

**For:**

- English teachers
- English subject leaders



**Qualifications  
and Curriculum  
Development  
Agency**

Active  
Shakespeare:  
Capturing  
evidence of  
learning

# Exploring the soliloquies of *Romeo and Juliet* Exemplification level 5

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**Qualifications and Curriculum  
Development Agency**

53–55 Butts Road  
Earlsdon Park  
Coventry  
CV1 3BH

Telephone 0300 303 3010  
Enquiry line 0300 303 3011  
Textphone 0300 303 3012  
Fax 0300 303 3014  
info@qcda.gov.uk  
www.qcda.gov.uk

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The *Active Shakespeare: Capturing evidence of learning* materials provide teachers with a way of building assessment into their ongoing teaching of Shakespeare that supports the periodic assessment of reading. The supporting exemplification materials give examples of evidence generated by pupils working at different levels and can be used as a resource and reference point for teachers. Each set of exemplification includes:

- examples of the pupil's classroom work drawing on the synoptic task and the reflection log
- commentary on the evidence at assessment focus (AF) level which contributes to a judgement on the pupil's overall reading level
- teacher observations contributing to the assessment judgement
- an assessment summary outlining the overall evidence that could contribute to a periodic reading judgement for the different AFs.

**These *Active Shakespeare* materials provide a useful and varied range of written and oral evidence that will contribute towards a periodic review of pupils' progress in reading using the Assessing Pupils' Progress (APP) guidelines. Because the material relates to a single text and helps to generate evidence for selected assessment focuses only, it does not provide sufficient evidence on its own to make an overall judgement of a pupil's reading level.**

STAGE 1

**Taking it further B: Romeo's first soliloquy**

Romeo compares Juliet to both the sun and to the stars. Think about the setting of this scene, for example time and place. In what ways do Romeo's words suggest what an audience would actually be seeing on stage at this point?

Now have a look at one other 'night' scene in the play, for example:

- Act 1 Scene 5 line 43ff
- Act 3 Scene 5 lines 1 - 36
- Act 5 Scene 3 Lines 305ff

Does your chosen night scene have the same impact as Romeo's soliloquy?

Comments generally supported by relevant textual reference or quotation, even when points made are not always accurate  
**AF2 L5 b2**

- The setting links to language of the soliloquy because you can see the stars and the moon which Romeo is talking about.  
 - The lighting makes it more effective because the only light is from the bedroom and when Juliet comes out the light comes off her

- In act 1 scene 5 line 43 it tells us that Juliet lightens up his world by making things brighter eg 'O she doth teach the torches to burn bright!' It also tells us that he is truly in love with her.

- Act 3 scene 5 lines 1-36. It has an effect on the audience because all lights are on in Juliet's bedroom with just Romeo and Juliet and it tells us that it is a calm place to be.

- Act 5 scene 3 line 305 shows that it was a sad ending and a sad place to be outside in the dark with a couple of lights on.

Comments on structural choices show some general awareness of author's craft  
**AF4 L5 b1**

Simple comment on writer's choices  
**AF5 L4 b2**

Simple comment on overall effect on reader  
**AF6 L4 b3**

In this evidence, the pupil shows a general awareness of the writer's craft: *The setting links to language* and *The lighting makes it more effective* (AF4 L5 b1). Comments are generally supported by textual references or quotations, for example, "O she doth teach the torches to burn bright" (AF2 L5 b2). The pupil makes an unfocused link between the setting of the soliloquy and the language and comments simply on the writer's choices by pointing out the relationship between Juliet's effect on the 'torches' and Romeo's feelings for her (AF5 L4 b2). The pupil makes a simple comment about the effect of Juliet's bedroom as a single source of light on the reader, creating a feeling of calm (AF6 L4 b3).

## STAGE 2

 **Task 1: Juliet's soliloquy**

Use a highlighter pen and find lines or phrases in the speech that refer to:

- 'speed' or 'time'.

Looking at the speech as a whole write a paragraph in which you analyse three of these phrases closely and describe how the references to time and speed build anticipation and tension for the audience. Look at the way Shakespeare ends the soliloquy. Why does the list of adjectives in the last line make an effective ending? Where possible include direct quotations from the text.

Comments show some awareness of the effect of writer's use of language  
**AF5 L5 b2**

Simple comments show some awareness of writer's viewpoint;  
Simple comment on overall effect on reader  
**AF6 L4 b2&3**

Juliet's soliloquy is talking about the nurse. The nurse said that she will be only 30 minutes. So when Juliet is talking about the time she is talking about how slow the nurse is. It sounds like Juliet is saying it quite fast with all the little words at the front of each line. At the end it sounds like the speed of her saying it slows down because they are bigger words eg unwieldy. Juliet is annoyed with the nurse for being so slow and the tension for the audience is what will Juliet do next. The list of adjectives in the last line makes it look like an effective ending because it rounds it off of what the nurse is in Juliet's opinion.

