function in *Romeo and Juliet*?
4. In what way is Juliet herself metaphorically exiled while Romeo is literally exiled?
5. For Romeo, is exile indeed worse than death?

Romeo and Juliet Topic of Foolishness and Folly

"Wisely and slow – they stumble that run fast," a priest warns an impetuous young lover in *Romeo and Juliet*. But nobody spends much time pausing to think in *Romeo and Juliet*. Passionate love and passionate hatred propel the characters to immediate action. Fate may have a hand in the deaths of Romeo and Juliet – who both commit suicide rather than live without each other – but so does rashness and haste. Thinking his love is dead, Romeo kills himself to be with Juliet. If he had waited only a few minutes longer, he would have discovered that Juliet was actually alive. Youthful foolishness leads to Romeo and Juliet's tragic end, but so does the foolishness of those older and supposedly wiser – including Friar Laurence, who comes up with the disastrous plan to fake Juliet's death.

Questions About Foolishness and Folly

1. Which characters are guilty of acting hastily or foolishly in the play? What are the consequences of refusing to act "wisely and slow"?
2. Does the play ever critique the Capulet/Montague feud?
3. Why does Romeo commit suicide, exactly? What happens just moments after he takes his life?
4. In the last lines of the play, the Prince says, "Some shall be pardon'd, and some punished" for their roles in the tragedy. To which characters do you think he refers?

Romeo and Juliet Topic of Family

The conflict between family and the individual is played out in the most extreme fashion possible in the play, as two children from warring families fall in love and have to choose between their families' expectations and their passion for each other. Romeo and Juliet choose passion. They abandon their loyalty to their parents and kinsman and lie to their relatives in order to protect their love. Ultimately, though, Romeo and Juliet can't escape the conflict that divides their families. Bad luck is partially responsible for Romeo and Juliet's deaths, but so is Romeo's obligation to avenge his friend's murder and defend his masculinity and family name. Juliet's father and mother, who try to push her into an unwanted marriage, are also to blame. Though we often think of family as a refuge and a place of security, in *Romeo and Juliet*, kinship is more often a source of danger and battle.

Questions About Family

1. Why do the Capulets hate the Montagues?
2. How does the Capulet/Montague family feud impact Romeo and Juliet's love affair and marriage?
3. Why does Juliet face greater family conflict than Romeo? Is it because she is a woman and he is a man?
4. Explain how the prince's kinship bonds influence his decision to exile (rather than execute) Romeo.

Romeo and Juliet Topic of Marriage

Romeo and Juliet marry for love, a choice that is standard today. But in the world of the play, marriage for love, rather than money or social position, was a radical and dangerous choice. Romeo and Juliet, the children of rival

families, fall in love against their parents' wishes and marry in secret. Their union reflects a new focus on individual passion and inner conviction – and in the play, it comes dangerously in conflict with social and familial expectations. Romeo and Juliet pay a heavy price for marrying for love – their clandestine union propels the lovers towards their tragic deaths.

Questions About Marriage

1. How does Juliet's dad (Capulet) first react when Paris asks to marry Juliet at the beginning of Act 1, Scene 2?
2. When and why does Lord Capulet decide Juliet should marry Paris?
3. Friar Laurence doesn't think Romeo's love for Juliet is any more genuine than his former crush on Rosaline but he agrees to marry Romeo and Juliet anyway (2.3.9). What explanation does the Friar offer? What does this suggest about the nature of his character?
4. Explain why Romeo and Juliet marry in secret. What are the consequences of such secrecy?
5. How would you characterize the Capulets' marriage?

Romeo and Juliet Topic of Fate and Free Will

The play goes out of its way to suggest that Romeo and Juliet are destined for tragedy. After all, the Chorus tells us in the opening Prologue that the "star-cross'd lovers" will "take their life" and Shakespeare foreshadows the lovers' deaths throughout the play. At the same time, however, the play seems to remind us that Romeo and Juliet decide to commit suicide of their own volition. There are also plenty of players (the meddling Friar and Nurse, Romeo and Juliet's warring parents, etc.) that contribute to the play's tragic events. This may suggest, in the words of W.H. Auden, that, in tragedy, "fate is not an arbitrary person – it is we who are responsible and we bring our fate upon ourselves" (*Lectures on Shakespeare*, 24).

Questions About Fate and Free Will

1. What role does fate play in *Romeo and Juliet*? Is fate alone responsible for the deaths of Romeo and Juliet, or should certain characters be held accountable?
2. Is fate friendly or unfriendly to Romeo and Juliet? Does fate seem like a threatening force or simply an inevitable one?
3. How are Romeo and Juliet's deaths foreshadowed throughout the play?
4. Read the opening Prologue and discuss how the Chorus treats the topic of "fate."

