

Study Guide prepared by  
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Barter Playwright-in-Residence

## ***Romeo and Juliet***

Written by William Shakespeare  
Cut to one-hour length by Katy Brown

\*Especially for Grades 7-12

**By The Barter Players, touring January - March, 2012**

**(NOTE: standards below are included for reading William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and for completing the study guide.)**

### **Virginia SOLs**

**English** – 7.5, 8.5, 9.1, 9.3, 9.5, 10.3, 10.5, 10.6, 12.3, 12.5, 12.6

**Theatre Arts** – M.8, M.9, M.12, M.13, M.14, TI.8, TI.10, TI.11, TI.13, TII.9, TII.12, TII.13, TII.14, TII.15, TIII.10, TIII.12

### **Tennessee TCAPS**

**Language Arts** – 7.1.06, 7.1.12, 7.1.13, 7.2.09, 7.2.11, 7.2.12, 8.1.06, 8.1.12, 8.1.13, 8.2.11, 8.2.13

**English I** – 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2    **English II** – 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2

**English III** – 2.01, 2.02, 2.03, 2.08, 2.10, 2.11, 2.12, 4.05

**Theatre 6th-8th Grade** – 6.0, 7.0, 8.0    **Theatre 9th-12th** – 5.0, 6.0, 7.0, 8.0

### **North Carolina SCOS**

**English/Language Arts** – 7.5.01, 7.5.02, 8.5.01, 8.5.02

**English I** – 5.01, 5.03    **English II** – 4.02, 4.03, 4.05, 5.01    **English IV** – 4.03, 5.02, 5.03

**Theatre Arts** – 7.7.01, 7.7.03, 7.7.05, 8.1.04, 8.7.01, 8.7.04, 8.7.06

**Theatre Arts I** – 1.01, 1.03, 5.02, 5.03, 6.01, 7.02, 8.01

**Theatre Arts II** – 1.03, 1.06, 5.01, 5.03, 6.03, 8.03

**Theatre Arts III** – 1.06, 5.02, 7.02

### **Setting**

Various locations in Verona, Italy, including the streets, the home of the Capulets, the garden under Juliet's balcony, the cell of Friar Laurence and a crypt.



## Characters

*The Prince of Verona* – a statesman

*Romeo* – a member of the house of Montague

*Juliet* – a member of the house of Capulet

*Mercutio* – related to the Prince of Verona and a friend to Romeo

*Paris* – young count who wants to marry Juliet.

*Tybalt* – the nephew of Capulet and a cousin to Juliet

*Benvolio* – a friend to Romeo who strives for peace between the two families

*Nurse* – Juliet's friend and nursemaid

*Friar Laurence* – a man of God who marries Romeo and Juliet

*Montague* – Romeo's father

*Lady Montague* – Romeo's mother

*Capulet* – Juliet's father

*Lady Capulet* – Juliet's mother

### Note: Cast Size and Doubling of Actors

In this production of *Romeo and Juliet* only six actors will be used, with some actors playing more than one role. Doubling of actors requires distinction between characters. In this production, characters will be distinguished by costume, voice and other physical character traits.

## Synopsis

Romeo Montague is brooding because the woman he loves, Rosaline, no longer loves him. When his friend Benvolio discovers that Rosaline will be attending a party at the Capulet house, he convinces Romeo to crash the event, in spite of the fact that the Montagues and Capulets are sworn enemies. Romeo does so accompanied by Benvolio and another friend, Mercutio. However, Romeo is soon recognized by Tybalt, a Capulet cousin, who wants to kill him. Capulet refuses to allow this, for the Prince of Verona has ordered that the next man who brings violence upon another will suffer death himself. Romeo and his friends are therefore allowed to stay and Romeo glimpses Juliet, Capulet's daughter. All thoughts of Rosaline are banished from his mind and he and Juliet instantly fall in love. Only after Romeo has left the party do he and Juliet discover that they have each fallen in love with their sworn enemy. Later that night, Romeo hides in the orchard beneath Juliet's balcony. Juliet comes to the window and unable to contain himself, Romeo leaps out from hiding. They declare their love for each other and Juliet promises to send her Nurse to Romeo tomorrow so he can tell her when and where they will be married.



