

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Romeo and Juliet, Day 1



Key Paragraph

Sometime during the dance, Romeo sees Juliet and Juliet sees Romeo – love at first sight! They don't know – until it's too late – that he is the only son and she is the only daughter of the feuding families. [p. 77]

Some people just cannot get along. No matter what anyone does, no matter who else is there, certain people cannot seem to work together. They quickly irritate each other. Sometimes it is because the people have a past history together, or friends or relatives who do not get along, or a rivalry. Two people may be on opposite sides of an issue, or belief; they may feel so strongly about it they cannot get along with anyone on the other side.

Think of a time when you had to deal with someone you just could not get along with. Someone you had to work, or study, or cooperate with. This might be another student, or a teacher at school, someone in your family, at work, or in your neighborhood. Describe what made it difficult to get along with this person. Was it the person's personality, or their attitude, or the way they treated you, or other people? Was it the result of something that happened in a specific incident, or in many incidents? Do you associate a particular feeling, or emotion with this person?

Write an argumentative paragraph explaining why it is difficult to get along with this person, using concrete examples. You do not have to use the person's real name. You can also write about two people you know who don't get along, where you are an outside observer.

1. How do you resolve conflict?
2. Describe a time when you made amends with someone you didn't like.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
***Romeo and Juliet*, Day 2**



Key Paragraph

Juliet is distraught when she hears that her brand-new husband has killed her cousin. [There is no chance of reconciling the families now.] She carries on and on... [p. 79]

At the end of *Romeo and Juliet*, you can easily imagine many people thinking to themselves that this isn't what anyone wanted to happen. Pretend you are a friend of Romeo or Juliet from the future.

In a letter, write an argumentative paragraph to convince Romeo or Juliet not to go through with their plan. Provide three examples to support your claim.

1. Describe a situation where everything you planned turned out wrong.
2. How did you respond to the unexpected events?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
***Romeo and Juliet*, Day 3**



Key Paragraph

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-cross'd lovers take their life;
 Whose misadventur'd piteous overthrows
 Doth with their death bury their parents' strife.
 The fearful passage of their death-mark'd love,
 And the continuance of their parents' rage,
 Which but their children's end naught could remove

The play begins with a discouraging prologue that suggests that Romeo and Juliet are star-crossed lovers. The results of the ancient grudge that sets their families against each other must somehow end in their harm. It sounds like this is set up and cannot be changed.

Write an argumentative paragraph supporting or disproving that the young romance will break the family feud.

1. Describe a time when you felt, or found yourself in a similar situation as Romeo and Juliet.
2. Have you ever felt that something was about to happen to you and you could do nothing to stop it, even though you did not like it?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Romeo and Juliet, Day 4



Key Paragraph

Nay, as they dare. I will bite my thumb at them; which is disgrace to them if they bear it.

[Enter [Abraham](#) and [Balthasar](#).]

Abraham.

Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

Sampson.

I do bite my thumb, sir.

Abraham.

Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

Sampson.

Is the law of our side if I say ay?

Gregory.

No.

Sampson.

No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir; but I bite my thumb, sir.

Gregory.

Do you quarrel, sir?

Abraham.

Quarrel, sir! no, sir.

Write a paragraph describing how the Zeffirelli film presented the quarrel and street fight in the opening scene. How are the two families, and the feud between them, portrayed in the opening of the film? How is the Prince introduced? What kind of leader does the Prince appear to be in the film? How do you know? What visual and musical and other clues does the film use? How does the film make those leadership qualities in the Prince clear?

Describe the quarrel that led to the street fight in the first scene. What started the quarrel? Who made the decision to start the quarrel? What do you think their motivation was? Which characters did the most and least to stop the quarrel? Why do you think the quarrel got so out of control?

Pretend you are a judge. After the quarrel you need to decide who is responsible for the damage caused. Decide who is responsible for the quarrel. Write an argumentative paragraph that proves that they are responsible. Support your claim with three examples from the reading.

1. Give an example of how quarrels like this have escalated from your own life.
2. How would you deescalate the situation?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Romeo and Juliet, Day 5



Key Paragraph

[Enter [Benvolio](#).]

Benvolio.

Part, fools! put up your swords; you know not what you do.

[Beats down their swords.]

[Enter [Tybalt](#).]

Tybalt.

What, art thou drawn among these heartless hinds?

Turn thee Benvolio, look upon thy death.

Benvolio.

I do but keep the peace: put up thy sword,

Or manage it to part these men with me.

