

CRITICAL EVENTS
IN
ROMEO AND JULIET

This outline includes the major events of the play keyed to material covered in these modules. Please note that all act, scene, and line references are keyed to the Arden edition of Romeo and Juliet.

PROLOGUE

Timeless Issues

Conflicts between families
Conflicts within families

Responsibility/Blame/Guilt

Sets the scene and tells the story of the feud and Romeo and Juliet's love.

ACT I

Scene 1, Lines 1-101

Timeless Issues

Conflict between families

Barriers to Communication

Giving double messages

Servants of both houses quarrel. Benvolio tries to stop the fight. Tybalt fans the flames. Prince Escalus intercedes.

Scene 1, Lines 116-128

Timeless Issues

Isolation/loneliness

Benvolio describes Romeo's sadness and desire for solitude, and his own.

Scene 1, Lines 129-157

Timeless Issues

Isolation/loneliness

Conflict within families

Barriers to Communication

Being secretive

Montague expresses concern over Romeo's isolation, sadness, and refusal to confide in him. Benvolio offers to help.

Scene 1, Line 158 to end

Timeless Issues

Love and its complexities

Barriers to Communication

Giving quick advice

Benvolio asks Romeo to tell him his troubles. Benvolio suggests Romeo look at other women as a cure for his unhappiness in being rejected.

Scene 2, Lines 7-19

Timeless Issues

Conflicts within families

Capulet tells Paris that he must win Juliet's hand: "my will to her consent is but a part."

Scene 2, Line 84 to end

Timeless Issues

Becoming independent/
needing others

Benvolio suggests crashing the Capulet's party so Romeo can compare other women to Rosaline. Romeo agrees in order to prove him wrong.

ACT I (continued)
Scene 3, Line 6 to end

Timeless Issues

Conflict within families

Barriers to Communication

Not being heard/understood

Not listening

Lady Capulet comes to tell Juliet that Paris wishes to marry her. The Nurse interrupts. Juliet says little.

Scene 4, Line 11 to end

Timeless Issues

Isolation/loneliness

Being accepted/valued by peers

Barriers to Communication

Not being heard/understood

Teasing and ridicule

Romeo, Benvolio, Mercutio, and their friends prepare to go to the Capulets'. Romeo is anxious and sad. Mercutio tries to get him to join in the fun and teases him about being in love.

Scene 5, Lines 30-91

(In some editions, this is printed as a continuation of Scene 4)

Timeless Issues

Love and its complexities

Conflicts between families

Conflicts within families

Capulet and his cousin discuss the swift passage of time. Romeo sees Juliet. Tybalt and Capulet quarrel over Romeo's presence.

Scene 5, Lines 92-109

Timeless Issues

Developing trust in others;
in ourselves

Romeo and Juliet meet and speak (in perfect sonnet form).

Scene 5, Lines 110-140

Timeless Issues

Conflict between families

"Hopeless" Situations

Feeling helpless

Romeo discovers that Juliet is a Capulet. Juliet discovers that Romeo is a Montague.

Scene 5, Line 140 to end

Barriers to Communication

Resorting to deception

Juliet hides her feelings from the Nurse.

ACT II

Scene 1, Lines 3-42

Timeless Issues

Becoming independent/
needing others

Barriers to Communication

Teasing and ridicule

Mercutio and friends joke about Romeo's love sickness. Romeo hides from them.

ACT II (continued)

Scene 2, Line 1

(Note: in some editions this is in Act II, Scene 1)

Timeless Issues

Love and its complexities

Barriers to Communication

Not being understood

"He jests at scars that never felt a wound."

Scene 2, Lines 33-61

Timeless Issues

Being independent/
needing others

Conflicts between families

Impulsiveness

Developing trust in others

Juliet questions the meaning of family names and alliances in the feud. Both Romeo and Juliet swear allegiance to each other.

Scene 2, Lines 116-124

Timeless Issues

Impulsiveness

Juliet expresses her fears of their impetuosity: "It is too rash, too unadvis'd, too sudden."

Scene 2, Lines 143 to end

Timeless Issues

Conflict between families

Developing trust in others

Barriers to Communication

Resorting to deception

Romeo and Juliet exchange vows to be married and plan to meet the next day.

Scene 3, Lines 1-26

Timeless Issues

Learning to be FRIENDS FOR LIFE

Friar Laurence muses on man's dual potential - to create good out of ill and ill out of good and to act with "grace" or "willfulness."

Scene 3, Lines 53-60

Timeless Issues

Conflict between families

Developing trust in others;
in ourselves

Barriers to Communication

Being secretive

Romeo asks Friar Laurence to marry him to Juliet.

Scene 3, Lines 85-90

Timeless Issues

Impulsiveness

Friar Laurence agrees to marry Romeo and Juliet in order to restore harmony between the two families, but warns Romeo, "wisely and slow, they stumble that run fast."

ACT II (continued)
Scene 4, Lines 1-44

Timeless Issues

Becoming independent/
needing others

Learning to be FRIENDS FOR LIFE

Benvolio and Mercutio express concern for Romeo because of his love sickness and Tybalt's challenge.

