

Romeo and Juliet Study Guide

Romeo and Juliet Act I Questions

ACT I, SCENE i

- 1) At the opening of the play, how does the quarrel begin and how does it escalate? **The quarrel begins with Sampson and Gregory, the Capulet servants, making an obscene gesture (biting their thumbs) at the Montague servants. Then they start to antagonize one another and Tybalt and Benvolio enter the scene. Benvolio tries to break up the fight, but Tybalt only wants to fight. Then citizens try to beat everyone down with clubs to stop the fighting, and Lord Capulet and Lord Montague arrive and try to fight one another; fortunately, the Prince shows up to break up the brawl.**
- 2) Describe the Prince's reaction to the brawl. How does he try to ensure violence won't break out again? **He is appalled by the brawl and says that he is sick of all of the death that is coming from this stupid feud. He also says that the next person to start one of these fights will be executed.**
- 3) What are the different views of love in scene i? **Romeo's view of love is that it's a contradiction, since his love for Rosaline is torturing him and causing him pain. Benvolio's view of love is more casual, since he advises Romeo to get over Rosaline by looking at other beautiful women, and doesn't take love as seriously as Romeo.**
- 4) What is Romeo's state of mind in this scene? **Romeo is extremely depressed and a little erratic. He has been walking around in the woods at night crying, and when the sun rises he locks himself in his room, blocks out the light from the windows, and doesn't let anyone come in. This is all due to the heartbreak that Rosaline is causing him.**
- 5) Summarize Benvolio's advice to Romeo. **Benvolio basically says to forget about Rosaline and to go out with him to look upon other beautiful women of Verona; this will help him get over Rosaline.**

ACT I, SCENE ii

- 6) Why is Juliet of particular worth to her father (lines 14-15)? **Capulet says that she is his only daughter, since all of his other children died, therefore all of his hopes for the future of their family are pinned on her.**

ACT I, SCENE iii

- 7) What qualities of Paris does Lady Capulet stress when she presents him as a suitable match for Juliet? **She stresses his beauty more than anything else.**
- 8) When Juliet responds to her mother's proposal about Paris does Juliet seem naively obedient or wise? Why? **(answers will vary) She seems wise because she seems skeptical of the idea that a person could fall in love by simply studying a beautiful person's face.**
- 9) What are three different views of love presented in this scene? **There is familial love, since the Nurse is talking about how much she cares for Juliet since her own daughter had died. Lady Capulet's view on love is that it is mainly reliant on a person's looks and that it should happen by a certain age (14 or so). Juliet's view on love is that it cannot be determined by physical attraction alone.**
- 10) Discuss the **extended metaphor (conceit)** that Lady Capulet uses when describing Paris (lines 83-94). **Lady Capulet compares Paris to a beautiful book.**

ACT I, SCENE iv

- 11) Contrast Romeo's mood with the other people as they approach the Capulet's party. **Romeo is depressed and doesn't want to participate in the dancing at the party. Everyone else is excited about the party and they are anxious to arrive to meet the beautiful women.**
- 12) Explain Romeo's fears or suspicions that he reveals in his final speech (lines 106-113). What literary element is used? **Romeo is afraid that the events that will conspire tonight will cut his life short somehow; this is foreboding, since Romeo is hinting at bad things to come.**

ACT I, SCENE v

- 13) In this scene at the feast at the Capulet's house, Romeo sees Juliet for the first time. When he first sees her he uses figurative language to describe her beauty. Write down three examples of this figurative language.

- Romeo uses a simile when he says that she "hangs upon the cheek of night Like a rich jewel in an Ethiope's ear" (I.v.42-43).

-Romeo uses hyperbole when he says that Juliet has “beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear” (I.v.44). He is exaggerating when he says that she is too beautiful to exist, or to live on earth, implying that she’s an angel.

-Romeo uses personification when he says that Juliet teaches “the torches to burn bright (I.v.41). He is personifying the torches as beings that can be “taught” how to burn.

14) What effect is created by connecting Romeo’s discovery of Juliet with Tybalt’s discovery of Romeo? What themes are revealed here? **Connecting these two discoveries gives their love a sense of danger, and the thematic idea being presented is that of hate destroying or endangering love.**

15) To what extent, can each of the following terms or phrases be used to describe Romeo and Juliet’s meeting?

- ❖ Love at first sight-They experience love at first sight because Romeo immediately asks who Juliet is when he arrives at the party, even though he had just been complaining about being heartsick over Rosaline.
- ❖ Infatuation- Romeo experiences infatuation because he says that he must kiss her, and he says that touching her hand will make “blessed” his hand (I.v.48). It’s almost like he’s so obsessed with her beauty that he thinks of her as a goddess. Also, when he leaves the party, he almost immediately sneaks back in to see her again.
- ❖ Passion- They experience passion because they share their first kiss together on their first meeting, and Juliet compliments Romeo on his kissing.
- ❖ Physical attraction- They experience physical attraction because Romeo says that he had never “seen true beauty till this night” (I.v.50).
- ❖ Friendship- They experience friendship when they joke back and forth about Romeo being a pilgrim (a religious traveler) who is seeking his spiritual destination (Juliet). They share very witty remarks with one another and challenge each other with their cleverness.