Tybalt.

What, drawn, and talk of peace! I hate the word

As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee:

Have at thee, coward!

Having watched Act I Scene 1 in both film versions, as well in your reading of the text, how do they differ in the their presentation of the scene?

Write an argumentative paragraph detailing what you consider to be the most significant differences and similarities in the two film versions of this scene. Support your position with examples.

Or, Look at the roles of Benvolio and Tybalt in this scene. How do you feel they each contributed to the quarrel? Are you more like Benvolio or more like Tybalt when you are in a conflict? Write an argumentative paragraph that proves that you are more like Tybalt or Benvolio. Support your claim with three examples.

1. Would you recommend the movie or the book? Why?
2. Name a book you like more than the movie.
3. Name a movie you like more than the book.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Romeo and Juliet, Day 6



Key Paragraph

Tybalt.

Boy, this shall not excuse the injuries
 That thou hast done me; therefore turn and draw.

Romeo.

I do protest I never injur'd thee;
 But love thee better than thou canst devise
 Till thou shalt know the reason of my love:
 And so good Capulet,--which name I tender
 As dearly as mine own,--be satisfied.

Mercutio.

O calm, dishonourable, vile submission!
 Alla stoccata carries it away. [Draws.]
 Tybalt, you rat-catcher, will you walk?

Benvolio and Mercutio are on streets walking, discussing who is more likely to get into arguments. As soon as Tybalt arrives, Mercutio challenges him. Tybalt is looking for Romeo, and when Romeo arrives, challenges him. Romeo attempts to avoid the conflict, but Mercutio does not think he should give in. After thinking about this scene, write a persuasive letter to either Mercutio, Benvolio, Tybalt, or Romeo.

Write an argumentative paragraph explaining what you think this character should have done in this scene. Include three reasons to support your answer. In the next segments we will see that their actual choices had disastrous effects.

1. Who do you count on for advice?
2. Who is a responsible role model in your life? What makes them responsible?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Romeo and Juliet, Day 7



Key Paragraph

Mercutio.

Ay, ay, a scratch, a scratch; marry, 'tis enough.--
 Where is my page?--go, villain, fetch a surgeon.

[Exit Page.]

Romeo.

Courage, man; the hurt cannot be much.

Mercutio.

No, 'tis not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church door;
 but 'tis enough, 'twill serve: ask for me to-morrow, and you
 shall find me a grave man. I am peppered, I warrant, for this
 world.--A plague o' both your houses!--Zounds, a dog, a rat, a
 mouse, a cat, to scratch a man to death! a braggart, a rogue, a
 villain, that fights by the book of arithmetic!--Why the devil
 came you between us? I was hurt under your arm.

Romeo.

I thought all for the best.

Mercutio.

Help me into some house, Benvolio,
 Or I shall faint.--A plague o' both your houses!
 They have made worms' meat of me:
 I have it, and soundly too.--Your houses

When Mercutio dies as a result of the conflict with Tybault, while being held back by Romeo, he ends by declaring "a plague o' both your houses!" What do you think he meant by this? In what ways were both families responsible for his death?

Write an argumentative paragraph explaining how each of the families was responsible for Mercutio's death. Include three reasons to support your answer. In what specific ways do you think each of the two families contributed to Mercutio's death?

1. Describe a time when you were indirectly responsible for a positive or negative outcome.
2. Give an example of how you take responsibility for your actions.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Romeo and Juliet, Day 8



Key Paragraph

Prince

Immediately we do exile him hence:
 I have an interest in your hate's proceeding,
 My blood for your rude brawls doth lie a-bleeding;
 But I'll amerce you with so strong a fine
 That you shall all repent the loss of mine:
 I will be deaf to pleading and excuses;
 Nor tears nor prayers shall purchase out abuses,
 Therefore use none: let Romeo hence in haste,
 Else, when he is found, that hour is his last.
 Bear hence this body, and attend our will:
 Mercy but murders, pardoning those that kill.

The Prince is called upon to resolve the situation at the ends of Act 3, Scene 1 where Tybault and Mercutio are dead, and Romeo is on the loose. The Prince has threatened death for anyone further disturbing the streets of Verona, and this disturbance actually includes a death. In the end the Prince banishes Romeo instead of putting him in prison or putting him to death.

Write an argumentative paragraph explaining the Prince's decision. In your paragraph be sure to give evidence from the text and film versions.

