

ROMEO &

JULIET  
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

## A BROADCAST GUIDE: Preparing for the Schools' Broadcast

### GETTING STARTED

In order for your students to enjoy the broadcast and have a positive experience watching the play, it is essential that they are prepared. This short guide should help you to introduce the text.

### BEFORE THE DAY OF THE BROADCAST

This guide contains activities for you to do with students before taking part in the broadcast. Understanding the plot of the play and the key events is really important for students and we recommend you spend at least one lesson exploring the play before the day of the broadcast.

### ON THE DAY OF THE BROADCAST

We will provide some things to look out for on the day as part of the broadcast and will be inviting students to engage with the play and the choices in this production. This will help students to participate in our live Q&A as well as sharing ideas with other learners across the UK.

### PRODUCTION INSIGHTS

The 2018 production of *Romeo and Juliet*, directed by Erica Whyman and featuring Karen Fishwick and Bally Gill in the title roles, is set in a modern world like our own, but without guns or mobile phones. You can discover more about the set and the inspiration behind the world of the play from Erica and designer Tom Piper in our [model box film](#) which talks through the staging choices.

Erica wanted to explore the divide between generations in this play, saying 'The grown ups in the play have created a situation where they don't agree and that disagreement is violent and really dangerous. People die all the time on their streets, so what I think young people recognise in the play is that the grown ups have let the young people down.' What do students think this might look like?

## BEFORE THE DAY OF THE BROADCAST

If you've got limited time, but want your students to feel prepared, we suggest that you focus on the following:

- Understanding the plot of the play.
- Knowing the characters and their relationships.
- Introducing the context of the play's opening scene or key scenes.

There will be a short video on the website that we advise you to watch before seeing the broadcast. The video introduces all of the things listed above and is a great way prepare your students and to introduce your students to this production and its choices.

## UNDERSTANDING THE PLOT

In order for students to enjoy the production, it helps to have an overview of the plot before watching for the first time. The following activity requires the 'Story in 20 Minutes' resource from the end of this pack and will allow you to explore the story practically. It is also an opportunity to introduce some of the key questions that will be explored during the broadcast.

- Divide students into small groups.
- Using the 'Story in 20 Minutes' resource in this pack, assign each group two or three scenes each, making sure all twenty scenes have been distributed.
- Ask each group to create tableaux or freeze frames for their scenes.
  - Encourage them to narrate their scenes, explaining what happens in each scene before we see it and using the lines they have been given from the play to bring some of the freeze frames to life.
- Ask the whole class to form a circle and invite each group into the middle to share their scene or scenes, in the order they happen in the play.
- Reflect with students on why Romeo and Juliet chose death over a life without each other. What drives them both to this and what do you think is the most important factor for Romeo and then for Juliet? Is it different for each of them or the same?



## SYNOPSIS

A full synopsis of the play is available at: <http://www.rsc.org.uk/romeo-and-juliet/plot>

## KNOWING THE CHARACTERS

As students work through the following exercise on the characters in the play, encourage them to think about each character's attitude towards the feud and how motivated they are by it. Ask them to decide what is the most important motivation for each character at the start of the play. For example, the Nurse's motivation might be keeping Juliet safe and happy. Think about at what point their motivations change?

- Divide students into groups of five or six, providing them with the Character Facts for one of the character sets:
  - Montagues
  - Capulets
  - People of Verona

These character sets are available in the resource section of this pack. Explain that the character facts introduce us to the characters at the start of the play.

