

19 – THE DEATHS

Who is more responsible for the deaths of Romeo and Juliet?

WHAT YOU NEED

- Some pieces of note paper, or a notebook and something to write with.
- A computer with internet connection, ready to play [this clip](#)

ACTIVITY

- Watch the clip of Act 5 Scene 3, performed by RSC actors onstage. Pay close attention to the Friar's actions.
- Ask yourself: Would the outcome have been the same if the Friar had stayed?
- Create a mind map around this question. Take a piece of paper and write 'The Friar stays' in the centre. Think of everything that happens in the scene up to Juliet's death. Write these events on the page and draw a line between each of them to the words in the centre. If you think the Friar might have changed these events by staying, write that down underneath the events. Use different colours, if you have them, to make each event stand out.
- When you have finished your map, compare your events to what happens at the end of the play. Are there any differences? What does this tell you about the Friar? Who else could have changed the events, apart from the young couple themselves? Would things have been different, for example, if Juliet had not been told she had to marry someone else by her father?
- If you have time, read the very end of the play from Balthasar's line 'I brought my master news of Juliet's death'. Ask yourself: Why does Shakespeare include these speeches here? What does he want us to think of the people saying them?

EXTENSION

- Create a soundscape for Juliet's tomb. In your copy of the text look at Juliet's soliloquy in Act 4 Scene 3 where she imagines waking up in a tomb. The speech begins 'I have a faint cold'. Make a list of all the images Juliet uses in this soliloquy. Think of how you can create the sounds to reflect these fears.
- Record and edit together your sounds to create the atmosphere of Juliet's speech. What does it sound like if you read this speech out loud with your soundscape playing underneath it? If necessary, do another edit so that your soundscape fits the speech more accurately.