

**William Shakespeare**

## **Year 8 Revision Guide**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class and teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

## The Exam

1. You will have **45 minutes** to complete your task. You should spend 10 minutes reading and annotating the extract and planning; 30 minutes writing your essay; and 5 minutes checking over your writing.
2. You will be given an extract from the play. It will be a scene you have studied from the beginning of the play.
3. You will need to analyse the specified scene in as much detail as you can.
4. Your question will be focused on one character from the play but you can embed as much thematic knowledge into your response as you can.
5. You should **practise planning and writing** an essay using the practise exam question in this booklet.

## Revision Techniques

If we look back to the origins of the word, revision means to see again and, if done well, it can help us feel more confident and well prepared. Below are some suggestions to help you:

- Mind maps of the play including: characters, themes, context
- Quizzes from the knowledge organisers- ask other students questions, get them to ask you and ask and parents/ carers to quiz you!
- Post it notes with key points from the Knowledge Organiser such as characters, themes and context
- Summary notes and essay plans for each theme- select ones you feel least confident with first!
- Key words that can act as triggers for other key areas- look at any overlaps and cross references. This will ensure you develop your ideas confidently.
- Use your exercise books and teacher feedback
- Make some revision cards for themes and characters. TIF: Colour code themes and characters so you can easily identify any overlaps.
- Look through the booklet and annotations of model answers and, most importantly, HOW they have answered the questions using the mark scheme.



## CONTEXT

### Context is:

- The things that influenced Shakespeare when he wrote the play.
- The thoughts, beliefs, customs and behaviour of Shakespeare's contemporary (of his time) audience.

### Social context:

- Patriarchal society
- Women and their role in society
- Social hierarchy: the way society was organised in the late 16<sup>th</sup> Century: privileged rich, servants and large households.
- Social status: important / powerful families and their behaviour towards other families

### Historical context:

- Shakespeare's life and success as a playwright
- the reigning monarch: Elizabeth I
- major historical events

### Cultural context:

- the ideas, customs and behaviour of people in the Shakespearean era
- includes religion, beliefs and superstitions and the Italian connection - Catholicism
- Shakespeare's theatre, the conventions and experience of being at The Globe.

***A good way to help you look for and understand the context of this play is to ask yourself:  
Does it connect to any of the following images that were popular and widely recognised in the  
16<sup>th</sup> Century?***

- ❖ Religion: God, faith, belief and the Church.
- ❖ Cosmic imagery: the sun, moon, stars and their connection with fate and destiny.
- ❖ Nautical imagery: all things relating to the sea which was considered an exciting but also dangerous place.
- ❖ Nature: birds, animals, the countryside, flowers and all things relating to the four seasons and the natural world.
- ❖ Light and dark imagery: things associated with the colour black = evil / the devil / wickedness / ugliness / witchcraft / hell / etc. Things associated with the colour white = virginity / purity / kindness / angels / heaven / beauty / gentleness / etc.



## Plot summary

PLOT	
Prologue	The Chorus gives an overview of the key events and themes in the play. We learn of a long-standing hatred between two families in the Italian city of Verona, and this feud affects the whole community.
Act 1	Capulet's servants, Sampson and Gregory, pick a fight with Montague's servants. Benvolio tries to stop the fight and encourages Tybalt to do the same, but he refuses and the violence escalates. The Prince arrives and threatens death for the next person to fight in public. Meanwhile, Romeo is broken-hearted over Rosaline so Benvolio encourages him to go to the Capulets' masked ball. Romeo falls in love with Juliet at first sight and they kiss. Only then do they learn of each other's identities.
Act 2	Romeo scales the wall of the Capulet orchard and watches Juliet on her balcony. She wishes he was not a Montague. He signals his presence, they talk and declare their love for one another, and make plans to marry. Friar Laurence warns Romeo not to rush but agrees to help because he thinks the marriage will end the feuding.
Act 3	Benvolio and Mercutio cross Tybalt, who is looking to duel Romeo because of his attendance at the Capulet ball. Newly-married Romeo refuses to get involved and Mercutio is drawn into the fight instead and is killed. Romeo, blinded by fury, then kills Tybalt. He hides in the Friar's cell as Escalus decides to banish him. He is distraught but he and Juliet spend the night together. Meanwhile, Capulet brings the wedding between Juliet and Paris forward and when told, Juliet refuses to obey and Capulet threatens to disown her.
Act 4	Juliet seeks the Friar's help. He gives her a sleeping potion which will give the impression she is dead, and says he will write to Romeo and let him know. Juliet returns home and makes peace with her parents before taking the potion. When the Nurse cannot wake her the next morning, they fear she is dead and take her to the family tomb.
Act 5	The Friar's letter does not reach Romeo so when Balthazar, his servant, reports of Juliet's death, Romeo buys poison. Arriving at the tomb, he fights and kills Paris. He says goodbye to Juliet, drinks the poison and dies. Juliet wakes, realises what Romeo has done and stabs herself with his dagger. Following the Friar's explanation of events to Escalus, the Capulets and Montagues decide to reconcile.



