

***Romeo and Juliet* Essay Topics**

Topic #1

Shakespeare uses foreshadowing in *Romeo and Juliet* to warn the reader that danger or a perilous situation is near. As the play opens in the city of Verona, and the audience settles down to hear the tale of the star-crossed lovers, it is evident that things are not going to turn out well for the pair. The story of *Romeo and Juliet* progresses and the foreshadowing becomes heavier. The witty word play that Shakespeare so often employs serves as a double entendre for the impending events, such as Mercutio's admittance that the next day will find him a "grave man". In what scenes of the play is the foreshadowing the strongest, and what is the event being foreshadowed? What does Shakespeare hope to accomplish with the foreshadowing, and what use does foreshadowing deliver to the audience? **For this essay on *Romeo and Juliet*, consider the overall importance and role of foreshadowing using the questions listed here as a guide.**

Topic #2

The powerful concept of fate and destiny has intrigued many writers, including William Shakespeare. Although *Romeo and Juliet* scheme up many ways to be together, it is almost certain that they have no hand in their fate; they are merely being pushed along by fate. As Juliet prepares to leave everything she loves, Romeo is caught up in the cosmic warfare between his family and the Capulet's, fighting for his life against her cousins and is eventually banished by the Prince. Using these examples, as well as Shakespeare's own textual hints, **describe how destiny controls the end result of *Romeo and Juliet's* ill-fated union.** Did they ever have a chance together? Why or why not?

Topic #3

The theme of religion appears quite frequently throughout the text of *Romeo and Juliet*. In what ways does religion in *Romeo and Juliet* allude to the feelings that the lovers have for each other? Romeo compares Juliet to a saint as he kisses her hand, saying that he is unworthy to do so, and at several moments, the duo declare their love as divined by God. What is the connection between their affair and the heavens, and do they perhaps overestimate God's favor? If God really approves of their love, why is it that the one religious figure in the play causes their deaths? Also, in what way does the language used between *Romeo and Juliet* add to the consecration of their relationship?

Topic #4

Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* is, at its core, a story about the undeniable power of love. Before Romeo and Juliet meet, both of them are involved with another. Romeo is infatuated with Rosaline, who does not return his feelings, and Juliet is betrothed to Paris by her father, but shows no true feelings towards him. However, once Romeo meets Juliet, their prospective romances fall apart as their feelings for one another eclipse their respective feelings towards Rosaline and Paris. In what instances is their love for one another different from their feelings towards Rosaline and Paris? **How do their interactions vary, and in what ways do the people around them notice these changes?**

Topic #5

The role of the family in *Romeo and Juliet* is perhaps the most important, as the feuding families end up being the ultimate downfall for Romeo and Juliet. Were it not for the battle between the Capulets and Montagues, the ending of *Romeo and Juliet* would have turned out far differently. The feuding causes Romeo's banishment, the death of Tybalt, and the ultimate suicide of the lovers. In what ways are Romeo and Juliet driven to destruction by the wars of their families? **Do the lovers underestimate the hatred between their fathers and overestimate the power of their love to overcome the family feud?**