Scene 4, Lines 45-99

Barriers to Communication

Not listening

Romeo and his friends joke around. Mercutio tells Romeo he prefers him in this lighthearted mood: "Now art thou sociable, now art thou Romeo."

Scene 4, Line 168 to end

Timeless Issues

Conflict within families

Barriers to Communication

Being Secretive

Romeo meets the Nurse and tells her that his marriage to Juliet has been arranged.

Scene 5, Lines 1-17

Timeless Issues

Conflicts within families
Generation gap

Juliet impatiently waits for the Nurse to return.

Scene 5, Line 18 to end

Barriers to Communication

Being secretive

The Nurse teases Juliet and demands attention, then tells Juliet that her marriage is arranged.

Scene 6, Line 1 to end

Timeless Issues

Impulsiveness

As Friar Laurence prepares to marry Romeo and Juliet, he advises Romeo to "love moderately."

ACT III

Scene 1, Lines 1-54

Timeless Issues

Conflict between families
Impulsiveness

Mercutio, spoiling for a fight tries to provoke Tybalt, as Tybalt looks for Romeo, whom he has challenged to a duel.

Scene 1, Lines 55-71

Timeless Issues

Conflicts between families
Love and its complexities

Barriers to Communication

Not being heard/understood

Romeo tries to defuse the violence by calmly refusing Tybalt's insult and by hinting at his motivation for loving Tybalt.

ACT III (continued)
Scene 1, Lines 72-110

Timeless Issues

Conflicts between families
Conflicts within ourselves
Being accepted/valued
by peers

"Hopeless" Situations

Feeling powerless/helpless
Panic reactions

Responsibility/Blame/Guilt

Who might have made a difference?

Mercutio sees Romeo's refusal to fight as a lack of masculinity and sense of honor, challenges Tybalt, and is fatally wounded as Romeo tries to stop the fighting.

Mercutio refuses Romeo's help and curses both families.

Scene 1, Lines 111-138

Timeless Issues

Conflict between families
Conflict within ourselves
Becoming independent/
needing others
Impulsiveness

"Hopeless" Situations

Tunnel vision
Panic reactions

Responsibility/Blame/Guilt

Who was responsible for the tragedy?
Who might have made a difference?

Romeo, overwhelmed by guilt and anger, feels he must avenge Tybalt's death to regain his own honor.

Scene 1, Line 143 to end

Barriers to Communication

"Hopeless" Situations

Responsibility/Blame/Guilt

The Capulets, Montagues, and Prince Escalus argue over who is to blame. The Prince decrees Romeo's banishment.

Scene 2, Lines 1-31

Timeless Issues

Impulsiveness

Juliet, unaware of events, awaits impatiently for Romeo's arrival.

Scene 2, Lines 32-126

Timeless Issues

Conflicts within ourselves
Isolation
Becoming independent/
needing others

"Hopeless" Situations

Panic reactions
Losing/gaining perspective
Tunnel vision
Dealing with loss

Responsibility/Blame/Guilt

The Nurse enters and incoherently tells Juliet of Tybalt's death and Romeo's banishment. Juliet struggles with conflicting loyalties, but refuses to blame Romeo and grieves for his banishment.

ACT III (continued)
Scene 2, Line 129 to end

"Hopeless" Situations

Negotiating for a better
outcome
Starting over

Juliet feels that only death awaits
her and retires to her room. The
Nurse goes to find Romeo.

Scene 3, Lines 1-80

"Hopeless" Situations

Dealing with loss
Panic reactions
Tunnel vision

Barriers to Communication

Not being heard/understood

Romeo is overwhelmed by grief at his
banishment. Friar Laurence tries to
make him see that there is a future
and that banishment is not the end
of the world.

Scene 3, Lines 81-101

"Hopeless" Situations

Feeling powerless/helpless
Tunnel vision
Panic reactions

Responsibility/Blame/Guilt

The Nurse enters and tells Romeo the
news of Juliet. Romeo expresses fear
that Juliet no longer loves him.

Scene 3, Lines 102-107

"Hopeless" Situations

Losing/gaining perspectives

Despairing over his guilt and shame,
Romeo tries to kill himself.

Scene 3, Lines 108-157

"Hopeless" Situations

Negotiating for a better
outcome

Friar Laurence responds angrily, then
advises Romeo to go comfort Juliet
and then go to Mantua while the
Friar seeks reconciliation for him.

Scene 4, Lines 1 to end

Timeless Issues

Conflicts within families
Impulsiveness

Capulet impulsively promises Paris
that he can marry Juliet and sends
Lady Capulet to tell her.

Scene 5, Lines 1 - 59

"Hopeless" Situations

Romeo and Juliet say their final
farewells. As daylight forces
Romeo's departure, each has a sense
of foreboding.

Scene 5, Lines 60-103

Barriers to Communication

Giving double messages

Lady Capulet, mistaking the cause
of Juliet's tears, speaks of revenge
on Romeo. Juliet's replies hide her
true feelings.

