

For:

- English teachers
- English subject leaders



**Qualifications
and Curriculum
Development
Agency**

Active
Shakespeare:
Capturing
evidence of
learning

Exploring the soliloquies of *Romeo and Juliet*

Teacher notes

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Teaching time: These materials are designed to be integrated into teachers' existing plans for the study of Shakespeare and to take approximately 6 one-hour lessons (or equivalent).

Framework objectives:

- 5.1 Developing and adapting active reading skills and strategies
- 5.2 Understanding and responding to ideas, viewpoints, themes and purposes in texts
- 6.2 Analysing how writers' use of linguistic and literary features shapes and influences meaning
- 6.3 Analysing writers' use of organisation, structure, layout and presentation

Assessment focuses: Reading AF4 and AF5. During the course of these activities you will also see evidence of AF2 and AF3.

Synoptic task: A commentary comparing and contrasting two soliloquies.

Active Shakespeare: Exploring the soliloquies of *Romeo and Juliet*

Introduction

Using these materials pupils will explore the characters of Romeo and Juliet through a close study of four soliloquies. During each stage pupils are involved in a sequence of practical, drama-based activities which focus on how Shakespeare structures soliloquies for dramatic effect (AF4) and how language is used to establish and develop the two characters (AF5).

Prior learning

Pupils will need a solid understanding of the plot, the characters of Romeo and Juliet, the purpose and characteristics of soliloquies, and the themes and imagery of the play. They will also need some knowledge of the social and historical context to help them relate their comments to knowledge of Shakespeare's times.

The Teacher Guidance provides examples of how you might integrate the materials into your scheme of work, in order to provide this prior learning.

Stages and timing

Stage 1: The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars: Romeo's soliloquy

Act 2 Scene 2 (*approximately 1 hour 30 minutes*)

Pupils will be introduced to the materials and given their reflection logs. Pupils will then explore a Romeo soliloquy taken from the early part of the play. In particular they will focus on the structure of the soliloquy and look in detail at features at word and sentence level. Pupils will then write observations on what they've learned.

Stage 2: Love's heralds should be thoughts: Juliet's soliloquy Act 2 Scene 5

(*approximately 1 hour*)

Pupils will explore a Juliet soliloquy taken from the early part of the play. In particular they will focus on the structure of the soliloquy and look in detail at features at word and sentence level. Pupils will then write observations on what they've learned.

Stage 3: There's a fearful point!: Juliet's soliloquy Act 4 Scene 3 (*approximately 1*

hour and 25 minutes)

Pupils will explore Juliet's last major soliloquy, looking in particular at its structure, and how it links in with the themes of the play. They will then write observations on what they've learned.

Stage 4: Thus with a kiss I die: Romeo's soliloquy Act 5 Scene 3 (*approximately 1*

hour and 15 minutes)

Pupils will actively explore Romeo's last soliloquy, looking in particular at its structure, and how it links in with the themes of the play. They will then write observations on what they've learned.

Stage 5: Synoptic task (*approximately 1 hour*)

Pupils will write a detailed commentary comparing and/or contrasting two of the soliloquies, analysing the similarities and differences in the way Shakespeare structures these speeches, and Shakespeare's uses of language at word and sentence level.

Resources

- A copy of the *Reflection log* for each pupil
- Copies of the complete text of *Romeo and Juliet* for pupils to refer to.

The following are in the Appendix to these notes:

- Taking it further B: Handout 1 (if activity is done)
- Taking it further C: Handout 1 (if activity is done)

Additional requirements

Ideally all lessons would take place in an open space so that pupils have room to move around and physically explore the text, which aids understanding. However, many lessons could take place in a classroom, with pupils sitting grouped around desks where necessary, or with desks cleared away.

Pupils will also need different coloured highlighter pens.