## Synopsis (cont.)

The next morning Romeo tells Friar Laurence about his plans to marry Juliet. He agrees to help the two lovers because he hopes that the marriage will end the feud between the two houses. Nurse meets Romeo and he informs her that Juliet is to meet him at Friar Laurence's cell. Nurse delivers the message and later that day, Juliet meets Romeo and Friar Laurence marries the two.



Meanwhile, Tybalt has been searching for Romeo to punish him for attending the party and flirting with Juliet. He confronts Mercutio and asks him where Romeo is hiding. Romeo enters and Tybalt challenges him to a duel, but Romeo refuses. Instead, Mercutio draws his sword and fights Tybalt. Romeo tries to stop the fight, but his interference accidentally accounts for Mercutio's death. Enraged, Romeo turns on Tybalt and kills him. The Prince learns of the deaths and banishes Romeo. Romeo sees Juliet one last time, spending his last night in Verona with her. After he sneaks off, Lady Capulet tells Juliet that her father has decided that she will marry her kinsman Paris that week. Unsure what to do, Juliet goes to see Friar Laurence. He agrees to help her and comes up with the following plan: Juliet would drink a potion that will make her appear dead. The effects

of the potion would last long enough for her to be placed in the crypt, where she would awake. Friar Laurence would send a letter to Romeo to let him know what was happening. Romeo would then return and let her out of the tomb and they could live the rest of their lives together, free from the confines of their families' mutual hate. Juliet agrees to the plan. She returns home and takes the poison. The next day, Nurse finds her and the news of Juliet's death spreads. Romeo's servant finds him in Mantua and tells him that he saw Juliet being placed in the Capulet tomb. Romeo returns to Verona immediately to see if it is true. In the meantime, Friar Laurence sends the letter to Romeo, but it is too late. Romeo enters the tomb and sees Juliet. Believing her to be dead, he drinks poison and dies instantly. Juliet awakens to find Romeo dead beside her. Juliet takes Romeo's dagger and stabs herself. Montague, Capulet, and the Prince arrive. The Friar explains everything that has happened. Montague and Capulet finally see how much damage their feuding has done so they decide to end the war between their houses.



# Biography of the Playwright

William Shakespeare was born in 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon in England, and his birthday is traditionally celebrated on April 23. At the age of eighteen he married Anne Hathaway, with whom he had three children. By 1592, he was living in London and working as an actor and playwright. He was part owner of the acting company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men (later called the King's Men), which built and performed in the Globe Theatre. Over the course of his career Shakespeare wrote 37 plays, 154 sonnets and many other poems. He died on April 23, 1616, and was buried at Holy Trinity Church in Stratford.



## Vocabulary Words

dignity  
grudge  
mutiny  
rebellious  
profaner  
importune  
grievance  
shrift  
chaste  
woo  
consent  
counsel  
disposition  
solemnity  
pilgrim  
trespass  
prodigious  
utterance  
enmity  
prorogued  
perjury  
perverse  
repose

rancour  
wench  
salutation  
counterfeit  
confidence  
devise  
herald  
nimble  
courteous  
warrant  
virtuous  
blazon  
riband  
consort  
appertaining  
villain  
rapier  
cockatrice  
banished  
woe  
slain  
exile  
carrion

vestal  
modesty  
lamentation  
jocund  
fettle  
twain  
inundation  
battlements  
surcease  
prosperous  
gadding  
prostrate  
orison  
conceit  
apothecary  
dram  
vengeance  
conjuraton  
contagion  
restorative  
ambiguity