## Key Scenes

Page	Act and Scene	Description
4	Act 1: Prologue	An introduction to the key themes and ideas
5-6	Act 1 Scene 1	Introduction to the Montague and Capulet conflict
7	Act 1 Scene 1	The Prince's speech
8-9	Act 1 Scene 2	Paris and Capulet discuss a possible marriage to Juliet
10-11	Act 1 Scene 3	Juliet, Lady Capulet and Nurse discuss Juliet's marriage to Paris
12	Act 1 Scene 5	Romeo first sees Juliet at the Capulet ball
14-15	Act 2 Scene 2	The Balcony Scene
16-18	Act 2 Scene 4	Romeo and Tybalt – Toxic Masculinity
19-20	Act 2 Scene 5	Nurse and Juliet – a frank discussion of love
21	Act 2 Scene 6	Friar Laurence and Juliet
22-24	Act 3 Scene 1	The Mercutio and Tybalt fight scene – Masculinity and violence
25-26	Act 3 Scene 5	The arranged marriage
27-28	Act 4 Scene 3	Juliet as an autonomous female character
29-30	Act 4 Scene 5	The Capulets think Juliet is dead
31-32	Act 5 Scene 1	Romeo's reaction to Juliet's death
33-34	Act 5 Scene 3	The Great Tragedy



## THE CHARACTERS

**Romeo** is a member of the house of Montague. He falls in love with Juliet who is the daughter of his family's enemy, the house of Capulet. Romeo eventually takes his own life when he believes that Juliet is dead. However, her "death" was merely a ruse in order for her not to marry Paris and instead be with Romeo.

**Juliet** is a member of the house of Capulet. She falls in love with Romeo who is the son of her family's enemy, the house of Montague. She fakes her own death to be with Romeo, but Romeo never learns of the plan. She awakens to find Romeo dead beside her. She stabs herself with a knife and dies rather than live without Romeo.

**Mercutio** is kin to the Prince of Verona and a friend to Romeo. Mercutio is killed by Tybalt when Romeo tries to stop the two from fighting.

**Paris** is a young count and kin to the Prince. He wants to marry Juliet.

**Tybalt** is the nephew of Capulet and a cousin to Juliet. He is headstrong and despises the Montagues. He kills Mercutio, and Tybalt is later killed by Romeo who avenges Mercutio's death.

**Benvolio** is a friend to Romeo. He always tries to play the role of peacemaker by trying to stop the fighting between the Montagues and Capulets. He also tries to help Romeo while he is depressed over the loss of his former love, Rosaline.

**The Nurse** is Juliet's friend and nursemaid. She raised Juliet, as was usually the custom in wealthy families of the time period. The nurse also helps Juliet and Romeo meet with each other. She always does what she thinks is best for Juliet.

**Friar Lawrence** marries Romeo and Juliet with the hope that the marriage will stop the feuding between both of their houses. When Romeo kills Tybalt, he tries to help the two stay together by coming up with the plan for Juliet to fake her death. However, he does not get word to Romeo in time, and the two lovers end up committing suicide.

**Lord Montague** is the leader of the house of Montague and Romeo's father.

**Lady Montague** is the wife of Montague.

**Lord Capulet** is the leader of the house of Capulet and Juliet's father.

**Lady Capulet** is the wife of Capulet.

**Balthasar** is Romeo's servant. He tells Romeo that Juliet has died.

**Escalus, Prince of Verona** who tries to keep peace between the houses Montague and Capulet. He banishes Romeo from Verona for the death of Tybalt.

**Peter** is the nurse's servant.




**Sampson** is one of the servants to Capulet. He and Gregory start a fight at the beginning of the play with Abram, a Montague.

**Gregory** is one of the servants to Capulet. He and Gregory start a fight at the beginning of the play with Abram, a Montague.

