

AQA English Literature GCSE

Romeo and Juliet: Question Bank *Themes*



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Please note: *these questions have been written and formatted in the same style as AQA exam questions. You can use them to help with extract questions and timed essay practice. These questions have NOT been taken from past papers and they have NOT been made by AQA.*



1. Violence and Conflict

Read the following extract from Act 3 Scene 1 of *Romeo and Juliet* and then answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play, Romeo, Mercutio and Benvolio have encountered the Capulet's in a public area.

MERCUTIO

Good king of cats, nothing but one of your nine lives; that I mean to make bold withal, and as you shall use me hereafter, drybeat the rest of the eight. Will you pluck your sword out of his pitcher by the ears? make haste, lest mine be about your ears ere it be out.

TYBALT

I am for you.

Drawing

ROMEO

Gentle Mercutio, put thy rapier up.

MERCUTIO

Come, sir, your passado.

They fight

ROMEO

Draw, Benvolio; beat down their weapons. Gentlemen, for shame, forbear this outrage!

Tybalt, Mercutio, the prince expressly hath

Forbidden bandying in Verona streets:

Hold, Tybalt! good Mercutio!

TYBALT under ROMEO's arm stabs MERCUTIO, and flies with his followers

MERCUTIO

I am hurt. A plague o' both your houses! I am sped. Is he gone, and hath nothing?

01) Explore how Shakespeare presents family honour in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Write about:

- how Shakespeare presents violence and conflict at this moment in the play.
- how Shakespeare presents violence and conflict in the play as a whole.

[30 marks]

AO4 [4 marks]



2. Internal Conflict

Read the following extract from Act 2 Scene 2 of *Romeo and Juliet* and then answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play, Juliet has just called out for Romeo, not knowing that he was beneath her in hiding.

JULIET

O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?
Deny thy father and refuse thy name;
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

ROMEO

[Aside] Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

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.

01) Explore how far Shakespeare presents internal conflict in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Write about:

- how Shakespeare presents internal conflict at this moment in the play.
- how Shakespeare presents internal conflict in the play as a whole.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]



3. Isolation

Read the following extract from Act 4 Scene 3 of *Romeo and Juliet* and then answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play, Juliet has just agreed to marry Paris the following day.

JULIET

Ay, those attires are best: but, gentle nurse, I pray thee, leave me to my self to-night,
For I have need of many orisons
To move the heavens to smile upon my state,
Which, well thou know'st, is cross, and full of sin.
Enter LADY CAPULET

LADY CAPULET

What, are you busy, ho? need you my help?

JULIET

No, madam; we have cull'd such necessaries
As are behoveful for our state to-morrow:
So please you, let me now be left alone,
And let the nurse this night sit up with you;
For, I am sure, you have your hands full all,
In this so sudden business.

LADY CAPULET

Good night:
Get thee to bed, and rest; for thou hast need.

Exeunt LADY CAPULET and Nurse

01) Explore how Shakespeare presents isolation in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Write about:

- how Shakespeare presents isolation at this moment in the play.
- how Shakespeare presents isolation in the play as a whole.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]



4. Love

Read the following speech from Act 4 Scene 3 of Romeo and Juliet and then answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play, Juliet has just asked her mother and the Nurse to leave her alone.

JULIET

Farewell! God knows when we shall meet again.

I have a faint cold fear thrills through my veins,

That almost freezes up the heat of life:

I'll call them back again to comfort me:

Nurse! What should she do here?

My dismal scene I needs must act alone.

Come, vial.

What if this mixture do not work at all?

Shall I be married then to-morrow morning?

No, no: this shall forbid it: lie thou there.

Laying down her dagger

What if it be a poison, which the friar

Subtly hath minister'd to have me dead,

Lest in this marriage he should be dishonour'd,

Because he married me before to Romeo?

I fear it is: and yet, methinks, it should not,

For he hath still been tried a holy man.

How if, when I am laid into the tomb,

I wake before the time that Romeo

Come to redeem me? there's a fearful point!

Shall I not, then, be stifled in the vault,

To whose foul mouth no healthsome air breathes in,

And there die strangled ere my Romeo comes?