Stage 1: The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars: Romeo's soliloquy Act 2 Scene 2

Learning objectives

- 6.2 Analysing how writers' use of linguistic and literary features shapes and influences meaning
- 6.3 Analysing writers' use of organisation, structure, layout and presentation

Resources

- Reflection log pages 1-4.
- Highlighter pens for Activity 1.
- Pens/pencils and drawing paper for pupils if you choose to do the 'Taking it further A: Imagery drawings' activity.
- Taking it further B: Handout 1 (in Appendix of these teacher notes).

Introduction (10 minutes)

- The purpose of these activities is to provide pupils with the necessary understanding so that they can write detailed observations about four speeches (two soliloquies by Romeo, two by Juliet).
- Give out the reflection logs and ask pupils to write their names on the front. Explain that:
 - it contains the four soliloquies they will be working with
 - it provides opportunities for them to reflect and write down notes about each soliloquy
 - it has a 'synoptic task' which brings together everything they have learnt and in which they will write a detailed commentary, comparing and contrasting two soliloquies

- the notes they make in their reflection logs will greatly help them when they come to do the synoptic task so it's important that they make as many notes as they can during the course of the activities
- they will need to include quotations and explain the reasons for their choice of quotations
- you will be looking for evidence of RAF4 and RAF5.

Activity 1: Line endings (*15 minutes*)

- The purpose of this first exercise is to help pupils understand Shakespeare's use of language at word and sentence level. Looking at the last word of each line can be very helpful in understanding the overall meaning or theme of a speech.
- Ask pupils to read the soliloquy on page 1 of their reflection logs (*Resource 1: Romeo's soliloquy Act 2 Scene 2*). Check for understanding and contextualise the scene.
- If they're not already doing so, ask pupils to stand up. Ideally they should stand in a circle. In turn, each student is to say out loud the last word of each line from the soliloquy.
- Pupils then read through the speech a second time, this time adding a strong gesture that goes with the word they are saying.
- When everyone's finished, ask pupils to turn to the person next to them and quickly discuss the questions below.
 - Which words or images were repeated in these words?
 - What do these words and images tell us about the character of Romeo?
 - How do these words and images link to the rest of the play?

Taking it further A – Imagery drawings (20 minutes)

This activity allows pupils to draw images from Romeo's soliloquy before creating drama freeze frames. This could replace or prepare pupils for Activity 2 which follows.

- Give each pupil a number from 1 to 8. They should each look at the text extract with the number you have given them on page 1 of their reflection logs (*Resource 1: Romeo's soliloquy Act 2 Scene 2*).
- Pupils draw an image that either captures how Romeo is feeling, or presents a key moment from their text extract. They will be asked to present this image to others, so they need to think carefully about how best to present their image so that the others know what it's about. They also need to choose and write down a word, a phrase or a line of text to go with their image.
- Pupils move into groups where each extract is represented. Each pupil, in extract order, presents their image to the rest of the group and explains their reason for choosing the accompanying word, phrase or line.
- Prompt a group or whole class discussion using the following questions.
 - Which images stood out?
 - Why are these images so important?
 - What do they tell us about the character of Romeo?

Activity 2: Representing the imagery (40 minutes)

- Divide the class into eight groups of three or four. Using the same Romeo soliloquy as before (page 1 of reflection log), pupils in their groups read the text out loud from one punctuation mark to the next.
- Reading from punctuation mark to punctuation mark is an unthreatening way of getting pupils to read text out loud. All pupils get to speak the text, but no one pupil has the burden of reading out a large chunk of text on their own. Explain that:
 - the first pupil reads to the first punctuation mark
 - the second pupil reads to the next punctuation mark
 - the third pupil reads to the next punctuation mark, and so on
 - pupils keep taking turns to read until they reach the end of the speech.
- When everyone's finished, ask the following questions.
 - Which words are repeated?
 - Why might these words (eg sun, moon, stars, heaven, eyes) be so important and what effect do they have on us?
- Give each group a number from 1 to 8 and ask them to look at the text extract with the same number.
- Pupils should create a freeze frame (a still image or tableau) with their bodies that either captures how Romeo is feeling, or presents a key image from that text extract. They're going to present this freeze frame to the others, so they need to think carefully about how best to present it so that others know what it's about. They also need to choose a word, a phrase or a line of text to go with their freeze frame. They need to think about the best way to say this line – for example, everyone together, one person or everyone echoing a key word or words, etc.
- After giving them time to create their freeze frames, ask for a volunteer group to show everyone what they've done. Others should comment on how well the group has conveyed their freeze frame. Prompt comments on, or support for, the clarity with which they present their freeze frame to encourage similar clarity from everyone else.