**Abram** is one of the servants to Montague who gets into a fight with Sampson and Abram.



## Key Themes

Key Themes	
<b>Love</b> 	In the play, love is an overpowering force that supersedes all other values, emotions, and loyalties. Through their love, Romeo and Juliet conspire to go against the forces of their entire social world. Romeo returns to visit Juliet at points, even though he is well aware of the threat of death. At times, love is presented as fickle (Mercutio's speeches, Romeo + Rosaline).
<b>Conflict</b> 	A serious disagreement or argument. We see the conflict between the Montagues and Capulets which makes 'civil hands unclean'. This demonstrates how violence leads to the degradation of man and morality.
<b>Family</b> 	The play centres around two key families within Verona. It calls into question the expectations put upon family duty: marriage, loyalty and love. Our 'star crossed lovers' battle with their duty to their family which comes into conflict with their love for one another.
<b>Power</b> 	Throughout the play we see shifting power dynamics and influence. Parents over their children. Men over women. Religion through society. Society over the people. The titular characters spend the majority of the play subverting society's power dynamics in the pursuit of their love.
<b>Death and revenge</b> 	Death lurks throughout the play, acting as a motivator for revenge and instilling a sense of duty in those who feel they have been wronged. The use of suicide (which translates as self-murder) would have been seen as truly tragic as this would bar the victims from heaven according to Christianity.
<b>Fate and Destiny</b> 	In the first address to the audience, the Chorus states that Romeo and Juliet are 'star-cross'd' lovers, meaning that fate had intended for their paths to cross, and that fate controls their actions. A series of unfortunate accidents towards the end of the play thwart Friar Laurence's plan and eventually manifest in both Romeo and Juliet committing suicide, thus adding to the sense of fate.



The play is an **exploration** of the human **condition** of love and conflict – it explores man’s hubris (pride) and how this ultimately becomes man’s **fatal flaw**. **In Romeo and Juliet this is demonstrated through the conflict between the Montagues and Capulet and the love between Romeo and Juliet**



**Gender Roles** – Vulnerability of the male characters’ masculinity and their need to defend their honour. De Beauvoir's **Feminist reading of the play** explores toxic masculinity and the effect on the male and female characters in the play.



**Celestial Imagery** – “Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven, Having some business, do entreat her eyes To twinkle in their spheres”

– imagery of darkness/light and heaven or the stars – shows Romeo is transfixed by Juliet’s beauty and willing to reject the Capulet and Montague conflict to marry her.







## Quote Analysis Practice

1. Explode the following quotes about Romeo to practice your analysis skills.
2. Try to write a line of argument in the WHAT box, using the GOLDEN concepts to help you.
3. Write a sentence about Shakespeare’s intent in the WHY box.
4. Choose quotations for Juliet and practice a Juliet character response.

WHAT	HOW	WHY
<b>Romeo allows Shakespeare to explore the human condition of love. When he first sees Juliet at the Capulet ball he is in awe of her beauty.</b>	“It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night Like a rich jewel in an Ethiope's ear;”	
<b>Romeo rejects toxic masculine traits to allow Shakespeare to demonstrate ...</b>	“Did my heart love till now? forswear it, sight! For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night.”	
	“It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.”	
	It is my lady, O, it is my love! O, that she knew she were!	



WHAT	HOW	WHY
Shakespeare uses celestial imagery to heighten...	"Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven, Having some business, do entreat her eyes To twinkle in their spheres"	
	"The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars, As daylight doth a lamp"	
	"Her eyes in heaven Would through the airy region stream so bright That birds would sing and think it were not night"	

Write one of your ideas into a WHAT, HOW, WHY paragraph using the space below:



Use the following extracts to practice your extract analysis skills.

**ROMEO**

He jests at scars that never felt a wound.

*JULIET appears above at a window*

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,

As daylight doth a lamp; her eyes in heaven

Would through the airy region stream so bright

That birds would sing and think it were not night.

See, how she leans her cheek upon her hand!

O, that I were a glove upon that hand,

That I might touch that cheek!



### **CAPULET**

And too soon marr'd are those so early made.  
The earth hath swallow'd all my hopes but she,  
She is the hopeful lady of my earth:  
But woo her, gentle Paris, get her heart,  
My will to her consent is but a part;  
An she agree, within her scope of choice  
Lies my consent and fair according voice.  
This night I hold an old accustom'd feast,  
Whereto I have invited many a guest,  
Such as I love; and you, among the store,  
One more, most welcome, makes my number more.  
At my poor house look to behold this night  
Earth-treading stars that make dark heaven light:  
Such comfort as do lusty young men feel  
When well-apparell'd April on the heel  
Of limping winter treads, even such delight  
Among fresh female buds shall you this night  
Inherit at my house; hear all, all see,  
And like her most whose merit most shall be:  
Which on more view, of many mine being one  
May stand in number, though in reckoning none,  
Come, go with me.

### **JULIET**

'Tis but thy name that is my enemy;  
Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.  
What's Montague? it is nor hand, nor foot,  
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part  
Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!  
What's in a name? that which we call a rose  
By any other name would smell as sweet;  
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,  
Retain that dear perfection which he owes  
Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name,  
And for that name which is no part of thee  
Take all myself.



WHAT	HOW	WHY