Romeo and Juliet Act II Questions

ACT II, SCENE i

16) Mercutio says, “If love be blind, love cannot hit the mark” (33).

a.) Explain his allusion to Cupid’s arrow here. **He is alluding to Cupid’s arrow because he is saying that Cupid’s arrow cannot hit the right part of a target; in other words, Cupid is blind so he does not have the accuracy to “hit” the people that he means to fall in love.**

b.) What is Mercutio’s opinion about “blind love”? **He believes that blind love is unrealistic and not substantial.**

ACT II, SCENE ii

17) What is the setting of this scene? **Juliet’s balcony/Capulet’s back yard**

18) Define “soliloquy.” Using line numbers, find an example of a soliloquy in this scene. **A soliloquy is a long, uninterrupted speech given by a character to the audience (not to another character). An example would be Romeo’s speech in lines 1-25, since he is speaking to himself, not to Juliet.**

19) List the images of light in Romeo’s opening speeches (lines 3-23 and 27-32). What does this say about Romeo’s love for Juliet? **Romeo says that Juliet is like the sun rising in the east; he also says that the stars are jealous of her light, since her light would overshadow them. Then he says that she is a “bright angel” (II.ii.26). This reveals that Romeo values beauty when he falls in love, and that the beauty of his love seems to be unrealistic, and it dominates anything else in the natural world.**

20) Explain how Juliet’s “O Romeo, Romeo!” speech (lines 33-36 and 38-49) introduces the theme of destiny (or fate) vs. human responsibility/choice. **Juliet is saying that Romeo was born a Montague, which is his destiny, but that he also has the ability to rid himself of his name and run away with Juliet. This is contradictory, since fate keeps Romeo from leaving his name behind, but he still wants to choose to be with Juliet.**

21) What are Romeo and Juliet planning for the following day? **To be married**

ACT II, SCENE iii

22) What does the Friar’s opening soliloquy tell us about who he is, what he believes and what he thinks about humans? **It tells us that he is a holy man who works a great deal with plants. It also tells us that he believes that all humans have both evil and good inside of them (much like plants have the ability to be medicine or poison). He believes that if evil is predominant in a human, it will lead to that human’s death.**

23) What does Friar mean when he tells Romeo, "Young men's love then lies/Not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes" (67-68)? **He means that Romeo is only feeling lust for Juliet because he finds her attractive; he does not truly love her with his heart.**

ACT II, SCENE v

24) What does Juliet say has changed about her since she has been in love? **She says that she has been given determination, since she has been in love. She has also been experiencing anxiety, since she is waiting to hear back from the Nurse.**

25) How are youth and old age contrasted in this scene? **Juliet contrasts youth and old age by showing Juliet as impatient and anxious, and the Nurse is relaxed and distracted. Juliet says that youth allows people to move quickly and with purpose, but the Nurse is slow because she is old and not "new in love." The Nurse also complains about her aching bones and back. She does not have the vitality of a young person in love.**

ACT II, SCENE vi

26) How is the tragic outcome of the marriage between Romeo and Juliet foreshadowed in this scene? **Friar Lawrence says that these "violent delights have violent ends" (II.vi.9). This foreshadows the couple's intense (almost violent) passion leading to their violent deaths (suicide).**

Romeo and Juliet Act III Questions

ACT III, SCENE i

27) Why does Tybalt always want to cause fights? **He is hot-headed and he hates all Montagues.**

28) Why does Romeo refuse to fight with Tybalt at first? **Because Tybalt is his new cousin, since he has just married Juliet.**

29) How does Tybalt mortally wound Mercutio? **He stabs him under Romeo's arm, as Romeo is trying to stop the fight.**

30) Even up to the point of his own death, Mercutio is his playful self. Agree or disagree. Explain. **(answers will vary) Romeo is both playful and serious since he makes a pun on the word "grave," but he is also serious since he curses both the Montagues and the Capulets as he dies.**

31) How does Romeo get even for Mercutio's death? **He kills Tybalt.**

32) Having heard about the circumstances leading up to the recent deaths, the Prince gives Romeo a sentence. What is it? **Banishment**

33) What point in this scene would you choose as the turning point (or climax) in the play? **Romeo killing Tybalt**

ACT III, SCENE ii

34) Describe Juliet's response to Tybalt's death and Romeo's banishment? What figurative language does she use to describe her conflicting emotions? **She uses oxymorons to describe her conflicting emotions. At first she is angry with Romeo for killing Tybalt and calls him a deceiver, but then she realizes that she is glad that Romeo survived and feels ashamed to have been angry with her new husband.**

ACT III, SCENE iii

35) Why, after giving his news to Romeo, does the Friar think Romeo is not grateful? **Because Romeo says that banishment is worse than death.**

ACT III, SCENE iv

36) What does Capulet decide for Juliet? What does this say about the control Juliet has over her own life? **Capulet decides that Juliet will marry Paris in three days, which shows that Juliet does not have much control at all over her own life.**