- Pupils then stand in speech sequence, and say their word/phrase/line and present their freeze frame.
- Ask others to comment on particularly effective examples. Also encourage reflection on improvements that could have been made to the work. What could have been done differently? If necessary, ask groups to repeat their freeze frames and words if you feel they can be improved.
- Prompt a brief whole class discussion on:
 - images which stood out
 - why the images are important
 - what the images tell us about the character of Romeo.
- Ask one group to repeat their freeze frame, but say the entire opening two lines of the soliloquy. Another group should then repeat theirs, but this time saying all three lines at the close of the soliloquy.
- Prompt a group or whole class discussion about the way Shakespeare structures and presents this soliloquy. You may wish to prompt discussion of:
 - how Romeo's thoughts and feelings develop from the opening to the closing lines of the soliloquy
 - how the images link to other parts of the play
 - the dramatic effect of this speech being a soliloquy (i.e. Romeo declaring his love for Juliet although she can't hear him).

Activity 3: Romeo's soliloquy (20 minutes)

- In this activity pupils choose from three questions on page 2 of their reflections logs, and produce a short piece of writing (*Task 1: Romeo's soliloquy*). This draws on the activities they have done with the soliloquy. You may wish to help pupils select which question is most suitable for them. To make the task more manageable pupils could just look at extracts 1, 2, 3 and 8.

- Remind pupils of the importance of including quotations and explaining the reasons for their choice of quotations.

Assessment opportunity

During this activity pupils will write up observations about this soliloquy in their reflection logs. This will provide you with evidence of AF4 and AF5. The discussion at the end of activity 2 about the way Shakespeare structures the soliloquy should provide further evidence of AF4.

After writing up their observations pupils could be put into groups and asked, individually, to tell the others what they've learned from the activity. You could tell the class that you are going to work with/observe one group particularly and make assessments of their contributions.

Taking it further B: Romeo's soliloquy (20 mins)

There is another set of tasks available in Taking it further B: Handout 1. There are three tasks on the same topic. You will need to help pupils select which question is most suitable for them.

The tasks will enable pupils to explore their thoughts on Romeo's soliloquy further and will provide additional evidence of reading AF4. Tasks could be done in class or for homework.

Stage 2: Love's heralds should be thoughts: Juliet's soliloquy Act 2 Scene 5

Learning objectives

- 6.2 Analysing how writers' use of linguistic and literary features shapes and influences meaning
- 6.3 Analysing writers' use of organisation, structure, layout and presentation

Resources

- Reflection log pages 5-7.
- Taking it further C: Handout 1(in Appendix of these teacher notes).

Introduction (5 minutes)

- The sequence of activities in this stage will help pupils understand in detail one of Juliet's soliloquies from early in the play. In particular, pupils will focus on the structure and effect of the soliloquy, as well as the language and how it links to the themes of the play.

Activity 1: Juliet soliloquy line beginnings (10 minutes)

- The purpose of this exercise is to help pupils understand Shakespeare's use of language at word and sentence level. Just as looking at the last word of every line for Romeo's soliloquy helped understanding of overall meaning and themes, so does looking at the first word of a line.
- Ask pupils to read the text on page 5 of their reflection logs (*Resource 1: Juliet's soliloquy – Act 2 Scene 5*). Check for understanding and contextualise the scene.
- Pupils stand up (ideally in a circle). In turn, each student is to say out loud the first word of each line from the soliloquy. They should keep going until the speech has been read through twice, and so that everyone in the class speaks at least once.

