

Shakespeare – Romeo and Juliet

Topic

Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*

Aims

- Learners will practise listening skills
- Learners will practise speaking skills through a group discussion
- Learner will use analytical/critical thinking skills
- Learners will develop writing skills

Age group

Teens

Level

B1–B2

Time

45 minutes or three shorter sections

Materials

- Video from LearnEnglish Teens <http://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/uk-now/literature-uk/shakespeare-romeo-and-juliet>
- Romeo and Juliet student worksheet

Introduction

In this lesson, learners will watch a video about Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. They will discuss what they already know about the play, check their understanding of the video, evaluate different characters' responsibility for the tragedy in the play, and take part in a group discussion to reach an agreement about who is ultimately responsible. There are also suggestions for alternative/additional follow-up activities.

Procedure

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| 1. Introduction to the | • Introduce the topic by writing the words 'Romeo and Juliet' on the board. Ask students what they know about the play and brainstorm ideas, writing words on the board around 'Romeo and Juliet'. When they have finished, write the word 'relationship' on the board. |
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topic (10–15 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students if they know what the relationship between Romeo and Juliet was. Elicit the fact that they were ‘in love’ or that they were ‘in a relationship’ or ‘boyfriend and girlfriend’. • On the board write the following statements: Having things in common Being from the same town/area Being the same age Getting on with each other’s family Being able to trust each other • Ask students to look at the statements and rank them from which is the most to which is the least important thing to have in a relationship. Then ask them to discuss their answers with a partner, justifying their answers. • Explain that the students are going to watch a short video about the play <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>. Ask: ‘Does anyone know what problem they had in their relationship?’
2. Preparation activity (5 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students to do the pre-watching task (vocabulary matching) from the LearnEnglish Teens website. It can be found here and is the first task under ‘Preparation’. http://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/uk-now/literature-uk/shakespeare-romeo-and-juliet. This can be done by projecting the page, or by printing off the worksheet here: http://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/sites/teens/files/romeo_and_juliet_-_exercises_1.pdf. • Alternative: Divide up the words and definitions and put the definitions on one colour card and the words on a different colour card. Ask students to find their partner. Check the answers when students have matched themselves, and check pronunciation.
3. Watch the video – check understanding (10–15 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students watch the video. • Ask students to do the ‘Check your understanding’ activity from the LearnEnglish Teens website: http://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/sites/teens/files/romeo_and_juliet_-_exercises_1.pdf, putting the events from the story in order. This can be done in class on a computer, or by printing out the worksheet. Alternative: Cut up the comprehension task onto pieces of paper (one per group) and ask students to order them, working in groups. • If necessary, watch the video again so that students can check their answer. • Ask students to do the multiple choice comprehension activity. Again, this can be done in class on a projector, or by printing off the worksheet. Alternative: Ask the questions to the whole class (like a quiz), and students work in teams, writing down the correct option.
4. Follow-up: discussion task (10–15 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain that <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> is a tragedy. Tell students that they must decide who, if anyone, is responsible for the deaths of Romeo and Juliet. • Put students into groups of four. Give them the worksheet. Tell them to look at the different characters and make notes about why they might be responsible for the deaths of Romeo and Juliet. Encourage students to analyse the characters’ actions and their consequences. Look at the example in the table on the worksheet to help them. • Give students 10 minutes to make notes and to reach a conclusion as to who they think is responsible. They should choose one of the characters/groups of characters, or they can decide that no one is to blame, but they must justify their answers. • Here are some suggestions. if your students need help: <i>The Montagues – Romeo’s parents were at war with the Capulets, so Romeo couldn’t</i>

	<p><i>be with Juliet.</i></p> <p>Romeo's friends – <i>They decided to go to the Capulet's party, which is where Romeo met Juliet. It was also dangerous.</i></p> <p>Romeo's best friend (his name is Mercutio in the play) – <i>Had a fight with Tybalt and was killed. This was when Romeo decided to kill Tybalt and then he had to leave Verona.</i></p> <p>The Capulets – <i>Juliet's parents were at war with the Montagues. They forced Juliet to marry Paris, even though she didn't want to. Tybalt kills Romeo's best friend, and when Romeo reacts by killing him, he has to leave Verona.</i></p> <p>Friar Lawrence – <i>He marries Romeo and Juliet, even though he knows their families are not happy about it. He gives Juliet the drugs. His message doesn't reach Romeo. He doesn't tell their parents what is happening.</i></p> <p>Romeo – <i>He goes to the Capulet's party, when he knows he shouldn't. He kills Juliet's cousin Tybalt, which means he has to leave Verona. He immediately kills himself when he sees Juliet is dead – he could have waited.</i></p> <p>Juliet – <i>She lies to her parents about being married to Romeo. She takes the drugs, even though it might be dangerous. Paris dies because of her.</i></p> <p>Anyone else? – <i>The messenger who doesn't get the message to Romeo saying that Juliet is not really dead. Accept any other sensible suggestions here!</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once students have reached an agreement in groups, regroup them and ask them to discuss their answers with their new group. An easy way to do this is to give each person in the group a number (e.g. 1, 2, 3, 4), then put all the 1s together, all the 2s together, etc. When students are in their new groups, they can compare who they think is responsible and, again, give reasons. • You could review language for discussion here if you think your students need it (agreeing/disagreeing, giving and asking for opinions). Write some useful phrases on the board. • Set a time limit of 10 minutes, and ask students to reach a conclusion. • Ask for feedback from all groups. There are no right or wrong answers, but students should justify their opinions.
5. Optional follow-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you would like to do more work with your learners on Shakespeare, go here: http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/Teens%20Shakespeare%20Extension%20Activities.pdf for a series of additional/alternative follow-up activities.

Contributed by

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