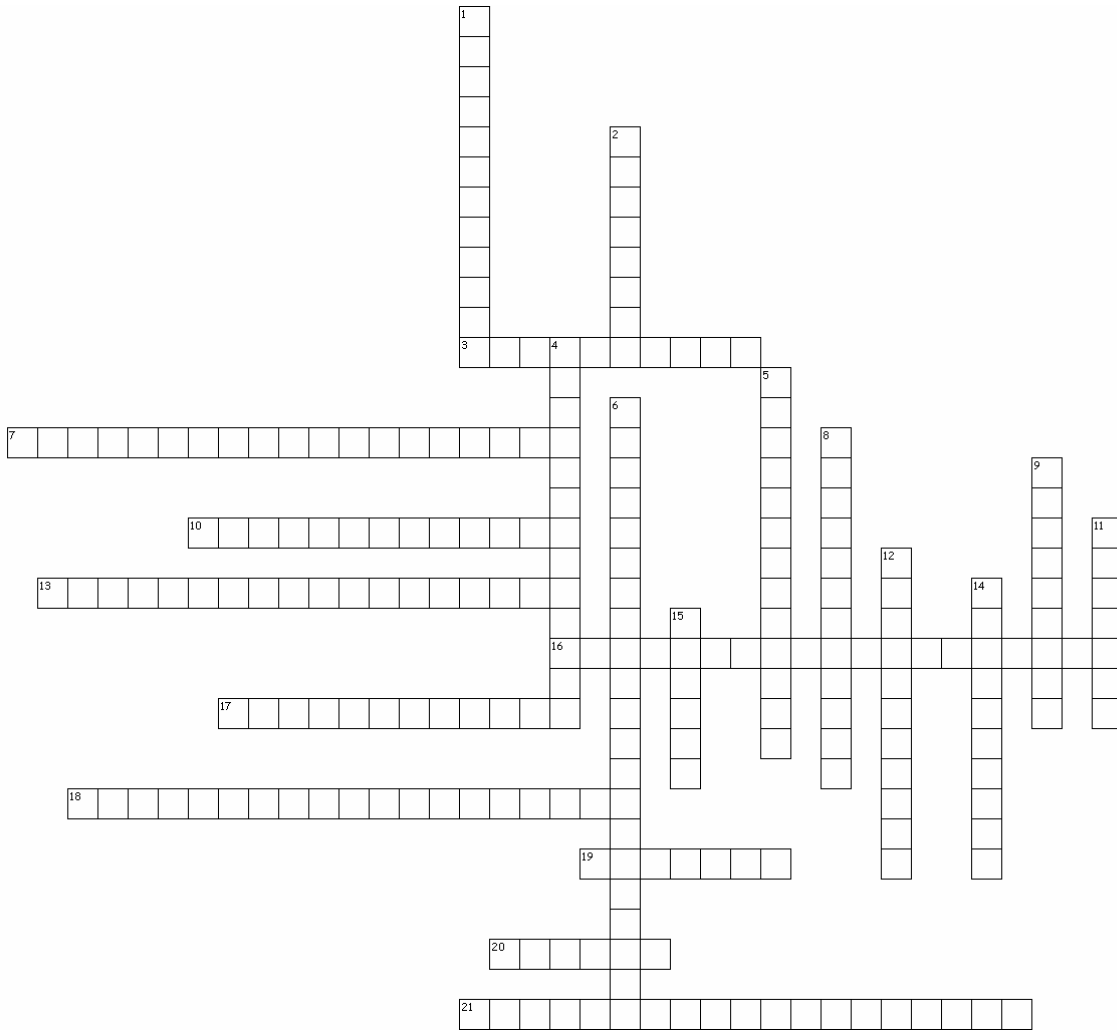
# WORD SEARCH

Find the following words below: **Romeo, apothecary, Friar Laurence, Verona, dagger, Capulet, poison, Juliet, balcony, Nurse, Montague, Tybalt, woe, Will Shakespeare, Mantua, villain, Mercutio, Paris, crypt, banished, Benvolio, wedding, rapier**

P T V I L L A I N V P W Y W E  
K E D M K P I U F G L O T R H  
Q L N O S I O P D S I R A P V  
A U F R I A R L A U R E N C E  
E P D E H S I N A B P M T N R  
O A O P O D H U I S G O L U O  
W C D T A I T T E I J N A R N  
W Z R G H N L K E M Q T B S A  
B E G O A E A O E I Y A Y E U  
T E D M M H C R V N L G T D G  
R P F D S E C A O N N U R R D  
N N Y L I U O C R R E E J T D  
O D L R T N L R O Y Y B I P U  
M I D I C A G R A P I E R Y Q  
W Q O A B S B F W S U Y B X B