When answering the question above, consider the following:

- Based on this decision, what kind of leader is the Prince?
- What else could he have done?
- How is the Prince pictured as a leader differently in the two movie versions?

1. Describe a time when you made a difficult decision.
2. How do you think about your decisions? Do you make a pro con list? Do you talk to a friend or mentor?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Romeo and Juliet, Day 9



Key Paragraph

Prince.

A glooming peace this morning with it brings;
The sun for sorrow will not show his head.
Go hence, to have more talk of these sad things;
Some shall be pardon'd, and some punished;
For never was a story of more woe
Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.

With the death of their children, and a reminder from the Prince as to how this has happened, the Capulets and the Montagues have finally come together. The Montagues are even going to build a tribute to Juliet, a statue. They have proclaimed that their feud, and their enmity is at an end. Do you believe them? Do you think it is over?

Write an argumentative paragraph defending whether you believe the Montagues and Capulets have learned their lesson? If so, why? If not, Why not? Include three reasons to support your answer. What about their experience leads you to answer one way or another? You may wish to answer utilizing the text, both movie versions, or contrast the future outcome between movie versions.

1. Describe a time when an unfortunate event created a positive change.
2. What lessons can you learn from tragedies?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
***Romeo and Juliet*, Day 10**



Final Product

Writing an Argumentative Essay on 3 Readings of *Romeo and Juliet*

Materials:

The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare
 New Folger Library edition, Washington Square Press;
 Franco Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet*, 1968 [138] Paramount;
 Baz Luhrmann's *William Shakespeare's Romeo & Juliet*, 1996 [120]
 20th Century Fox
Romeo & Juliet Media Study Chart; Comparing and Contrasting
 3 Readings of the Play [completed]

Step One: Using your filled out chart, choose 3 contiguous cells to analyze.

1. Using a completely filled out chart, choose any 3 cells that are next to each other in any column or row. You could choose the Prince, or the Prince in one scene, the Montagues, Capulets, Brawl, Prologue, etc from one column. Or choose 3 adjoining cells in one row: like the Capulets, Montagues and Prince in the Zeffirelli film or the 3 different scenes where the Prince appears in the Luhrmann film, or the setting, Prologue and Brawl in the text.
2. Think about how the information in these cells is alike and different. You will need to prove how this sources are similar and different.

	Setting	Prologue	Street Brawl	Montague	Capulet	Prince	Prince in I, 1	Prince in III, 1	Prince in V,3
New Folger Library text William Shakespeare <i>Romeo & Juliet</i>									
Franco Zeffirelli's Romeo & Juliet 1968 Paramount									
Baz Luhrmann's <i>William Shakespeare's Romeo & Juliet</i> 1996 20 th Century Fox									

Step Two: Form a thesis that explains your thoughts on the information.

1. What do you think about the information in these 3 cells – argue how are they alike and different?
2. Express your thoughts in one clear, precise sentence – this is your thesis.

Step Three: Write a paragraph explaining each cell and linking to the thesis.

1. Write a clear paragraph explaining the information in each cell.
2. Start with a strong topic sentence and connect your writing to the thesis.
3. Revise the 3 body paragraphs [which are paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 of the essay] so that they argue how the information in these 3 cells is alike and different.

Step Four: Write a *Who Cares?* introduction to the essay.

1. Write an introductory paragraph that ends with your thesis and answers the question: *Who Cares?* in regards to this thesis. This will be paragraph 1 of the essay..
2. This is done by giving the reader enough information to understand the thesis, and a reason to care about it. It also means explaining the source of the information contained in each of the cells.

Step Five: Write a *So What?* conclusion to the essay.

1. Write a concluding paragraph that starts with your thesis and answers the question: *So What?* in regards to this thesis. This is paragraph 5 of your essay.
2. This is done by giving the reader a summary of the information in your 3 body paragraphs, and a reason or reasons why it is important. What are the implications? It also means explaining the source of the information contained in each of the cells.
3. This might be stronger if you can argue one major way all the cells are alike and different.

Step Six: Put it together and revise, revise, revise; then edit and publish.

1. Pull all the paragraphs together and revise using the *Revision Prompts*.
2. Consider tinting the entire essay with a single idea, point of view, image or emotion.
3. After revising, revising, and revising, edit the essay and put it in its final form to publish.

Variations for the Essay

1. If you have been writing paragraphs as you go, pull them from your writing folder and sort them into the essay. Then start the revision process.
1. What did you like and dislike about this story?
2. Would you recommend this story to a friend? Why or why not?