- Ask each group to read through the information and descriptions for their character set and to then create a human diagram, with each of them representing a different character in the set. In their diagram, Romeo, Juliet or Mercutio should be in the centre with the other character arranged around them.
- Encourage them to think about the other characters' closeness to the character in the centre, in terms of their importance and influence as well as how close they seem emotionally.
- Ask students to share their human diagrams, looking at each of the character sets and how they interact with each other. Reflect with them on how different groups have approached the same sets of characters. Why have they made those choices? Which relationships do they think have the most influence on the characters in the centre.
- Reflect specifically with the group looking at the people of Verona. How easy was it to create their human diagram? Are there any characters in this set that were more difficult to place in terms of how they related to Mercutio?
- Invite two groups, a Capulet group and a Montague group, to share their diagrams and then ask one of the People of Verona groups one at a time to decide if they think they actually belong in one of the other two diagrams. If they think they do, ask them to go and join it – positioning themselves in relation to the family. For example, Mercutio himself might go to the Montague diagram and Paris might go to the Capulet diagram.
- Discuss with students any characters that have not fitted into the Capulet or Montague diagrams. Create a 'neutral zone' between the two family diagrams and discuss which of the characters might belong in there. Friar Laurence and Prince Escalus might be the most obvious choices but are there any other characters who aren't naturally involved in the feud?

## THE OPENING SCENE

Romeo and Juliet opens with a 14 line prologue, traditionally spoken by a Chorus. In the 2018 production this Chorus is made up of young people from the local community and different members of the cast, who play characters on both side of the feud. The following activity will help explore the

prologue in a bit more detail, but as students work on it encourage them to think about what these choices might mean for the production.

- Divide the class into groups of four or five.
- Provide each group with two lines from the prologue each until all 14 lines have been allocated.
- Ask the groups to translate their two lines into their own words. Tell them to be prepared to speak their lines aloud so that a part of the group says the original two lines and the others say their modern version.
- Invite groups to read and translate their lines, in order, so that they can hear the whole prologue in sequence.
- Ask each group to then create a series of actions that tell the story of their two lines from the prologue. The series of actions should begin and end in a freeze frame and Shakespeare's lines should be spoken during the actions. Groups can choose one person or the whole group to say the lines during the series of actions.
- Allow students about five minutes to prepare their pieces, then position the groups around the space in speech order so that the prologue runs in sequence.
- Reflect with students on what the prologue tells them; what facts about the story has Shakespeare chosen to share? Why do they think he opens the play this way?
- Share with students that, in this production, the prologue is spoken by several characters including teenagers from the theatre's local community. What impact do they think this has? Do they think it matters who delivers the prologue? Does it have a different purpose in a modern re-telling of Romeo and Juliet?

We also strongly advise that students explore some of the key moments in the play ahead of watching the broadcast including the meeting of Romeo and Juliet in Act 1 Scene 5 and the balcony scene in Act 2 Scene 2. The following activity will help you to explore the balcony scene with students.

## THE BALCONY SCENE

Explain to pupils the context behind the balcony scene. Romeo has climbed the wall into the Capulet's orchard in search of Juliet, knowing he'll be killed if he's found. The following activity looks at his speech at the start of the scene, as he sees Juliet again and hears her speak.

Ask students to read the speech out loud together, taking turns to read to the next punctuation mark until the whole text has been read. This may mean that individuals only read one word or a couple of lines.

- Reflect with students on what words stand out when they read it this way. Was there a place in the speech where readers changed a lot? Did they notice anything about the pattern of the speech?
- Ask students to repeat the reading together but this time ask them to imagine that Romeo is sharing a secret that he doesn't want anyone else to overhear. Students will whisper the words to the next reader, passing on what is said with energy. There should be no pauses between one reader and the next; it should be as if there is only one person speaking. Ask:
  - What is the effect of this?
  - What is Romeo's state of mind? Excited? Confused?