- When everyone's finished, prompt a group or whole class discussion using the questions below.
 - Did they notice the length of these first words – that most are monosyllables? What effect does that have on the pace of the speech? What mood do they think Juliet is in?
 - What did they notice about the very last word – unwieldy? What is the effect of it having three syllables, against the mostly single syllables elsewhere?
 - What do these words tell us about Juliet's situation and state of mind (e.g. her impatience; her directness)?

Activity 2: 'First Words' interview (20 minutes)

- Pupils work in pairs for this activity. One pupil is to be a Shakespeare 'expert' and the other is a television interviewer, doing a series of mini-interviews on different aspects of Shakespeare's writing. The focus of this 2-3 minute interview is 'First Words'.
- The 'expert' will explain how the first word of Shakespeare's lines can tell us a lot about a character and his or her situation or state of mind. For this interview, the 'expert' will use examples from Juliet's first soliloquy. The interviewer will introduce the topic and summarise at the end.
- Pupils should prepare by looking back at the notes they have made about this soliloquy in their reflection logs. Both pupils should help prepare what the 'expert' will say.
- Pupils then team up with another pair and take it in turns to present, and then be the audience for, each interview.

Assessment opportunity

This activity should provide pupils with opportunities to show additional evidence of AF4 and AF5. You could focus on one or two pairs as they present their interview.

Alternatively, you could record some or all interviews, either on video, or by asking pupils to capture the interviews on a mobile phone, which can later be downloaded.

Activity 3: Nurse and Juliet statues (25 minutes)

- Divide the class into pairs. Using the same Juliet soliloquy as before (page 4 of reflection log), ask pupils in their pairs to read the text out loud from one punctuation mark to the next.
- When everyone's finished, check for understanding. You may wish to discuss:
 - why Juliet keeps referring to the time
 - how these references to time link to the rest of the play
 - the contrasts which are set up (eg speed versus slow; old versus young)
 - the effect of these contrasts on the reader or audience.
- In their pairs pupils will create statues that represent Juliet and the Nurse, from Juliet's point of view.
- Ask pupils to choose to be A or B. A is to be the first statue, which shows how Juliet thinks of old age represented by the Nurse. Together, pupils first look for references to age and the Nurse in the soliloquy. Then B 'moulds' A into a position that represents how the Nurse is described. Together again, pupils look for evidence of how Juliet is feeling and what she says about youthfulness. Now A 'moulds' B into a position that represents Juliet and Youth.
- Ask for some volunteers to share their statues. Then either prompt a whole class discussion or set up small group discussions to discuss the following:
 - the images that Juliet uses to describe youth and old age
 - Juliet's attitude to the nurse in this scene
 - the evidence in the text which helped them create their statues
 - how Shakespeare sets up the contrasts between old and young, slow and fast
 - how these contrasts tie in with the rest of the play.

Activity 4: Juliet's soliloquy (20 minutes)

- In this activity pupils choose from three questions on page 6 of their reflection log, and produce a short piece of writing (*Task 1: Juliet's soliloquy*). This draws on the activities they have done with Romeo's soliloquy.. You may wish to help pupils select which question is most suitable for them.
- Remind pupils of the importance of including quotations and explaining the reasons for their choice of quotations.

Assessment opportunity

During this activity pupils will write up observations about this soliloquy in their reflection logs. This will provide you with evidence of AF5.

After writing up their observations pupils could be put into groups and asked, individually, to tell the others what they've learned from the activity. You could tell the class that you are going to work with/observe one group particularly and make assessments of their contributions.

Taking it further C: Juliet's first soliloquy (20 minutes)

There is another set of tasks available in *Taking it further C: Handout 1*. There are three tasks on the same topic. You may wish to point individual pupils towards the task most suitable for them.