Or, if I live, is it not very like,

The horrible conceit of death and night,

Together with the terror of the place,

As in a vault, an ancient receptacle,

Where, for these many hundred years, the bones

Of all my buried ancestors are packed:

Where bloody Tybalt, yet but green in earth,

Lies festering in his shroud; where, as they say,

At some hours in the night spirits resort;

Alack, alack, is it not like that I,

So early waking, what with loathsome smells,



And shrieks like mandrakes' torn out of the earth,
That living mortals, hearing them, run mad:
O, if I wake, shall I not be distraught,
Environed with all these hideous fears?
And madly play with my forefather's joints?
And pluck the mangled Tybalt from his shroud?
And, in this rage, with some great kinsman's bone,
As with a club, dash out my desperate brains?
O, look! methinks I see my cousin's ghost
Seeking out Romeo, that did spit his body
Upon a rapier's point: stay, Tybalt, stay!
Romeo, I come! this do I drink to thee.
She falls upon her bed, within the curtains

01) Explore how far Shakespeare presents love as destructive in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Write about:

- How Shakespeare presents love at this moment in the play.
- How Shakespeare presents love in the play as a whole.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]



5. Death

Read the following extract from Act 3 Scene 1 of Romeo and Juliet and then answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play, Tybalt has just killed Mercutio.

BENVOLIO

O Romeo, Romeo, brave Mercutio's dead! That gallant spirit hath aspired the clouds,
Which too untimely here did scorn the earth.

ROMEO

This day's black fate on more days doth depend; This but begins the woe, others must
end.

BENVOLIO

Here comes the furious Tybalt back again.

ROMEO

Alive, in triumph! and Mercutio slain! Away to heaven, respective lenity, And fire-eyed
fury be my conduct now!

Re-enter TYBALT

Now, Tybalt, take the villain back again, That late thou gavest me; for Mercutio's soul Is
but a little way above our heads, Staying for thine to keep him company: Either thou, or I,
or both, must go with him.

TYBALT

Thou, wretched boy, that didst consort him here, Shalt with him hence.

ROMEO

This shall determine that.

They fight; TYBALT falls

BENVOLIO

Romeo, away, be gone! The citizens are up, and Tybalt slain. Stand not amazed: the
prince will doom thee death, If thou art taken: hence, be gone, away!

ROMEO

O, I am fortune's fool!





01) Explore how far Shakespeare presents death as inevitable in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Write about:

- how Shakespeare presents death at this moment in the play.
- how Shakespeare presents death in the play as a whole.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]



6. Gender roles

Read the following extract from Act 3 Scene 5 of *Romeo and Juliet* and then answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play, Juliet has just told her father that she refuses to marry Paris.

CAPULET

How now, how now, chop-logic!
What is this? 'Proud,' and 'I thank you,' and 'I thank you not;'
And yet 'not proud,' mistress minion, you,
Thank me no thankings, nor, proud me no prouds,
But fettle your fine joints 'gainst Thursday next,
To go with Paris to Saint Peter's Church,
Or I will drag thee on a hurdle thither.
Out, you green-sickness carrion! out, you baggage! You tallow-face!

LADY CAPULET

Fie, fie! what, are you mad?

JULIET

Good father, I beseech you on my knees,
Hear me with patience but to speak a word.

CAPULET

Hang thee, young baggage! disobedient wretch!
I tell thee what: get thee to church o' Thursday,
Or never after look me in the face:
Speak not, reply not, do not answer me;
My fingers itch. Wife, we scarce thought us blest
That God had lent us but this only child;
But now I see this one is one too much,
And that we have a curse in having her:
Out on her, hilding!

01) Explore how Shakespeare presents gender roles in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Write about:

- How gender roles are presented at this moment in the play.
- How gender roles are presented in the play as a whole.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]



7. Courtly love

Read the following extract from Act 1 Scene 4 of *Romeo and Juliet* and then answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play, Romeo speaks of Rosaline who had forsaken him.

MERCUTIO

You are a lover; borrow Cupid's wings,
And soar with them above a common bound.

ROMEO

I am too sore enpierced with his shaft
To soar with his light feathers, and so bound,
I cannot bound a pitch above dull woe:
Under love's heavy burden do I sink.

MERCUTIO

And, to sink in it, should you burden love;
Too great oppression for a tender thing.

ROMEO

Is love a tender thing? it is too rough,
Too rude, too boisterous, and it pricks like thorn.

MERCUTIO

If love be rough with you, be rough with love;
Prick love for pricking, and you beat love down.
Give me a case to put my visage in:
A visor for a visor! what care
I What curious eye doth quote deformities?
Here are the beetle brows shall blush for me.