## Brush Up Your Shakespeare

Using the clues below, fill in the blanks with the appropriate title of one of the following Shakespeare plays: *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Henry V*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Julius Caesar*, *A Midsummers Night Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It*, *Cymbeline*, *Richard III*, *Timon of Athens*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Henry VI Part II*, *Twelfth Night*, *Henry IV Part I*, *Henry IV Part II*, *The Tempest*, *Merry Wives of Windsor*



### Across

- 3. the winter of our discontent
- 7. the world's my oyster
- 10. eaten out of house and home
- 13. Rome meets Egypt
- 16. a pound of flesh
- 17. give the devil his due
- 18. Beatrice and Benedick
- 19. The Moor
- 20. To be or not to be
- 21. Kate and Petruchio

### Down

- 1. Et tu, Brute?
- 2. has 3 daughters
- 4. kill all the lawyers
- 5. We have seen better days
- 6. If we shadows have offended
- 8. Viola and Orsino
- 9. the game is up
- 11. Out, damned spot
- 12. all the world's a stage
- 14. the stuff dreams are made on
- 15. O for a Muse of fire

## True and False

Write **T** if the statement is **True** and **F** if the statement is **False**.

1. \_\_\_\_ Romeo was of the House of Montague.
2. \_\_\_\_ The main action of the play is set in Mantua.
3. \_\_\_\_ Paris wants to marry Juliet.
4. \_\_\_\_ Romeo was in love with Rosaline.
5. \_\_\_\_ Nurse raised Romeo from babyhood.
6. \_\_\_\_ The Montagues and Capulets were friends until Romeo flirted with Juliet.
7. \_\_\_\_ Paris kills Mercutio.
8. \_\_\_\_ Shakespeare describes Juliet as being 14 years of age.
9. \_\_\_\_ Romeo kills Tybalt.
10. \_\_\_\_ Verona is a town in southern Spain.
11. \_\_\_\_ Juliet's father wants her to marry Benvolio.
12. \_\_\_\_ Romeo is banished by the Prince of Verona.
13. \_\_\_\_ Friar Tuck marries Romeo and Juliet.
14. \_\_\_\_ The apothecary sells Romeo a dagger.
15. \_\_\_\_ Juliet kills herself by drinking poison.

## Matching

Match the person/place in the 1st column with the corresponding description in the 2nd.

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| 1. Paris           | a. where the apothecary lived              |
| 2. Nurse           | b. asks Juliet's for her hand in marriage  |
| 3. Juliet          | c. the son of Lord Montague                |
| 4. Verona          | d. Romeo's friend and a peacemaker         |
| 5. Mercutio        | e. a holy man who married Romeo and Juliet |
| 6. Romeo           | f. kin to the Prince of Verona             |
| 7. Tybalt          | g. a town in northern Italy                |
| 8. Benvolio        | h. the daughter of Lady Capulet            |
| 9. Mantua          | i. Juliet's hot-tempered cousin            |
| 10. Friar Laurence | j. Juliet's confidante                     |

## Questions and Activities for Middle/High School

1. Shakespeare begins this play with a Prologue. What is the purpose of this device? What themes are established there? Who speaks it? Why do you think Shakespeare tells us how the story ends before it even starts?

***“A pair of star-cross’d lovers...”***

2. Shakespeare describes Romeo and Juliet as “a pair of star-cross’d lovers.” What does this mean? Where does the expression “it’s in the stars” come from? Why do you think we connect our fate/luck/future with the stars?

### The Sonnet

The Prologue to *Romeo and Juliet* is in the form of a “sonnet.” A sonnet is a poem that is 14 lines long, written in iambic pentameter and follows a rhyme scheme of  
*a-b-a-b, c-d-c-d, e-f-e-f, g-g*

#### ACTIVITY

**Write a prologue to your favorite novel/story using the sonnet form.  
Share it with your class.**



3. Shakespeare never tells us the reason the Montagues and the Capulets are feuding. How long do you think the feud has already lasted at the opening of the story? Given both families social standing (wealthy), the time the play was written (1590's) and its setting (Verona, Italy) make a list of reasons the feud may have begun.

## Family Feud!

Next to the fictional Montagues and Capulets, perhaps the most famous feuding families in history are the very real Hatfields and McCoys, who dwell in Kentucky and West Virginia.



