

The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet, Act I, by William Shakespeare
Vocabulary Builder

Word List

adversary augmenting grievance oppression pernicious transgression

A. DIRECTIONS: In each of the following items, think about the meaning of the italicized word and then answer the question.

1. Would you be likely to praise an action that had *pernicious* consequences? Why or why not?

2. In your opinion, does a *transgression* typically deserve punishment? Explain.

3. Would a person expressing a *grievance* be likely to seem happy or sad? Explain.

4. If your employer announces that she is *augmenting* your salary, how would you feel?

5. Would you go out of your way to help an *adversary*? Explain.

6. Would a person experiencing *oppression* feel free or burdened? Explain.

B. WORD STUDY: The prefix *trans-* means "across" or "through." Answer each of the following questions using one of these words containing *trans-*: *transgression*, *transition*, *transitory*, *translucent*, *transport*.

1. What is one item that is *translucent*?

2. What is one *transition* that people often make in life?

3. What are two ways to *transport* goods?

4. What kind of treatment does someone who has committed a *transgression* deserve?

5. How would you feel if you found out that your troubles are *transitory*?

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Open-Book Test

Short Answer Write your responses to the questions in this section on the lines provided.

1. Conflict is a struggle between opposing forces. The conflict in *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*, Act I, Scene i, involves a feud. What two families are feuding? Does the Prince resolve the conflict?

2. In *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*, the elder Capulets and Montagues enter at Act I, Scene i, lines 71–76. How does Lady Capulet add a touch of comic relief to what is otherwise a tense and violent scene?

3. Use numbered explanations to help you understand Montague's speeches describing Romeo's behavior in *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*, Act I, Scene i, lines 127–151. Then, use your own words to summarize Montague's speeches.

4. Near the end of Act I, Scene i, in *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*, Benvolio gives Romeo advice in order to cheer him up. What does he mean when he says, "Examine other beauties"?

5. Reread the dialogue at the beginning of Act I, Scene ii, in *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet* between Capulet and Paris, focusing especially on lines 7–19. Explain how Capulet feels about his daughter Juliet's getting married.

6. What issue does Lady Capulet want to discuss with Juliet in Act I, Scene iii, lines 7–10, of *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*? Why is Nurse allowed to be part of the discussion?

7. Describe Juliet's response to her mother's announcement that Paris wants to marry her, in *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*, Act I, Scene iii, lines 97–99. Explain what her response tells you about Juliet's character.

8. Fill in the chart below to compare character traits of the characters Romeo, Benvolio, and Mercutio in Act I of *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*. Look for details about the characters in their speeches, in what other characters say about them, and in the way they interact with one another. Then answer the questions below the chart.

Character	Character Traits
Romeo	
Benvolio	
Mercutio	

Which character would you choose to have as a friend? _____

Why do you choose this character?

9. Describe Tybalt's reaction when he realizes that Romeo is attending the Capulets' party in *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*, Act I, Scene v, lines 53–91. Explain what Tybalt's reaction tells you about his character, citing details from the play.

10. Which of these characters from *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet* would you most likely describe as pernicious: Romeo, Mercutio, Benvolio, or Tybalt? Base your answer on the meaning of *pernicious*.
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Essay

Write an extended response to the question of your choice or to the question or questions your teacher assigns you.

11. In an essay, describe the relationships between Juliet, her mother, and the Nurse, as these characters are portrayed in *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*, Act I, Scene iii. How does the Nurse behave toward Juliet? Toward Lady Capulet? How does Juliet respond to her mother and to the Nurse? Which woman seems more enthusiastic about Juliet's possible marriage? What level of formality exists among the three characters? Cite details from the play to support your response.
12. In the Prologue to Act I, the chorus tells the outline of the plot of *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*. In an essay, identify details from the play that foreshadow, or predict, that the love between Romeo and Juliet will be ill-fated. Then explain how knowing the ending affects your reading of the play.
13. In an essay, describe and discuss the interaction between Romeo and Juliet at their first meeting in *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*. Explain why Romeo describes a series of images. Why does Juliet respond the way she does? What is the overall effect of using these images to portray a love scene?
14. **Thinking About the Big Question: Do our differences define us?** The feud between the Capulets and the Montagues is a very important feature of the background for the plot of *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*. In an essay, discuss some of the details that show this is a deep-seated, longstanding conflict between the families. Then use the cultural and historical context of the play to speculate on what factors may have caused such a feud.

Oral Response

15. Go back to question 7, 8, 9, or to the question your teacher assigns to you. Take a few minutes to expand your answer and prepare for an oral response. Find additional details in *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*, Act I, that will support your points. If necessary, make notes to guide your oral response.