The tasks will enable pupils to explore their thoughts on Juliet's soliloquy further and will provide additional evidence of AF4. Tasks could be done in class or for homework.

Stage 3: There's a fearful point!: Juliet's soliloquy Act 4 Scene 3

Learning objectives

- 6.2 Analysing how writers' use of linguistic and literary features shapes and influences meaning
- 6.3 Analysing writers' use of organisation, structure, layout and presentation

Resources

- Reflection log pages 8-15.

Introduction (5 minutes)

- In the next sequence of activities pupils will explore Juliet's last major soliloquy, looking in particular at its structure, position, effect, and how it links in with the themes of the play.

Activity 1: Taking the vial – for and against (30 minutes)

- Pupils will explore Juliet's conflicting thoughts and emotions as she tries to decide whether to take the vial. Some pupils will experience and report back on how it might feel to be faced by Juliet's dilemma.
- Divide the class into groups of four or five and ask them to read the soliloquy on page 8 of their reflection logs (*Resource 1: Taking the vial*). This is an edited version of Juliet's last major soliloquy. Check for understanding of meaning and contextualise the speech.
- Pupils then read the text out loud in their groups, reading from punctuation mark to punctuation mark as with earlier soliloquies.
- Label half of the groups A, and half B. As look again at the soliloquy and come up with Juliet's arguments for taking the vial. Bs should come up with Juliet's arguments against taking the vial. Tell pupils that, using Juliet's arguments, but in their own words, you will be asking them to take it in turns to try and persuade Juliet to take, or not take, the vial.

- Lead the activity as follows:
 - ask for one pupil to volunteer to be Juliet
 - pupils who were in a group A line up in a row, those in group Bs in another row opposite
 - stand behind your volunteer Juliet
 - explain to everyone that you will walk behind Juliet, giving each student in turn a nod of the head to indicate that it's their turn to voice their argument for or against
 - ask your volunteer Juliet to say the words "*Come vial*" and start walking slowly between the two rows
 - as s/he starts to walk between the two rows nod at the first student from group A, then the first student from group B, and continue until your Juliet has reached the end of the two rows
 - each time you nod at a pupil, s/he says why Juliet should or shouldn't take the vial
 - at the end, ask your volunteer Juliet to say the words "*Romeo - I drink to thee*".
- Pupils go back to their original groups and think of some questions they would like to ask the pupil who played Juliet. They should write these down. Ask them to decide who is going to ask which question.
- In turn, ask for someone in each group to ask the volunteer Juliet a question. When they run out of their pre-planned questions you might like to prompt a freer discussion.
- You might like to repeat the activity with a second pupil as Juliet, or else nominate another pupil as an additional Juliet to assist the pupil who will be answering the questions. Alternatively, the questioning could be done in groups with each group having one pupil as Juliet.

Activity 2: As ifs (25 minutes)

- Pupils will look at different ways of saying Juliet's soliloquy to help them understand Juliet's emotional journey and the possibilities for interpretation that Shakespeare gives us.
- Put pupils into pairs and refer them to page 9 of their reflection logs (*Resource 2: 'as ifs'*). This is a longer version of Juliet's soliloquy, which is the version they will write about.
- Pupils now experiment with a range of 'as ifs': they will read some or all of the speech as if they are in a particular mood, for example as if scared, or angry. They should try at least two 'as ifs' for each chunk of text. They should also come up with their own 'as ifs'. For the very last line there are no 'as ifs' suggested, and they should come up with their own ideas for this line.
- Ask for a volunteer to demonstrate 'as ifs'. Ask this volunteer to read out loud the first line as if she's determined to take the vial, and then as if she's nervous. Ask the volunteer to repeat the same 'as ifs' with the next two lines.
- Check pupils understand what they'll be doing then ask them to work in their pairs, taking it in turns to read some or all of the speech to the other, experimenting with a range of 'as ifs'. Ask for some volunteers to share some of their 'as ifs' with the rest of the class.
- Then either prompt a whole class discussion or set up group discussions to discuss the following questions.
 - Which 'as ifs' worked best and why?
 - What happens to Juliet's thoughts during the course of this speech?
 - Can you suggest some of the emotions that she feels at different points?
 - What impressions do you get of what a tomb or a vault is like? How does this affect how we feel when we get to the scene which actually takes place in the vault?