Some structural choices identified with simple comment  
**AF4 L4 b1**

This evidence shows some awareness of the writer's language choices by pointing out changes of pace in the speech and identifying and commenting on structural choices such as the effect of short words, *It sounds like Juliet is saying it quite fast with all the little words at the front of each line*, and longer words and lists of adjectives (AF5 L5 b2 and AF4 L4 b1). The pupil is able to make simple comments about the impact of the speech on the reader, predicting the anticipation of future events, and is clear on Juliet's feelings if not her overall viewpoint. Shakespeare is celebrated for writing from multiple perspectives and Juliet's viewpoint is synonymous with the writer's viewpoint at this point in the play (AF6 L4 b2 and b3).

STAGE 3

 **Task 1: Juliet's soliloquies**

In the soliloquy on page 8 Juliet imagines a series of increasingly terrifying images of her future. By carefully selecting six different images from the speech show how Shakespeare structures the soliloquy to become more and more dramatic and to build up the sense of horror and anticipation in the audience.

Within this speech Shakespeare writes about Juliet's thoughts for her future. All her thoughts and images of her future scare her and she thinks the only way escape is to drink the vial.

Firstly she is worried that when she is 'laid in the tomb' she wakes too early so the family knows she is alive.

This then scares her <sup>that</sup> she could die of suffocation 'stuffed in the vault, and there die.'

Another worry is that Juliet has is, 'if I wake, shall I not be distraught.'

Her thoughts get worse and worse to the point in the speech where she believed that she may be killed violently, she talks about 'dash out my desp'rate brains?'

One of her final images is that she thinks she can see her 'cousin's ghost seeking out Romeo,' maybe Tybalt wants revenge.

Having thought about what may or may not happen to her she releases she is in a desperate state and ends up drinking the vial 'I drink to thee.'

Comments make inferences and deductions based on textual evidence  
**AF3 L5 b2**

Comments generally supported by relevant textual reference or quotation, even when points made are not always accurate  
**AF2 L5 b2**

Comments make inferences and deductions based on textual evidence  
**AF3 L5 b2**

The pupil identifies at a simple but visceral level with Juliet's thoughts and feelings, *All her thoughts and images of her future scare her* and is therefore able to infer that this emotion drives her to drink the vial. She also infers that Juliet believes Tybalt's ghost may want revenge (AF3 L5 b2). The pupil refers regularly to the text using quotations but some points are not completely accurate. For example there is an implication that someone other than Juliet will "dash out my desp'rate brains" rather than Juliet herself (AF2 L5 b2).

**SYNOPTIC TASK: A commentary on two soliloquies**

Write a detailed commentary comparing and contrasting two of the soliloquies you've studied. These should be EITHER Juliet's two soliloquies OR Romeo's two soliloquies.

*NB The teacher in this case asked the pupils to write about one of Romeo's soliloquies and one of Juliet's.*

Comments on structural choices show some general awareness of author's craft  
**AF4 L5 b1**

1. The language from Romeo's first soliloquy tells us that Romeo is a very romantic person and Juliet is the love of his life like 'the fairest stars in all the heaven'.
  - The first word on each line tells us that he is talking just because the first word of each line is short like 'as, the.'
  - The last word on each line tells us that she lights up Romeo's world by saying things like 'sun, stars, bright.'
  - Compared to all the other soliloquies the speech has alot less which makes Romeo say it alot faster.
  - Shakespeare does repeat some words in the soliloquy but they are describing about her eg 'cheek, hand,' they were repeated twice.
  - Also Shakespeare uses a couple of adjectives like 'envious moon'
- 2) - At the beginning and the end of the soliloquy Romeo is describing about Juliet, but her is describing about her body like her 'cheek, hand,' but in the middle he is talking about what she is ~~like~~ like.

Comments make inferences and deductions based on textual evidence  
**AF3 L5 b2**

Comments show some awareness of the effect of writer's use of language  
**AF5 L5 b2**

**SYNOPTIC TASK: A commentary on two soliloquies (continued)**

- This soliloquy links to the rest of the play because Juliet is Romeo's world and he will do any thing for her.

3) - Shakespeare uses the language to show that Romeo is a very romantic man and makes an effect on the audience to show that they think that Juliet is a ~~very~~ lucky person eg 'the brightness of her cheek would shame those stars.'