Romeo and Juliet Topic of Gender

Machismo rules the day in Verona, the city where *Romeo and Juliet* takes place. Male honor –and male sexual posturing – are sources of both the play's humor and its final tragedy. The rivalry between Verona's two warring families, the Montagues and the Capulets, is driven by the testosterone-charged fighting between the young men of each family. Romeo Montague, the play's protagonist, is constantly torn between the male bonds he shares with his friends, especially his friend Mercutio, and his love for Juliet, a Capulet. Juliet, the only daughter of a well-to-do family, also faces some gender challenges that are pretty typical for young women in Shakespeare's literature – her parents choose a husband for her and threaten to disown her if she disobeys.

Questions About Gender

1. How do the young (and old) men of Verona prove their masculinity?
2. What is the relationship between honor and masculinity in *Romeo and Juliet*?
3. Do the values of masculinity come in conflict with other values in the play?
4. Often in literature, male friendship is threatened by the intrusion of a woman. What are the tensions between love and friendship in *Romeo and Juliet*? How are they resolved?
5. What kinds of challenges do Juliet face as a young *daughter*? How does her gender shape her experiences with her family?

Romeo and Juliet Topic of Mortality

Freud argued that human love was propelled by two opposing drives: eros, the desire for love, and thanatos, the desire for death. But centuries before Freud, *Romeo and Juliet* provided a very different view of the relationship between love and death. Despite – or perhaps because of – the passion and joy of the play's young lovers, death is never far in the background of *Romeo and Juliet*. Because their families have been feuding for as long as anyone can remember, they believe their "forbidden" relationship puts them in constant danger. Consequently, the seeming threat of death adds a spark of excitement to their secret meetings. Shakespeare links death and sex throughout the play and, to some degree, portrays suicide as an erotic act that both consummates the lovers' passion and (re)unites them in death.

Questions About Mortality

1. Is death presented as glamorous or even desirable in *Romeo and Juliet*?
2. Which characters, if any, are to blame for other characters' deaths?
3. What parallels are drawn between love/sex and death in *Romeo and Juliet*? Why do Romeo and Juliet's descriptions of love so often refer to death?
4. Does a love as passionate as Romeo and Juliet's necessarily have to end in death? Is death an integral component of their relationship?

Romeo and Juliet Topic of Youth

"Youth in this play is a separate nation," writes literary critic Frank Kermode. In the play, Romeo and Juliet's youthful passion conflicts with the values of their feuding parents and their more mature advisors. Juliet ignores her Nurse, who advises her to marry Paris after Romeo is

banished. Romeo and Juliet ignore Friar Laurence's warning to slow down and to stop rushing into love and, consequently, their youthful passion propels them towards their tragic end. Thinking Juliet is dead, Romeo immediately commits suicide. But Juliet has only been feigning death to escape her parents' anger. She, too, commits suicide when she realizes that Romeo is dead. Whether the values of the old or the young (or the tension between them) are most to blame for the lovers' tragic deaths is a question the play poses to audiences and readers.

Questions About Youth

1. What values do the young characters emphasize in the play? What about the older generation?
2. When do young and old characters come into conflict? Over what?
3. Both the Friar and the Nurse are old, yet they make Romeo and Juliet's hasty young marriage possible. Are the Friar and the Nurse on the side of the old or the young?
4. Is Romeo and Juliet's tragedy the fault of the old people or the young people? The values of the old or the values of the young?

Romeo and Juliet Topic of Hate

Love and hate are usually thought of as opposites, but in *Romeo and Juliet*, love and hate are two sides of the same coin, as two children from warring families (the Capulets and the Montagues) turn their hatred of each other into an insatiable passion. Ultimately, the hatred between their two families propels the lovers towards their tragic deaths. When their parents discover Romeo and Juliet dead in each others' arms, they vow to end the feud between their two families. At last, love triumphs over hatred – but the cost of two young lives is too heavy to bear.

Questions About Hate

1. Why do the Montagues hate the Capulets? What do we know about the family feud?

2. How do Romeo and Juliet each respond when they realize they have fallen in love with the "enemy"?
3. Rosaline, like Juliet, is a member of the Capulet family, but when Romeo crushes on Rosaline, he never worries about the family feud getting in the way of his love. Why is that?
4. Does the older generation (the parents of Romeo and Juliet) have the same attitude toward the family feud as the younger generation (Romeo, Juliet, Tybalt, Mercutio)?
5. How does the Montague/Capulet feud impact the lives of Romeo and Juliet?