### ACTIVITY

**Research the feud between the Hatfields and McCoys. When and why did it start? How long did it last? What finally brought it to an end? Present your findings to the class.**

4. Discuss Juliet's relationship with her Nurse. Why was Nurse willing to help Juliet marry Romeo only to turn around later and encourage her to marry Paris? Was she justified in her actions? How did Juliet view this reversal?
5. The most famous scene in *Romeo and Juliet* – if not all of Shakespeare's canon – is what is commonly referred to as The Balcony Scene. What takes place between Romeo and Juliet that makes this scene so famous? Are any well-known Shakespearean quotes derived from their conversation? If so, what are they and what do they mean? How long had Romeo and Juliet known each other when this scene occurs?
6. Why is Tybalt so determined to kill Romeo? Why did Mercutio feel compelled to draw his sword against Tybalt?

7. What Role did Friar Laurence play in the deaths of Romeo and Juliet? What more could he have done to prevent this tragedy? Should he have involved himself as much as he did (help them get married, give Juliet the potion, etc.)? Discuss.



8. What is the function of Benvolio in this play? How does his function compare to that of Mercutio? Why do you think Shakespeare found it necessary to have Paris killed at the end of the play?

9. The production you saw was a *touring* show, therefore the set, costumes, lights, sound and props were kept to a minimum. Pick a scene from *Romeo and Juliet* and design a set for it that would work in your school's auditorium. Keep in mind sightlines as well as the placement of entrances and exits. Once you have designed your set on paper, make a to-scale model of it. Present it to your class and explain how it would work. Is it possible to design a set that would function for every different scene in the play?

10. The original script of *Romeo and Juliet* is over two hours long. How does this one hour production compare to the original? What scenes/characters were left out? How did this affect the story?

11. Compare this production of *Romeo and Juliet* with Franco Zeffirelli's 1968 movie version. How well does the story translate to film? Compare that movie to the film version of the musical *West Side Story*. How do the two stories compare? Discuss.

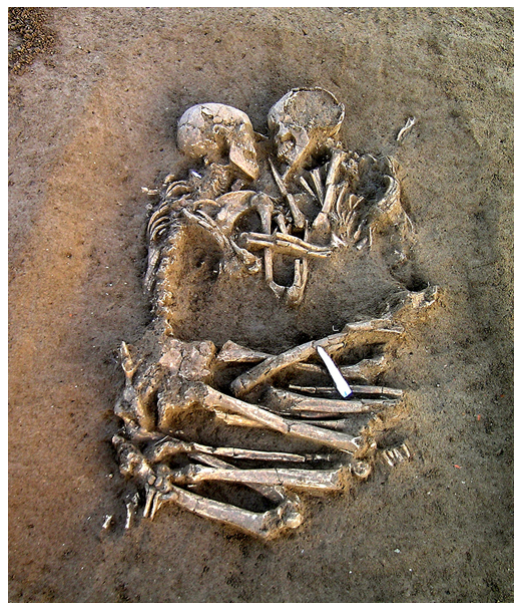
# MAP IT!

Locate the town of Verona on a map of Italy. What sort of landscape/terrain surrounds it. Next locate the town of Mantua. How far is it from Verona? How long would it have taken Romeo to move between the two towns on foot?



## Did you know.....?

In 2007, skeletons of a young man and woman locked in an embrace were discovered in Mantua, Italy. The skeletons are from the Neolithic Age (approx. 5000 years ago) and are referred to as “Romeo and Juliet.”



# Suggested Reading/Links

## Books about William Shakespeare

*Shakespeare: The Biography* by Peter Ackroyd

*Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare* by Stephen Greenblatt

*Shakespeare: An Ungentle Life* by Katherine Duncan-Jones

*Soul of the Age: A Biography of the Mind of William Shakespeare* by Jonathan Bate

## Shakespeare Links

To find out more about William Shakespeare, his life and his works, check out the links below...

*Folger Shakespeare Library*

<http://folger.edu/template.cfm?cid=863>

*Mr. William Shakespeare and the Internet*

<http://shakespeare.palomar.edu/>