01) Explore how Shakespeare uses Mercutio to explore courtly love in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Write about:

- How courtly love is presented at this moment in the play.
- How courtly love is presented in the play as a whole.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]



8. Religion

Read the following extract from Act 1 Scene 5 of Romeo and Juliet and then answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play, Romeo has just found Juliet at the ball.

ROMEO

[To JULIET] If I profane with my unworhiest hand This holy shrine, the gentle fine is this: My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.

JULIET

Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much, Which mannerly devotion shows in this; For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch, And palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss.

ROMEO

Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too?

JULIET

Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer.

ROMEO

O, then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do; They pray, grant thou, lest faith turn to despair.

JULIET

Saints do not move, though grant for prayers' sake.

ROMEO

Then move not, while my prayer's effect I take. Thus from my lips, by yours, my sin is purged.

JULIET

Then have my lips the sin that they have took.

ROMEO

Sin from thy lips? O trespass sweetly urged! Give me my sin again.

JULIET

You kiss by the book.





01) Explore how Shakespeare explores characters' thoughts on religion in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Write about:

- How courtly religion is presented at this moment in the play.
- How courtly religion is presented in the play as a whole.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]



9. Hatred

Read the following extract from Act 3 Scene 5 of Romeo and Juliet and then answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play, Romeo has just been banished for killing Tybalt.

LADY CAPULET

Well, girl, thou weep'st not so much for his death,
As that the villain lives which slaughter'd him.

JULIET

What villain madam?

LADY CAPULET

That same villain, Romeo.

JULIET

[Aside] Villain and he be many miles asunder.--
God Pardon him! I do, with all my heart;
And yet no man like he doth grieve my heart.

LADY CAPULET

That is, because the traitor murderer lives.

JULIET

Ay, madam, from the reach of these my hands:
Would none but I might venge my cousin's death!

LADY CAPULET

We will have vengeance for it, fear thou not:
Then weep no more.
I'll send to one in Mantua,
Where that same banish'd runagate doth live,
Shall give him such an unaccustom'd dram,
That he shall soon keep
Tybalt company: And then, I hope, thou wilt be satisfied.

JULIET

Indeed, I never shall be satisfied
With Romeo, till I behold him--dead-- Is my poor heart for a kinsman vex'd.
Madam, if you could find out but a man





To bear a poison, I would temper it;
That Romeo should, upon receipt thereof,
Soon sleep in quiet.
O, how my heart abhors
To hear him named, and cannot come to him.
To wreak the love I bore my cousin
Upon his body that slaughter'd him!

01) Explore how Shakespeare explores hatred in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Write about:

- How hatred is presented at this moment in the play.
- How hatred is presented in the play as a whole.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]



10. Public and Private Lives

Read the following extract from Act 2 Scene 6 of *Romeo and Juliet* and then answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play, the Friar had just married Romeo and Juliet.

FRIAR LAURENCE

Romeo shall thank thee, daughter, for us both.

JULIET

As much to him, else is his thanks too much.

ROMEO

Ah, Juliet, if the measure of thy joy
Be heap'd like mine and that thy skill be more
To blazon it, then sweeten with thy breath
This neighbour air, and let rich music's tongue
Unfold the imagined happiness that both
Receive in either by this dear encounter.

JULIET

Conceit, more rich in matter than in words,
Braggs of his substance, not of ornament:
They are but beggars that can count their worth;
But my true love is grown to such excess I cannot sum up sum of half my wealth.

FRIAR LAURENCE

Come, come with me, and we will make short work;
For, by your leaves, you shall not stay alone
Till holy church incorporate two in one.
Exeunt

01) Explore how Shakespeare explores public versus private lives in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Write about:

- How public and private lives are presented at this moment in the play.
- How public and private lives are presented in the play as a whole.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]



11. Family Honour

Read the following extract from Act 2 Scene 2 of Romeo and Juliet and then answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play, Juliet has just called out for Romeo, not knowing he was beneath her in hiding.

JULIET

O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?
Deny thy father and refuse thy name;
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

ROMEO

[Aside] Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

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.

ROMEO

I take thee at thy word:
Call me but love, and I'll be new baptized;
Henceforth I never will be Romeo.





01) Explore how Shakespeare explores family honour in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Write about:

- How courtly family honour is presented at this moment in the play.
- How courtly family honour is presented in the play as a whole.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

