



ROMEO AND JULIET: TEXT IN PERFORMANCE KS4/5

In these activities, students will learn how to respond to the play not just as a piece of writing, but as a piece of drama.

This is a lesson that we have taken from our KS4 / 5 *Romeo and Juliet* Scheme of Work, comprised of 30 lessons split into: Text in Performance, Characters, Language, Themes and Context.

We have adapted this lesson to make it suitable for use in a distance learning context. To access the full Scheme of Work for classroom-based learning, click [here](#).

DISTANCE LEARNING ACTIVITIES: TEXT IN PERFORMANCE

Key Questions for Students

Can I evaluate the importance of movement work and choreography in productions of Shakespeare?

Can I analyse how different actors who have played the role of Tybalt have communicated with the audience using body language, facial expression and other movements?

Can I apply these insights to my own ideas for staging a very physical scene?

Key words: *body language, character, choreography, facial expression, fight scenes, movement, swordfighting*



PROLOGUE

Ask students to watch the first part of Act I, scene 1 of *Romeo and Juliet* at Globe in 2009 (available through the stream on the Globe website) and 2016 available [here](#). Students should jot down any examples of carefully choreographed moves from this clip, and share findings.

ENTER THE PLAYERS

1. What does a choreographer do?

Ask students to think about:

- how the shape and layout of the Globe's stage might make particular demands of actors what other parts of *Romeo and Juliet* might need to be choreographed, e.g. the party in Act I, the fight in Act III, *Romeo and Juliet*'s deaths in Act V.

Students will find some interview questions and answers from a Globe choreographer at 2011.playingshakespeare.org/text-performance/choreography, and from a Globe text and space coach at 2011.playingshakespeare.org/text-performance/text-work.

2. Playing Tybalt

Ask students to read the quotations about Tybalt:

"Tybalt is a wonderful spoiler, and he is a great energy – just as a sort of malevolent energy."

"Mercutio uses fencing terms and also complains that Tybalt 'fights by the book'. The fights themselves were governed by a strict set of rules that they were honour bound to obey. Tybalt breaks these rules by thrusting under Romeo's arm."

"For Lady Capulet, losing Tybalt is like losing the son she never had...He is part of her household, she is looking after him, which is what they used to do with young men and young women, so she's looking after her brother's son, and he dies in her care."

What different aspects of Tybalt's character are emphasised in each quotation. Ask students to think of five adjectives to describe Tybalt and to support them with textual evidence. How would students advise the actor playing Tybalt or prepare for the part themselves? How should he stand? How should he move? Students should make notes in the Student Booklet.

3. Over to you: combat scene

Ask students to consider how they would stage the fight scene involving Tybalt, Romeo and Mercutio (Act III, scene 1 particularly lines 55 – 143). How naturalistic would the fighting be or would it be more stylised? Ask students to record their ideas on a storyboard sheet. You could ask students to bring some of these images to life using members of their household and even take photographs to which captions / quotations could be added.

EXUENT – Closing questions for students

Ask students to write a response to each of these questions, which they could email to you, or note at the back of their Student Booklet.

How important are a character's movements in a play?

Should all movement on stage be planned and rehearsed?

How can a character's movements affect our reactions to them?

Suggested plenary activity...

Ask students to pick one character and write down how they think that character should move, using a quotation from the play to support that idea. (The quotation could be said by the character in question or it could be something said by another character.)

Asides – Further Resources

- Most Elizabethan gentlemen carried swords in public and many had a dagger too. These weapons were worn more as a sign of status than for defence. However, younger gentlemen (or 'gallants') did fight in the streets. The fact that even the servants in *Romeo and Juliet* carry swords and shields too (not normally carried at all) is a sign of just how extreme the old feud has become.
- The open air playhouses in Shakespeare's time did more than just show plays. They staged exhibitions of sword fighting, tournaments and prize fights between duellers. Some theatres, including the Curtain where *Romeo and Juliet* was probably first played, became well known for these fights.

Challenge Task

Each of the following words is used by Shakespeare to mean a weapon or piece of armour, but the words also have other meanings with which students may be more familiar.

Ask students to research what these words mean when Shakespeare uses them in a military context?

1. crest; 2. carriages; 3. foil; 4. hanger; 5. partisan; 6. pike; 7. target; 8. tuck

We have added the relevant pages from the Student Booklet below for ease.



ROMEO AND JULIET

Student's Booklet

Key Stage 4 | Ages 14 – 19

Name

Class

SHAKESPEARE'S
GLOBE

TEXT IN PERFORMANCE

Dramatis Personae.

CAPULETS

JULIET – a thirteen-year-old girl from Verona, only child of the rich Capulet

CAPULET – her father

CAPULET'S WIFE – her mother

COUSIN CAPULET – a relative of her father's

NURSE – Juliet's wet nurse

PETER – Nurse's man

TYBALT – Juliet's cousin

TYBALT'S PAGE

PETRUCHIO – a follower of Tybalt

SAMSON – a Capulet retainer

GREGORY – another Capulet retainer

SERVINGMEN – in the Capulet household

MONTAGUES

ROMEO – sole son and heir of the Montague family

MONTAGUE – Romeo's father

MONTAGUE'S WIFE – Romeo's mother

BENVOLIO – Romeo's cousin

BALTHASAR – Romeo's man

ABRAHAM – a Montague retainer

SERVINGMEN – in the Montague household

THE PRINCE'S KINDRED

PRINCE ESCALUS – governor of Verona

MERCUTIO – his kinsman, and friend of Romeo's

COUNTY PARIS – another kinsman, suitor to Juliet

PARIS' PAGE

MERCUTIO'S PAGE

OTHERS

CHORUS

CITIZENS – of Verona

FRIAR LAURENCE – a Franciscan

FRIAR JOHN – another Franciscan

APOTHECARY – of Mantua

THREE WATCHMEN

THREE MUSICIANS – Simon Catling, Hugh Rebeck, and James Soundpost

Attendants, Masquers, Torchbearers, Guests and Gentlewomen

TEXT IN PERFORMANCE

Moving and Fighting.

How might the shape and layout of the Globe's stage make particular demands of actors?

In which parts of the play do scenes take place that need carefully rehearsed movements?

Extension activity: Watch the first part of Act I, scene 1 of *Romeo and Juliet* performed at the Globe in 2009. Write down any examples of carefully choreographed moves from this clip that you notice?

TEXT IN PERFORMANCE

Moving and Fighting.

My five adjectives about Tybalt:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

My advice to the actor playing Tybalt about his posture and movements:

Shakespeare's World

Most Elizabethan gentlemen carried swords in public and many had a dagger too. These weapons were worn more as a sign of status than for defence. However younger gentlemen (or 'gallants') did fight in the streets. The fact that even the servants in Romeo and Juliet carry swords and shields too (not normally carried at all), is a sign of just how extreme the old feud has become.

TEXT IN PERFORMANCE

Moving and Fighting.

Staging a fight

How would you stage the fight scene involving Tybalt, Romeo and Mercutio (Act III, scene 1, particularly lines 55 – 143)?

How naturalistic would the fighting be or would it be more stylised? My advice to the actor playing Tybalt about his posture and movements:

[illegible]

Use the space below to make notes and then record your ideas on a storyboard sheet. Include your storyboard sheet as a loose-leaf page inside this Student Booklet.

[illegible]