



***Romeo and Juliet* – Tossing Lines**

Overview

This is a great activity to demystify Shakespearean text. Each student will have the opportunity to work on a line from the play to further their understanding by tossing their lines to one another in playful repetition.

Grade
Level

Subject
Area

Curriculum Expectations and
Learning Outcome

Time
Needed

Space

Materials

7–12

English,
Language
& Drama

Clarity,
Coherence,
Diction and
Devices.

Making
inferences,
interpre-
tation of
texts.

Analyse
drama works
to determine
how they
communicate
ideas about
issues, culture
and society.

10–20
minutes

Clear
open
spaces

Cards (one per
student), each
containing a line
from the play.
Optional extra: up
to four soft foam
balls or beanbags.

Setting Up the Activity

Introducing this activity at the beginning of the play will give students a better understanding of the story and the lines they will hear/read.

- ❖ Copy the attached lines from *Romeo and Juliet* onto Avery Labels (#5162), then peel and affix each line to a blank index card (3" x 5" or 7.6 x 12.7 cm).
❖
- ❖ Tell the students they are now going to speak a bit of Shakespeare, using lines from *Romeo and Juliet*.
❖
- ❖ Have students read their cards to themselves, over and over, for a minute. Help them as necessary.
❖
- ❖ Then have students walk around the room saying the lines first in a whisper, then in a regular voice, then in a louder voice altogether.
❖
- ❖ Next, have them switch directions around the room saying the lines in various tones: sarcastically, sorrowfully, angrily, mysteriously and happily.
❖
- ❖ When you feel the students are comfortable saying their lines, have them stand in a circle.

THE ACTIVITY

- Have the teacher/instructor start the game with one soft foam ball or beanbag. (**NOTE:** if you don't want to use either in your classroom, you may just point instead.) Make eye contact with a student in the circle, say your line and toss the ball (or point) to that student. The toss goes with the impulse of the line.
- The student who caught the ball (or was pointed to) then makes eye contact with someone else across the circle and delivers the line and the ball (or points) to them. This continues, ensuring everyone in the circle has had their turn.
- If students are doing any of the following below, stop, explain and ask them to try again:
 - Not connecting the ball toss (or pointing) with the line (i.e. throwing the ball before or after they speak);
 - Not delivering the line to the person across the circle;
 - Not paying attention when a line is being delivered to them;
 - Not saying the lines in a loud clear voice.
- When the game is going well with one ball, add a second ball, then a third, then a fourth.

EXTENSION

- ◇ Discuss what lines stood out for the students. Pick one of those lines and ask four to six of the students to volunteer to go into the centre and create a tableau (still image) of what that line means to them. If you want, give them a 20-second count to confer with one another – although sometimes not giving them time to think produces an unrehearsed impulse that may surprise you and themselves at how creative they can be.
- ◇ Have the rest of the students walk around the tableau and offer their insights and understanding of what they see.
- ◇ Try this for a few lines, and then discuss with the whole class their understanding of the lines and the story.

TOSSING LINES – R & J

Civil blood makes civil hands unclean.

Romeo and Juliet

Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

Romeo and Juliet

Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace.

Romeo and Juliet

Some shall be pardoned, and some
punishèd.

Romeo and Juliet

Younger than she are happy mothers made.

Romeo and Juliet

I will make thee think thy swan a crow.

Romeo and Juliet

Come Lammas Eve at night
shall she be fourteen.

Romeo and Juliet

Seek happy nights to happy days.

Romeo and Juliet

Queen Mab hath been with you.

Romeo and Juliet

O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!

Romeo and Juliet

The sun for sorrow will not show his head.

Romeo and Juliet

I ne'er saw true beauty till this night.

Romeo and Juliet

This, by his voice, should be a Montague.

Romeo and Juliet

Good pilgrim, you do wrong
your hand too much.

Romeo and Juliet

TOSSING LINES – R & J

Palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss.

Romeo and Juliet

Let lips do what hands do.

Romeo and Juliet

You kiss by th' book.

Romeo and Juliet

My only love sprung from my only hate!

Romeo and Juliet

Can I go forward when my heart is here?

Romeo and Juliet

**But soft, what light through
yonder window breaks?**

Romeo and Juliet

It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.

Romeo and Juliet

Wherefore art thou Romeo?

Romeo and Juliet

What's in a name?

Romeo and Juliet

O swear not by the moon!

Romeo and Juliet

Anon, good Nurse!

Romeo and Juliet

Parting is such sweet sorrow.

Romeo and Juliet

I have been feasting with mine enemy.

Romeo and Juliet

O honey Nurse, what news?

Romeo and Juliet

TOSSING LINES – R & J

Hie you hence to Friar Laurence' cell.

Romeo and Juliet

These violent delights have violent ends.

Romeo and Juliet

A plague a' both your houses.

Romeo and Juliet

Brave Mercutio is dead!

Romeo and Juliet

Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds!

Romeo and Juliet

Come night, come Romeo!

Romeo and Juliet

A glooming peace this morning with it brings.

Romeo and Juliet

It was the nightingale, and not the lark.

Romeo and Juliet

It is the lark that sings so out of tune.

Romeo and Juliet

O happy dagger, this is thy sheath!

Romeo and Juliet

One kiss, and I'll descend.

Romeo and Juliet

O God, I have an ill-divining soul!

Romeo and Juliet

A joy comes well in such a needy time.

Romeo and Juliet

If all else fail, myself have power to die.

Romeo and Juliet

TOSSING LINES – R & J

Poor soul, thy face is much abused with
tears.

Romeo and Juliet

Past hope, past cure, past help!

Romeo and Juliet

I long to die.

Romeo and Juliet

Tomorrow night look that thou lie alone.

Romeo and Juliet

Henceforward I am ever ruled by you.

Romeo and Juliet

I'll not to bed tonight.

Romeo and Juliet

My dismal scene I needs must act alone.

Romeo and Juliet

Here's drink. I drink to thee.

Romeo and Juliet

Heaven and yourself had part in this fair
maid.

Romeo and Juliet

My dreams presage some joyful news at
hand.

Romeo and Juliet

I dreamt my lady came and found me dead.

Romeo and Juliet

Arms, take your last embrace.

Romeo and Juliet

O true apothecary, thy drugs are quick!

Romeo and Juliet

Thus with a kiss I die.

Romeo and Juliet