



## Romeo and Juliet – Tableaux the Story

### Overview

This activity allows students to participate in telling the play's story. Once students know the story, they're free to focus on the characters and the language. This exercise can be done at the beginning of the unit, as a way of introducing the play, and may be repeated at the end, as a way of recapping the story.

Grade Level	Subject Area	Curriculum Expectations and Learning Outcome			Time Needed	Space	Materials
7–12	English, Language & Drama	Identify the perspectives evident in the text and comment on any questions these may raise about beliefs, values and identity.	Select and use appropriate forms to suit specific purposes in drama works.	Enhance understanding of a complex text by making connections between the ideas expressed in it and the students' personal insights, knowledge and experience of the world around them.	20–30 minutes	Clear, open spaces	Tableaux cards from the play.

## BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

- ⇒ Using the attached tableaux from *Romeo and Juliet* copied on Avery Labels (# 5162), peel and affix the lines to blank index cards (3" x 5" or 7.6 x 12.7 cm).
- ⇒ Tell students they are now going to tell the story they are studying and/or going to see.
- ⇒ Define "tableau" (a frozen picture that tells a story – no moving, no talking).

## Activity

- ▽ Divide students into five groups. There should be five to eight students per group.
- ▽ Hand out two tableaux cards per group.
- ▽ Groups work independently to tableau the scene(s) on the cards for 10 minutes. The students will play the characters, and if there aren't enough characters, they may become inanimate objects (e.g., tables, chairs, rocks, trees, etc.).
- ▽ The teacher/instructor will travel around the room and coach. Remind the students of such things as:
  - Deciding where the "front" is;
  - Levels;
  - Choosing a freeze they can maintain for a while.
- ▽ After 10 minutes, call the students back. Have them sit facing the playing area.
- ▽ Students present their tableaux in story order. The teacher/instructor reads the card while the students take the freeze.
- ▽ Ask the students to hold the freeze while you discuss it.
  - Ask students in the "audience" to identify the characters who are named in the tableau card.
  - Discuss the relationships between the characters and the action in the scene, and how the tableau shows these things.

## EXTENSION

- ✓ Have the students storyboard *Romeo and Juliet* in three panels.
  - They may free-draw this or use the computer (digital), or create a collage using images and photos found in various media sources.
  - What are the most important points in telling the story of *Romeo and Juliet*?
  - Write a caption for each panel.
  - **NOTE:** Shakespeare examines many universal themes and motifs such as:
    - Young love, courtship and marriage
    - Fate vs. free will
    - Rebellion and retribution
    - Language and communication
    - Social graces
    - Freedom and choice
    - Adults versus adolescents (generation gap)
    - Light vs. dark

## QUESTIONS

1. If Romeo and Juliet had not died, what would their life together have been like over time?
2. Do you believe Romeo and Juliet's romance was love at first sight or an infatuation?
3. Light and darkness are mentioned frequently throughout the play. Discuss the importance of this and what it suggests.

TABLEAUX: *Romeo and Juliet*

1. A fight breaks out on the streets of Verona between two feuding families: the **Capulets** and the **Montagues**.

*Romeo and Juliet*

3. **Lady Capulet** tells her daughter **Juliet** that she is to be married to the gentleman **Paris**. **Juliet's Nurse** is delighted with the news.

*Romeo and Juliet*

5. Under **Juliet's** balcony, late at night, **Romeo and Juliet** swear their undying love for each other and vow to marry in secret.

*Romeo and Juliet*

7. In a fit of rage, **Romeo** kills **Tybalt** for having killed his friend **Mercutio**.

*Romeo and Juliet*

9. **Juliet** drinks a sleeping potion to fake her own death in order to avoid having to marry **Paris**.

*Romeo and Juliet*

11. **Juliet** wakes up to find **Romeo** dead and kills herself with his dagger.

*Romeo and Juliet*

2. **Romeo**, a Montague, always falling in and out of love, tells his friend **Benvolio** about his latest flame, **Rosaline**.

*Romeo and Juliet*

4. **Romeo and his friends** sneak into a party being thrown by the **Capulets**. **Romeo** sees **Juliet**, and it is love at first sight for both of them.

*Romeo and Juliet*

6. **Tybalt** (Juliet's cousin) and his **Capulet buddies** meet **Romeo** and his **Montague buddies** on the street and challenge them to a fight. **Tybalt** stabs **Romeo's** friend **Mercutio** as **Romeo** tries to stop the fight.

*Romeo and Juliet*

8. **Romeo** is banished from Verona. **Juliet** despairs.

*Romeo and Juliet*

10. **Romeo** arrives at **Juliet's** tomb not knowing that she isn't truly dead. He poisons himself in despair.

*Romeo and Juliet*

12. The **Montagues** and **Capulets** stand over the dead bodies of **Romeo and Juliet** and vow to end their feud.

*Romeo and Juliet*