ACT III, SCENE v

37) When Romeo and Juliet talk about their relationship they use images of night and day or dark and light. Why do they seem to prefer darkness over light? **They prefer darkness over light because their relationship has to be secret, since it is forbidden. They cannot spread the truth about their love, so they use night to "hide" it.**

38) What evidence is there that Juliet believes her and Romeo's destiny is controlled by fate? **Juliet speaks to fate and asks fate not to "keep him long," but to "send him back" (III.v.62). This shows that she believes fate has control over their future, rather than their own free will.**

39) What is the nurse's advice to Juliet? Why do you think she gives her this advice? **She advises Juliet to forget about Romeo and go ahead and marry Paris. She advises her to do this because she loves Juliet and doesn't want to see her thrown out by her father.**

Romeo and Juliet Act IV Questions

ACT IV, SCENE i

40) In what dilemma does Friar Lawrence find himself in at the beginning of Act IV? **Paris is asking him to marry Paris and Juliet, but he has already married Juliet to Romeo a few days earlier.**

41) Compare how Juliet and Romeo act during their meetings with the Friar. (Romeo's meeting was in Act III, Scene iii.) **Romeo is weeping and doesn't have the emotional strength to even stand up. Juliet seems more emotionally strong, but she is also desperate in that she tells Friar that if he cannot help her then she will kill herself.**

42) Why is the Friar deciding to help Juliet? **He doesn't want her to kill herself.**

ACT IV, SCENE ii

43) How is the mood of the beginning of this scene different from the mood at the end of the last scene? **The last scene was intense and full of desperation, whereas the beginning of this scene seems more cheerful, since everyone is getting ready for the wedding.**

ACT IV, SCENE iii

44) Why did Shakespeare add this scene between the drinking of the potion and the discovery of Juliet's "death"? **He wanted the audience to know Juliet's inner feelings and fears.**

45) List the fears Juliet expresses in her soliloquy (lines 14-59) and how she deals with each fear. **She is afraid that the potion will not work at all, and she plans to stab herself tomorrow morning if that is the case. She is afraid that Friar Lawrence actually gave her poison, but she says that he is a holy man and believes he wouldn't do such a thing.**

She is afraid that she will wake up too early and suffocate or be haunted by the ghosts of her dead ancestors. She puts these fears aside and drinks the potion for Romeo so that she can be with him.

ACT IV, SCENE v

46) Take a look at how each character responds to Juliet's death. What do their comments reveal about how they valued Juliet? **Paris mainly mourns over not being able to be married to her, which shows that he valued her as a wife. Capulet mourns over his daughter by saying that he will have no one to continue on the family line, so he valued her as the future of their bloodline. Her mother mourns her by saying that Juliet is her life and that she will die if Juliet doesn't wake up, which shows that Juliet gave her life meaning. The Nurse mainly repeats mournful cries over and over again, indicating that she is overwhelmed by emotion (and maybe too uneducated) to express herself fully, showing that she valued Juliet as a daughter.**

47) What poetic devices does Capulet use in lines 28-29 and lines 38-39 and what effect do they have? **He personifies Death, which makes Death seem like it is a powerful entity that chose to take her.**

Romeo and Juliet Act V Questions

ACT V, SCENE i

48) What is ironic about Romeo's soliloquy in light of the news he soon hears? **It is ironic because he said he had a dream that Juliet kissed him and brought him back from the dead, when he's about to hear news that Juliet has died.**

49) What plans does Romeo make when he learns Juliet is dead? **He plans to buy poison and to take it at Juliet's tomb so that he can lay with her forever.**

50) In his closing speech, Romeo criticizes the influence gold has on men (line 80). How is the theme of greed connected to the play? **Romeo was greedy with his love for Juliet, since he wanted too much too fast rather than taking this time. Capulet is greedy by forcing Juliet to follow his orders and marry Paris. Also, the family is greedy by valuing their feud over anything else, which leads to the death of their children.**

ACT V, SCENE ii

51) How does scene ii connect with the Prologue? **Fate has intervened to bring about Romeo and Juliet's death.**

ACT V, SCENE iii

52) Describe Romeo's state of mind at the beginning of this scene. **Romeo seems desperate and Bathasar notes that has a crazy look in his eye.**

53) What motivates Paris to challenge Romeo? **Paris believes that Romeo is going into the tomb to disgrace or steal from the bodies. He also thinks that Romeo indirectly caused Juliet's death since everyone believes that her grief from Tybalt's death is what killed her.**

54) What/Who does Friar Lawrence blame for the deaths of Paris and Romeo (lines 144-174 and 151-154)? **Friar Lawrence blames fate for their deaths.**

55) How do the Prince's closing remarks seem similar to the speech by the Chorus at the beginning of the play? **The Prince mentions that the family's hate has resulted in great evil, and he mentions that fate has managed to kill their joys (their children), which is foreshadowed in the Prologue. He also says, "A glooming peace this morning with it brings" (V.iii.305). This means that the play is gloomy, or sad, because of all of the death that has happened, but it is also peaceful because the families have finally reconciled.**