

Literary Analysis: *Romeo and Juliet*

Choose one of the following prompts (or, if you have your own idea, run it by me and if it is an acceptable path, you'll be able to write about your idea).

- How does Shakespeare use contrast in his play? Be mindful that this topic likely will require you to find “two halves” for each example.
- How does Shakespeare construct the idea that Romeo and Juliet are not in control of their lives? Think about what events or people, outside of the lovers themselves, are really deciding the course of action that has ensued.
- How does Shakespeare construct the idea that Romeo and Juliet are fated to be together, that destiny, fate, the universe, etc., is really the one calling the shots, that they are bonded beyond what they even realize?
- Shakespearean plays always have 5 acts and *Romeo and Juliet* is no exception. How does his play follow along the typical plot progression of exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution - at least as far as we have read (which is the first three acts)?
- Shakespeare was a bit of a heretic and broke from the historical tradition of creating a play that takes place all in one place, on one day, with one central plot. How has his use of various settings been constructed to affect the plot or the play's deeper meaning? (Think about the use of public versus private, of who is where and when, etc.)
- Shakespeare's plays contain some unorthodox ideas. What are some ways that he bravely presented some situations/strategies/etc. that contradict “normal” or convention thinking?

Section 1: Summarize the play up to the point that we have read. Include all the necessary information and important plot details.

Section 2: Present a clear claim that presents an argument for one of the topics listed above. Then, provide evidence and an example from the text for each of your three supporting reasons and analyze how that example supports the claim that your essay presents. End with a brief conclusion that does more than restate the obvious. Use thought-provoking ideas that get a reader thinking.

When citing a play, the format for in-text citations is as follows: For line 145 in Act III, Scene 5 = (3.5.145) or (III.5.145).