- I think this soliloquy shows a lot of Romeo's feelings and what he is like as being. You can also tell that he is truly in love with her and wants to spend the rest of his life ~~be~~ with her 'Juliet is the sun!'

2<sup>nd</sup> Soliloquy

1) - The language from the soliloquy tells a lot about Juliet and that she wants to be with Romeo not Paris and she ~~sometimes~~ sometimes nervous about things.

- Most of the words form the start of the line are starts of questions like '~~what~~' because she is nervous.

- Near the beginning of the soliloquy there is not a lot of punctuation so she is saying it fast but it gets slower and slower because there is more punctuation.

- There is a couple of repeated words like 'Romeo.'

Simple comments on writer's choices  
**AF5 L4 b2**

Comments make inferences and deductions based on textual evidence  
**AF3 L5 b2**

Comments show some awareness of the effect of writer's use of language  
**AF5 L5 b2**

Comments on structural choices show some general awareness of author's craft  
**AF4 L5 b1**

**SYNOPTIC TASK: A commentary on two soliloquies (continued)**

This is because who she is drinking to and worried if he wouldn't come to redeem her.

2) - This soliloquy does link to the rest of the play because if she hadn't taken the vial there wouldn't be an ending to *Romeo and Juliet*.

- There is some differences in the soliloquy ~~take~~ at the beginning she is asking questions about herself and then she takes it.

3) - This soliloquy does have a big effect on the audience because they wonder if she will take it ~~the soliloquy~~ or not and it makes them <sup>well</sup> ~~exciting~~ excited.

- I think this soliloquy is quite an exciting one and it's my favourite it also makes you want to see what happens next.

General awareness of effect on the reader, with some, often limited, explanation  
**AF6 L5 b3**

In this simple, structured response to the task, the pupil correctly infers that Romeo is *romantic* and *wants to spend the rest of his life* with Juliet (AF3 L5 b2). He is able to show some awareness of the writer's craft, picking up on short first words and the idea of fast delivery of the speech (AF4 L5 b2) but without relating this explicitly to Romeo's emotional state. He identifies the last words of each line and is clearly aware of their effect, *The last word on each line tells us that she lights up Romeo's world by saying things like "sun, stars, bright"* (AF5 L5 b2). There are more simple comments on the writer's choices, *you can also tell that he is truly in love with her ... "Juliet is the sun"* (AF5 L4 b2).

The comments on the repeated questions Juliet uses in the second soliloquy and how they relate to her emotional state show the pupil's awareness of the effect of language choices, for example *Most of the words from the start of the line are starts of questions like "what" because she is nervous* (AF5 L5 b2). There is evidence of some awareness of writer's craft and of the effective use of punctuation, *Near the beginning of the soliloquy there is not a lot of punctuation so she is saying it fast but it gets slower and slower because there is more punctuation* (AF4 L5 b1).

The comment that the soliloquy is *quite (-) exciting* and creates a feeling of anticipation in the reader shows some general awareness of the effect on the reader (AF6 L5 b3).

## Assessment Summary

In this selection of evidence the pupil shows a straightforward response to the soliloquies and an understanding of how they relate to the characters and situation. He uses inference, refers to the text to support points and makes relevant general comments on text structure, the writer's use of language and the overall effect on the reader with some explanation. Overall, the pupil consistently fulfils the level 5 criteria for AF4, 5 and 6, the AFs targeted in these materials. There is also evidence for AF2 and AF3.

**AF4** There is evidence of the pupil's ability to identify and give some explanation of structure/organisation of text, for example, about the effect of lighting on Romeo's first soliloquy, although explanation tends to remain undeveloped.

**AF5** The pupil showed some understanding of language choices, for example in his comments about the use of monosyllables in Juliet's first soliloquy.

**AF6** There are several comments showing general awareness of the effect on the reader, for example, towards the end of the synoptic task when he talks of *a big effect on the audience because they wonder if she will take it or not and it makes them feel excited*. There is evidence for other aspects of AF6, the writer's purpose and viewpoint, but it is less developed.



## About this publication

### Who is it for?

Teachers and English subject leaders.

### What is it about

Providing active and engaging ways to integrate Shakespeare in the ongoing periodic assessment of pupils' reading.

### What is it for?

To support the teaching and assessment of Shakespeare at Key Stage 3.

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### Contact information:

#### **Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency**

53-55 Butts Road, Earlsdon Park, Coventry CV1 3BH

Telephone 0300 303 3010

Textphone 0300 303 3012

Fax 0300 303 3014

[info@qcda.gov.uk](mailto:info@qcda.gov.uk) [www.qcda.gov.uk](http://www.qcda.gov.uk)

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