

Warmer – Activating background knowledge

Work in pairs or small groups. Look at the quotations and answer the following questions.

- Good night, good night! Parting is such sweet sorrow,
That I shall say good night till it be morrow.
- But, soft! What light through yonder window breaks? It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.
- Romeo, Romeo, Wherefore art thou Romeo?

1 Which Shakespeare play do the quotes come from?

2 What is the play about? What are some of the key events?

3 Can you 'translate' the quotes into modern-day English?

Task 1 – Gist reading

Read the newspaper article quickly and answer the question.

What makes this production of Romeo and Juliet very different?

21st-century Shakespeare?

Oh that I were a smartphone in @julietcap16's hand, that I might touch that cheek!
@julietcap16 spends a lot of time online, tweeting. At least, she does whenever she's not at school, where she isn't allowed to use her phone. Today is her birthday and there's a big party planned. She's hoping she might meet a boy who's a bit more exciting than the boys her parents want her to date. Does any of this remind you of anything?

Such Tweet Sorrow is the sad story of Romeo and Juliet, as told in 4,000 tweets by the Royal Shakespeare Company. Shakespeare's 1597 tragedy of teenagers falling in love and getting into fights is already one of the most frequently adapted of his works. It has already been produced as an opera, a ballet, a musical and even an ice show. This time, Juliet is the daughter of a successful property developer and a very modern-day teenager, obsessed with social networking.

Such Tweet Sorrow is being improvised by six actors from the Royal Shakespeare Company. For the next five weeks the actors will tweet to each other and the audience, following the story of Romeo and Juliet.

Michael Boyd, artistic director of the RSC, said: 'Our ambition is always to connect people with Shakespeare and bring actors and audiences closer together.'

Wherefore art thou, @Romeo? Tweets from the production.

@Romeo, @Julietcap16 you're brighter than any torch 😊

@Julietcap16, Can't believe it! I find a boy I really like and he's a #montague. Wherefore art thou @Romeo?

@LaurenceFriar, In my town the big problem is families feuding. Would love 2 talk 2 others about how to deal with that problem.

Task 2 – Scanning

Read the text again. Work in pairs to decide what each of the following numbers refers to.

16

4000

1597

6

5

Task 3 – Comprehension and discussion

Discuss the following questions in pairs.

1. How is the character of Juliet described in the article? Is it similar to the play? Why/why not?
2. How does the article describe the story of *Romeo and Juliet*? Do you agree?
3. What do you think of the tweets from the show? Do you find them interesting to read? Why/why not?
4. Do you think the project will make Shakespeare more relevant for the 21st century? Why/why not?

Task 4 – Noticing vocabulary

A Work in pairs. Find words in the text to match the following definitions.

- 1 a serious play that has a sad ending
- 2 changed from a book to a film, or a play to a ballet, etc.
- 3 all the plays, paintings, etc. produced by someone
- 4 done without preparation
- 5 all the actors in a play or film

B Can you find any other words related to the topic of theatre or performance?

C Now work in pairs to answer the following questions.

- 1 What words and phrases connected with technology can you find in the text?
- 2 What examples can you find in the text of how to write a tweet?

Task 5 – Writing tweets

1 Choose a character from the play and give them a twitter name (e.g. @Romeo). Then write a tweet from the character. Remember that you can't use more than 140 characters, so it is OK to use abbreviations.

2 Stick your tweet on the wall. Then read some other tweets and choose which ones you would like to reply to. Write your tweets under the original tweets.

3 Read some of the tweet conversations aloud to the class.