- Ask students to explain their comments and support them with evidence from the text.
- Ask students to space themselves out evenly around the room and read the speech again, to themselves. As they read ask them to walk around the room, changing direction every time they reach a punctuation mark.
- Ask students to reflect on how they think Romeo feels during this speech? Are there any places where Romeo's thoughts seem to change direction rapidly? For example, what do they notice in the middle of the speech when he is deciding whether or not to talk to Juliet.
- Ask students to find examples of:
  - What Romeo is talking about when his direction isn't changing so much. Why are his thoughts more clear on this topic?
- Explain to students that in the 2018 production Romeo cannot see Juliet at this point, and that rather than her looking like the sun this is just his imagination and how he sees her. Does that change the way he comes across?
- Ask students to form a circle and working with the person next to them, challenge the pairs to look at a short section of the speech, no more than two lines.
- Invite students to speak their lines together, in pairs, going around the circle until the whole speech is complete.
- Challenge students to try this multiple ways and introduce the idea that whenever actors approach their lines in the script they have choices they have to make. Encourage the whole circle to read the speech:
  - As if they are telling a young child a bedtime story
  - As if they are a teacher telling someone off
  - As if they are at a football match
- Ask students to find the key words in their lines and agree on strong gestures to go with each key word. Give them a few minutes to rehearse, so that they are confident to speak their lines and make their gestures.
- Invite students back into the circle and ask them to perform the speech together, delivering their lines and their gestures in order around the circle, using the interpretation they think best reflects Romeo's state of mind at this point in the play.
- Reflect with students on their choices, commenting on any turning points in interpretation. For example, did Juliet's appearance have an impact on their choices?

## ON THE DAY OF THE BROADCAST

### WATCHING THE BROADCAST

This broadcast is live and it **cannot be paused or stopped**. To help you and your students we have arranged the broadcast into **three parts**, offering two opportunities to take a break.

Below are some key things to look out for in each part of the broadcast as well as some questions to reflect on in the breaks.

Please send in your own questions for the company to [schoolsbroadcast@rsc.org.uk](mailto:schoolsbroadcast@rsc.org.uk) or through the question box on the website. The earlier you send in your questions the better.

## AS YOU WATCH

### PART ONE

Think about how we are introduced to Romeo and Juliet and the first impressions we get of their characters.

In particular, look out for:

- Romeo's attitude to love and the way he speaks about Rosaline
- Juliet's relationship with her Mother and the Nurse
- How their language changes in Act 1 Scene 5 when they meet at the Capulet ball

Romeo and Juliet meet in a public place, during the middle of a dance, but share an incredibly private and personal moment that changes the course of the play.

- Why do you think Romeo climbs the wall of the orchard to see Juliet again after the party?
- What does the balcony scene reveal about Romeo and what does it reveal about Juliet? How many times do they refer to light and dark or celestial imagery (like the sun and moon) and what do these images suggest about their love and their characters?
- What role the Friar plays and why? Why do you think Shakespeare includes these characters?

### PART TWO

Think about Romeo and Juliet's reactions and attitudes to each other and those around them.

In particular, look out for:

- How Juliet has changed, specifically in the way she behaves with the Nurse
- Romeo's attitude towards Tybalt and the fight
- How Romeo reacts to Mercutio's death and why

Romeo kills Tybalt at the end of this part, even though he did not want to fight against his new cousin.

- Why do you think Romeo acts the way he does and could he have prevented his own tragedy?
- What are Mercutio's final words and why do you think Shakespeare includes these?
- What do you expect to be the reaction of the families and other characters? How will the Nurse and Friar react to these events?

## PART THREE

Think about the reaction to Tybalt's death, particularly in the Capulet family and why Juliet responds the way she does to Romeo's banishment.

In particular, look out for:

- Romeo and Juliet's final moments together before he goes into exile
- The reaction of the Capulet family and the motivations of Lady Capulet, Lord Capulet and the Nurse in supporting the plan for Juliet to marry Paris almost immediately
- The details of the friar's plan to reunite the young lovers and his warnings

When Tybalt dies Lord Capulet agrees to Juliet's marriage to Paris but Juliet goes to the friar for help, as one of the only people who know she is already married.

- What reasons do Lord and Lady Capulet give for thinking the marriage to Paris is a good idea and why do they think the Nurse responds the way she does?
- How does Juliet feel about the friar's plan to make herself appear dead and why does she go ahead with it? How has Juliet changed throughout the play and how is this shown?
- How does Shakespeare use language to create the atmosphere in the Capulet tomb? What are Romeo's reactions to it and how is a sense of foreshadowing built through him and the other characters?

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# RESOURCES

## THE STORY IN 20 MINUTES

- 1. For years and years two of the most important families in Verona, the Capulets and the Montagues, have hated each other. Their sons and their servants are forever fighting in the streets.**

Abram: Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

Sampson: No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir. But I bite my thumb, sir.