- **Reflection opportunity:** Pupils write notes on page 12 of their reflection log (*Reflection opportunity 1: Juliet's soliloquy in the vault*) on Shakespeare's language in this speech and on the effects of different ways of saying the lines using the prompts to help them. Remind pupils of the importance of including quotations and explaining their reasons for selecting these quotations.

Assessment opportunity

The notes made in *Reflection opportunity 1* should provide evidence of both AF4 and AF5. You might be able to capture the 'as if' activity on video or digital camera and/or prompt a debate about the best additional suggestions. This activity, along with pupils' own suggestions for the 'as ifs' will provide further evidence of AF3.

Activity 3: Juliet's soliloquies (25 minutes)

- In this task pupils produce a short piece of writing on page 13 of their reflection logs (*Task 1: Juliet's soliloquies*). This draws on the activities they have done with both of Juliet's soliloquies. You may need to help pupils select which question is most suitable for them.
- Remind pupils of the importance of including quotations and explaining the reasons for their choice of quotations.

Assessment opportunity

During this activity pupils will write up observations about this soliloquy in their reflection logs. This will provide you with evidence of AF5.

After writing up their observations pupils could be put into groups and asked, individually, to tell the others what they've learned from the activity. You could tell the class that you are going to work with/observe one group particularly and make assessments of their contributions.

Stage 4: Thus with a kiss I die: Romeo's soliloquy Act 5 Scene 3

Learning objectives

- 6.2 Analysing how writers' use of linguistic and literary features shapes and influences meaning
- 6.3 Analysing writers' use of organisation, structure, layout and presentation

Resources

- Reflection log pages 16-21.

Introduction (5 minutes)

- The sequence of activities in this stage will help pupils understand in detail Romeo's last soliloquy, in particular its structure, effect, and how it links in with the themes and images of the play.

Activity 1: Repetitions (10 minutes)

- Put pupils into pairs and ask them to read the text on page 16 of their reflection logs (*Resource 1: Repetitions*). This is an edited version of Romeo's last soliloquy to help emphasise some key thoughts and images. Check for understanding and contextualise the speech.
- Pupils take it in turns to read out loud each numbered sentence. They should then discuss the following questions:
 - Which words are repeated?
 - What effect do these repetitions of words have on us, the reader/audience?

Activity 2: Romeo soliloquy in full (35 minutes)

- Each pair joins up with another pair. They should look at the text on page 17 of their reflection logs (*Resource 2: Freeze frames*). This is a fuller version of Romeo's last soliloquy (it is still slightly edited) and the version they will use to write about at the end of this stage.
- Give each group two or three of the numbered extracts to work on so that every extract is covered. Ask them to read their extracts and check if there are any new words they don't understand. They should then look at the instructions on page 19 and work through the activity instructions in their groups. If there's time, they can practise their extracts in front of another group, so that they can benefit from feedback.
- Each group then performs their extracts in number order, so together the class performs the whole speech.
- Prompt a group or class discussion on:
 - images which stood out
 - what these images show about what Romeo's thoughts and feelings
 - how Shakespeare structures the speech to highlight Romeo's feelings
 - what has happened to Romeo since the first soliloquy they read
 - how his language has changed
 - how the speech links to other sections of the play - echoes of words or images heard before in the play.
- **Reflection opportunity:** Pupils write notes on Shakespeare's language in this speech on page 20 of their reflection log (*Reflection opportunity 1: Romeo's last soliloquy*). Remind pupils of the importance of including quotations and explaining their reasons for selecting these quotations.

