

The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet, Act III, by William Shakespeare
Literary Analysis: Dramatic Speeches

Characters in plays often deliver these types of **dramatic speeches**:

- **Soliloquy**: a lengthy speech in which a character—usually alone on stage—expresses his or her true thoughts or feelings. Soliloquies are unheard by other characters.
- **Aside**: a brief remark by a character revealing his or her true thoughts or feelings, unheard by other characters.
- **Monologue**: a lengthy speech by one person. Unlike a soliloquy, a monologue is addressed to other characters.

Characters often add meaning to speeches by making **allusions**—references to well-known people, places, or events from mythology or literature. For example, in Act II, Mercutio insultingly calls Tybalt “Prince of Cats,” alluding to a cat named Tybalt in French fables.

DIRECTIONS: Answer the questions that follow about an aside, a soliloquy, a monologue, and an allusion.

1. In Scene v, Juliet’s mother refers to Romeo as a villain. In an aside, Juliet says, “Villain and he be many miles asunder.” What is the effect of this aside? Why do you think Shakespeare wrote just the one remark as an aside?

2. In Scene v, Capulet delivers a monologue when he discovers that Juliet has rejected the match with Paris. Reread lines 177–197. What makes this speech a monologue?

3. Why is it important for Juliet and the others to hear Capulet’s monologue?

4. At the close of Scene v, Juliet delivers a soliloquy. Reread lines 237–244. What makes these last eight lines a soliloquy?

5. Explain Juliet’s allusion to Greek mythology in the opening lines of Scene ii.

Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds,
Toward Phoebus’ lodging!

The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet, Act III, by William Shakespeare**Reading: Using Paraphrases to Summarize**

Summarizing is briefly stating the main points of a piece of writing. Before you summarize a long passage in a Shakespearean play, you should **paraphrase** it by restating the lines in your own words. For example, compare these two versions of a speech by Romeo:

Shakespeare's version: This gentleman, the prince's near ally, / My very friend, hath got his mortal hurt / In my behalf.

Paraphrase: My good friend, a close relative of the prince, has been fatally wounded in defending me.

Once you have paraphrased small portions of text, you can more easily and accurately summarize the entire passage.

DIRECTIONS: Paraphrase the following passages from Act III. Remember that a paraphrase is a restatement in your own words for clarity. It is not a summary.

1. **TYBALT.** Romeo, the love I bear thee can afford
No better term than this: thou art a villain. (Scene i, ll. 57-58)

2. **PRINCE.** My blood for your rude brawls doth lie a-bleeding;
But I'll amerce you with so strong a fine
That you shall all repent the loss of mine. (Scene i, ll. 188-190)

3. **JULIET.** So tedious is this day
As is the night before some festival
To an impatient child that hath new robes
And may not wear them. (Scene ii, ll. 28-31)

The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet, Act III, by William Shakespeare

Vocabulary Builder

Word List

eloquence exile fickle fray gallant martial

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

1. Would you describe the people participating on both sides of a *fray* as hostile or friendly? Explain.

2. Can a romance in which one or both partners are *fickle* be described as stable and happy? Why or why not?

3. Would the sound of *martial* music evoke war or peace? Explain.

4. If you call someone *gallant*, is that a compliment or an insult? Explain.

5. What might be one of the main sorrows or complaints of a person who is *exiled*?

6. If a candidate delivers a speech with *eloquence*, is it likely to be persuasive? Why or why not?

B. WORD STUDY: The Latin root *-loque-* means "to speak." Answer each of the following questions using one of these words containing *-loque-*: *colloquial*, *eloquence*, *loquacious*, *soliloquy*, *ventriloquist*.

1. Who gives a *soliloquy*?

2. With whom does a *ventriloquist* usually converse?

3. What is an example of when it is appropriate to use *colloquial* language?

4. What difficulty might you have conversing with someone who is *loquacious*?

5. How might you be affected by the *eloquence* of a speech?