Abram: You lie.

Sampson: Draw, if you be men. Gregory, remember thy washing blow.

- 2. The row grows, more and more citizens take sides and join in. Tybalt, Lady Capulet's nephew, is a hothead, always ready to wade in. Benvolio, Montague's nephew, tries to calm things down, but goes unheard as the fight grows more ferocious. The Prince comes in and the street falls silent and he tells them:**

Prince: Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace.  
Will they not hear? What, ho – you men, you beasts,  
Throw your mistempered weapons to the ground  
And hear the sentence of your moved prince.  
If ever you disturb our streets again  
Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace.

- 3. Benvolio finds Romeo, a Montague, after the fight. They discuss Romeo's love life, which isn't going so well. Benvolio tells him to look around for someone new and when they hear from a passing servant of a feast at the Capulets' house that night, Benvolio suggests they go along even though they are not invited.**

Servant: My master is the great rich Capulet; and if you be not of the house of Montagues, I pray come and crush a cup of wine. Rest you merry.

Benvolio: At this same ancient feast of Capulet's  
Supps the fair Rosaline whom thou so loves,  
Compare her face with some that I shall show,  
And I will make thee think thy swan a crow.

Romeo: I'll go along, no such sight to be shown,  
But to rejoice in splendour of mine own.

**4. At about the same time Paris, a handsome young nobleman, is trying to persuade Lord Capulet to let him marry his daughter, Juliet. Capulet says not to rush – she is only fourteen.**

Paris: But now, my lord, what say you to my suit?  
Capulet: My child is yet a stranger in the world;  
Let two more summers wither in their pride  
Ere we may think her ripe to be a bride.

**5. But Lady Capulet clearly disagrees, as she tells her daughter Juliet. Juliet's Nurse supports her view.**

Lady Capulet: Younger than you,  
Here in Verona, ladies of esteem  
Are made already mothers. Thus then in brief:  
The valiant Paris seeks you for his love.  
Nurse: A man, young lady? Lady, such a man  
As all the world – why, he's a man of wax.  
Lady Capulet: Verona's summer hath not such a flower.  
Juliet: I'll look to like, if looking liking move.

**6. That evening at the Capulet's party Romeo and Benvolio, wearing masks, mingle with the crowd of guests. Suddenly Romeo spots a beautiful young girl dancing and loves her at first sight.**

Romeo: O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!  
Did my heart love till now? Forswear it, sight!  
For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night.

**7. Romeo and Juliet meet and they are totally mesmerized by each other, until the Nurse arrives on the scene and tells Juliet that her mother needs her. The Nurse then tells Romeo who Juliet is.**

Romeo: What is her mother?  
Nurse: Her mother is the lady of the house.  
Romeo: Is she a Capulet?  
Benvolio: Away, be gone.

**Romeo and Benvolio quickly leave the party.**

**8. Juliet needs urgently to know the name of the young man she has just fallen for.**

Nurse: His name is Romeo, and a Montague;  
The only son of your great enemy.  
Juliet: My only love sprung from my only hate!

Too early seen unknown, and known too late.

**9. Romeo does not go home and creeps into the Capulets' garden instead. To his delight Juliet appears at her window!**

Romeo: But, soft! What light through yonder window breaks?  
It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.

**Juliet doesn't see Romeo and talks aloud to herself:**

Juliet: O Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo?  
Deny thy father and refuse thy name;  
What's in a name? That which we call a rose  
By any other name would smell as sweet.

**10. They then talk to each other and agree to marry soon. Not wasting any time, Romeo goes the next morning to see Friar Laurence, to ask if he will marry them. Friar Laurence urges patience but Romeo wants it to happen quickly.**

Romeo: Do thou but close our hands with holy words,  
Then love-devouring death do what he dare –  
It is enough I may but call her mine.  
Friar: These violent delights have violent ends  
And in their triumph die, like fire and powder.  
Which as they kiss consume.