Activity 3: Romeo's soliloquies (25 minutes)

- In this task pupils produce a short piece of writing about page 21 of their reflection logs (*Task 1: Romeo's soliloquies*). This draws on the activities they have done with both of Romeo's soliloquies. You may need to help pupils select which question is most suitable for them.
- Remind pupils of the importance of including quotations and explaining the reasons for their choice of quotations.

Assessment opportunity

During this activity pupils will write up observations about this soliloquy in their reflection logs. This will provide you with evidence of AF4 and AF5. Evidence for AF4 will come from activity 3 where pupils are looking at the contrasts between the two soliloquies and links with other parts of the play.

After writing up their observations pupils could be put into groups and asked, individually, to tell the others what they've learned from the activity. You could tell the class that you are going to work with/observe one group particularly and make assessments of their contributions.

Stage 5: Synoptic task

Success criteria

You should share these success criteria with the pupils before they begin the activity. Alternatively, you may want to agree and share your own success criteria for the task.

- How well does the pupil analyse and comment on the structure and organisation of the two speeches, including grammatical and presentational features at text level? (RAF4)
- How well does the pupil comment on Shakespeare's use of language at word and sentence level in the two speeches, and comment on similarities and differences? (RAF5)

Resources

- Reflection log.

Activity: A commentary on two soliloquies (*approximately 1 hour*)

- The purpose of this exercise is to write a detailed commentary on two of the soliloquies. Pupils can choose both Romeo soliloquies or both Juliet soliloquies.
- Refer pupils to page 22 of their reflection log (*Synoptic task: a commentary on two soliloquies*). Check understanding of the task. Remind pupils of the importance of including quotations and explaining the reasons for their choice of quotations.
- Pupils will need to look at the original versions of the soliloquies in their copy of the play as well as looking back at the versions in their reflection log and the notes they have made on these.

Appendix

Taking it further B: Romeo's first soliloquy

Write about one of these three tasks. Your teacher will help you to decide which one to choose.

1. Romeo's soliloquy and this whole scene take place at night. Make a list of the things that Romeo talks about as 'light' and those that he calls 'dark'.

Now think about the events that have led to this balcony scene. What happens at night and what happens in the daytime? Is it important that this meeting between Romeo and Juliet happens at night/in darkness?

Think of some reasons why it's important in this scene and in the play. Remember to include quotations from the text.

2. 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?

Explain what this is. Where possible include direct quotes from the text.

3. This soliloquy takes place at night and the only light source is from Juliet's bedroom/balcony. Make some notes on how:
- the setting links to the language of the soliloquy
 - the lighting makes the scene dramatic and effective.

Light and darkness are themes that recur throughout the play. Look again at one or more of the following scenes in addition to this soliloquy.

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

Show how the repeated references to light and darkness contribute to the impact (or effect) on the audience. Where possible include direct quotes from the text.

Taking it further C: Juliet's first soliloquy

Write about one of these three tasks. Your teacher will help you to decide which one to choose.

1. Imagine that Romeo and Juliet lived in a time when they had mobile phones and were able to text the other characters. Look through Juliet's speech and highlight five key words or phrases. Now work these into a text message that Juliet could send her Nurse to show her how anxious and excited she is and to get the Nurse to hurry up. You must use Shakespeare's five key words or phrases in your text message. Maximum 100 characters!
2. Look at the last words of each line. Imagine that you are a psychiatrist and you are looking at what Juliet's language reveals about her state of mind. Using only the last words of the lines make a diagnosis of your patient. You should choose five words that you think are important and revealing to the diagnosis and write about each one describing what it says about Juliet and her state of mind.
3. In this soliloquy Shakespeare's language contrasts youth and old age. Look carefully at the language of the speech and write two short paragraphs in which you show how youth and old age are characterised and contrasted in Juliet's speech. Where possible include direct quotes from the text.

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.

Related publications

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