ACT III (continued)
Scene 5, Lines 104-125

Timeless Issues

Conflicts within families

Barriers to Communication

Not listening

"Hopeless" Situations

Feeling helpless

Lady Capulet tells Juliet of her impending marriage to Paris and Juliet refuses the marriage.

Scene 5, Lines 126-203

Timeless Issues

Impulsiveness

Barriers to Communication

Not listening

Not being heard/understood

Being secretive

Capulet is angered at Juliet's refusal and will not listen to her. The Nurse and Lady Capulet try to intercede, but Capulet insists that Juliet go through with the marriage or he will disown her. Juliet appeals to her mother who refuses to help.

Scene 5, Lines 204-240

Timeless Issues

Being accepted/valued by peers

Barriers to Communication

"Hopeless" Situations

Juliet seeks comfort and advice from the Nurse who advises that she marry Paris. Juliet feels betrayed and rejects the Nurse as a counselor.

Scene 5, Lines 241-242

"Hopeless" Situations

Negotiating for a better outcome

Timeless Issues

Isolation

"I'll to the Friar to know his remedy/If all else fail, myself have power to die."

ACT IV

Scene 1, Lines 44-125

"Hopeless" Situations

Panic reactions

Timeless Issues

Isolation

Barriers to Communication

Being secretive

Juliet tells Friar Laurence of her panic, despair, and resolve to kill herself rather than marry Paris. The Friar suggests the potion scheme.

Scene 2, Line 16 to end

Timeless Issues

Impulsiveness

Conflicts within families

Barriers to Communication

Resorting to deception

Not listening

Juliet tells her father she has changed her mind. Capulet moves the wedding up to Wednesday.

ACT IV (continued)

Scene 3, Lines 1-13

Barriers to Communication
Resorting to deception

Juliet prepares for her wedding,
refusing the help of her mother and
dismissing the Nurse.

Scene 3, Line 14 to end

Timeless Issues
Isolation

Juliet stifles an impulse to call her
Nurse back. After debating with
herself, she takes the potion.

Scene 5, Line 13 to end

"Hopeless" Situations
Dealing with loss

Juliet is discovered "dead" and her
parents and Paris mourn.

ACT V

Scene 1, Lines 1-11

"Hopeless" Situations

Romeo is cheered by his dream of
awakening from death in Juliet's
arms.

Scene 1, Lines 12-33

Timeless Issues
Impulsiveness

"Hopeless" Situations
Panic reactions
Tunnel vision

Barriers to Communication
Not heeding warning signs
of despair

Balthazar brings Romeo the news of
Juliet's death. Romeo responds
wildly, calling for horses to return
immediately to Verona. He asks for
paper and writes to his father. He
decides not to check with Friar
Laurence. Balthazar is alarmed, but
obeys him.

Scene 1, Line 34 to end

"Hopeless" Situations
Dealing with loss
Panic reactions
Tunnel vision
Feeling hopeless

Romeo decides to kill himself to be
with Juliet. He persuades the Apothe-
cary to sell him poison.

Scene 2, Line 1 to end

Barriers to Communication
Resorting to deceptions
Need to communicate clearly

Friar John, unaware of the impor-
tance of the letter to Romeo, tells
Friar Laurence that he has been
unable to deliver it.

Scene 3, Lines 1-21

"Hopeless" Situations
Dealing with loss

Paris arrives at the tomb to mourn
Juliet.

Act V

Scene 3, Lines 22-48

Learning to be FRIENDS FOR LIFE

Listening
Getting help

Romeo tells Balthazar to leave him.
Balthazar is afraid for Romeo, but obeys and leaves.

Scene 3, Lines 49-84

Timeless Issues

Conflicts between families

Barriers to Communication

Not listening
Not being understood

Paris and Romeo confront each other in the tomb. Paris believes Romeo has come in vengeance. Romeo cannot persuade him of the truth. They fight and Romeo kills Paris, asking his forgiveness.

Scene 3, Lines 84-120

Timeless Issues

Impulsiveness

"Hopeless" Situations

Feeling powerless
Dealing with loss
Tunnel vision

Romeo, seeing the beauty of the "dead" Juliet, considers the meaning of "lightning before death." Failing to realize she is still alive, he takes poison and dies.

Scene 3, Lines 121-160

Barriers to Communication

"Hopeless" Situations

Panic reactions

Friar Laurence arrives a minute later and sees Romeo is dead. Juliet awakes. Friar Laurence tries to persuade her to leave. He is frightened by the Watch and leaves the tomb.

Scene 3, Lines 161-169

Timeless Issues

Isolation

"Hopeless" Situations

Feeling powerless
Panic reactions

Shocked and alone with the body of Romeo, Juliet kills herself.

Scene 3, Lines 221-261

All Modules

Creating other endings

In response to Prince Escalus' demand that the truth be told, Friar Laurence confesses what he knows.

Scene 3, Line 285 to end

"Hopeless" Situations

Dealing with loss
Starting over

Responsibility/Blame/Guilt

Prince Escalus reads Romeo's note to his father and feels that all are responsible. Montague and Capulet are reconciled. All leave to mourn the dead and to begin again.