**By the end of the day Romeo and Juliet are married.**

**11. Later that very same day, out on the streets of Verona Tybalt insults Mercutio which makes him very angry. When Romeo, fresh from his wedding, comes onto the scene, Tybalt insults him as well, trying to get him to fight. Romeo tries to calm Tybalt but Mercutio is furious and Mercutio and Tybalt begin to fight. Mercutio is killed just as Romeo is trying to separate them. His dying words are a curse:**

Mercutio: Help me into some house, Benvolio,  
Or I shall faint. A plague a-both your houses!  
They have made worms' meat of me.

**12. As Romeo realises Tybalt has killed his friend, he attacks Tybalt and kills him. Romeo then realises in an instant that all his happiness with Juliet has come to an end and he is guilty of murder.**

Benvolio: Romeo, away, be gone!  
Stand not amazed. The Prince will doom thee death  
If thou art taken. Hence, be gone, away!  
Romeo: O, I am fortune's fool!

Benvolio:                   Why dost thou stay!

**13. The Capulet family tell the Prince that they want revenge on Romeo for Tybalt's death while the Montagues ask him for mercy, arguing that Tybalt killed Mercutio in the first place. After consulting Benvolio the Prince declares his sentence:**

Prince:                    And for that offence, let Romeo hence in haste,  
Else, when he is found, that hour is his last.

**14. Meanwhile Juliet is ecstatically happy, thinking only of her joy in being Romeo's wife. On her wedding night she waits for him to come to her. The Nurse rushes in and tells her of Tybalt's death and Romeo's banishment. Juliet is in torment: her great love and husband has killed her cousin!**

Nurse:                  Shame come to Romeo!  
Juliet:                  Blistered be thy tongue!  
Nurse:                  Will you speak well of him that killed your cousin?  
Juliet:                  Shall I speak ill of him that is my husband?

**Juliet begs the Nurse to find him and let her see him one last time.**

**15. Romeo has fled to Friar Laurence's cell. He is devastated and the Friar listens patiently to Romeo and then tries to tell him about a plan he has formed. The Nurse arrives and Romeo tries to stab himself but they stop him and arrange for him to see Juliet that night. The Friar tells Romeo to go straight to Mantua after he has seen Juliet.**

Friar:                    Go before, Nurse. Romeo is coming.  
Nurse:                   Here, sir, a ring she bid me give you, sir.  
Romeo:                   How well my comfort is revived by this.

**16. Lord and Lady Capulet announce to Juliet that Count Paris has asked to marry her and that they want it to happen in three days' time. Juliet refuses and her father gets angry at her. Lord Capulet gives her a terrible choice:**

Juliet:                    Good father, I beseech you on my knees,  
Hear me with patience but to speak a word.  
Capulet:                  Hang thee, young baggage! Disobedient wretch!  
I tell thee what – get thee to church a'Thursday  
Or never after look me in the face.

**17. Juliet goes to Friar Laurence's cell to ask for his help. Paris is there but when he has gone she begs the Friar to help her. He tells her his plan: pretend to be happy about the wedding and then, on the night before the wedding, take a special potion. The potion is designed to put her in a really deep sleep that will make the family believe she is dead and take her to the Capulet tomb. Friar Laurence promises that during that time he will send a letter to Mantua telling Romeo about the plan and that Romeo will be there in the tomb when Juliet wakes up and they can go to Mantua together.**

Juliet: Give me, give me! O tell not me of fear!  
Friar: Hold. Get you gone, Be strong and prosperous  
In this resolve. I'll send a fiar with speed  
To Mantua, with my letters to thy lord.  
Juliet: Love give me strength, and strength shall help afford.  
Farewell, dear father.

**18. But things go terribly wrong. The messenger carrying Friar Laurence's letter to Romeo returns to say he hasn't been able to deliver the message to Romeo. Meanwhile, Romeo's servant, Balthasar, has travelled to Mantua and told Romeo the news that Juliet is dead. Romeo is distraught. He goes to an apothecary and buys poison before going back to Verona.**

Apothecary: Put this in any liquid thing you will  
And drink it off, and if you had the strength  
Of twenty men it would dispatch you straight.  
Romeo: Come, cordial and not poison, go with me  
To Juliet's grave. There there must I use thee.

**19. Juliet is in the tomb and Paris visits her. Romeo then arrives and Paris challenges him to a duel. Romeo tries to get him to go away, but Paris draws his sword and Romeo fights him. They fight and Paris is killed.**

Paris: Condemned villain, I do apprehend thee.  
Obey, and go with me. For thou must die.  
Romeo: I must indeed; and therefore came I hither.  
Good gentle youth, tempt not a desperate man.  
Paris: I do defy thy conjuration  
And apprehend thee for a felon here.  
Romeo: Wilt thou provoke me? Then have at thee, boy!  
Paris: O, I am slain!

**20. Romeo looks at Juliet, then drinks the poison and dies beside her. Friar Lawrence arrives too late to tell him Juliet is not dead. Juliet wakes up and sees Romeo with the poison still in his hand. They hear people coming and the Friar runs away, begging Juliet to come with him. But Juliet does not go and when the Friar has gone she takes Romeo's dagger and stabs herself.**

Juliet:                   Yea, noise? Then I'll be brief. O happy dagger!  
                              This is thy sheath; there rust, and let me die.

**21. The Capulets and Montagues gather in grief around the tomb. Many of the citizens of Verona are also there and all are upset but agree to stop fighting each other and to live in peace.**

Prince:                   A glooming peace this morning with it brings.  
                              The sun for sorrow will not show his head.  
                              For never was a story of more woe  
                              Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.

## CHARACTER FACTS

### Capulets

#### LORD CAPULET

Head of the Capulet family, he hates the Montagues.  
Rich and powerful  
Wants his daughter to marry into the Prince's family

#### LADY CAPULET

Wife to the great, rich Capulet  
Does what her husband says

#### JULIET

14 Years old  
Only child of the Capulets  
Brought up by her nurse

#### THE NURSE

Has looked after Juliet since she was a baby  
Loves Juliet and is like a mother to her

#### TYBALT

Bad tempered nephew of Lady Capulet  
Lord Capulet's right hand man, hates the Montagues

### Montagues

#### LORD MONATGUE

Head of the Montague family, hates the Capulets  
Rich, powerful and refined

#### LADY MONTAGUE

Wife to Montague, loves her son Romeo

#### ROMEO

The only son of the Montagues

Always falling in love, currently in love with Rosaline

BENVOLIO

Nephew of Montague and Romeo's best friend

## People of Verona

PRINCE ESCALUS

Ruler of Verona and keeper of the peace  
Makes the laws of Verona

MERCUTIO

Funny, clever and a rebel  
The prince's nephew, but close friends with Romeo Montague

FRIAR LAURENCE

A local priest and long term friend of Romeo  
Generally trusted and respected by both houses

PARIS

Prince Escalus' cousin, rich and powerful  
He wants to marry Juliet Capulet

## THE PROLOGUE

### CHORUS

Two households, both alike in dignity,  
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,  
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,  
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.  
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes  
A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life,  
Whose misadventured piteous overthrows  
Do with their death bury their parents' strife.  
The fearful passage of their death-marked love,  
And the continuance of their parents' rage,  
Which, but their children's end, nought could remove,  
Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage;  
The which if you with patient ears attend,  
What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.      *Exit*

## THE BALCONY SCENE

ROMEO

But, soft, what light through yonder window breaks?  
It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.  
Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,  
Who is already sick and pale with grief,  
That thou her maid art far more fair than she:  
Be not her maid, since she is envious:  
Her vestal livery is but sick and green  
And none but fools do wear it, cast it off.  
It is my lady, O, it is my love! O, that she knew she were!  
She speaks yet she says nothing: what of that?  
Her eye discourses: I will answer it.  
I am too bold, 'tis not to me she speaks:  
Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,  
Having some business, do entreat her eyes  
To twinkle in their spheres till they return.  
What if her eyes were there, they in her head?  
The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars.  
See how she leans her cheek upon her hand!  
O, that I were a glove upon that hand,  
That I might touch that cheek!