Dear Educators,

*Romeo and Juliet* is the play I've worked with the most since joining Seattle Shakespeare Company. And why not? It’s arguably the “greatest love story ever told,” and one of Shakespeare’s most famous plays. It has been adapted numerous times, is referred to in tons of songs and stories, and is well-known across the globe. I’ve seen our touring production of this play multiple times and forbidden love by two teenagers is a universal theme that, despite hearing the story over and over each year, doesn’t seem to get old.

Every spring, I spend most of my days teaching *Romeo and Juliet* workshops to 9th grade students across the greater Puget Sound region. As I work with students — most of whom are the age of the title characters — I am constantly amazed at how relevant and fresh the play feels every time. This 400 year-old play still captures the naïveté and urgency of teenage love, their clashes with parental expectations, and the dire miscommunications that can happen when relationships are new and complicated. These students usually start off thinking Shakespeare is old and boring, but, as they dive into the world of the play, they see the parallels that exist in their own lives.

It’s for this reason that we have a big focus on *Romeo and Juliet* in our Education Department. We tour *Romeo and Juliet* yearly in the spring to schools all across Washington State. We teach *Romeo and Juliet* in 9th grade classrooms across multiple school districts in the area. And this year, we’re producing a main stage show and a statewide touring production of *Romeo and Juliet*! We hope you enjoy this version of *Romeo and Juliet*.

Best,
Michelle Burce
Education Director

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The play opens with a brawl between the two feuding families of Verona, the Capulets and the Montagues. The Prince breaks up the fight and threatens death for anyone “who disturbs our streets”.

A great celebration is being planned by the Capulets to which everyone in the town is invited, except the Montagues. The primary reason for the party is to introduce their young daughter, Juliet, to an influential young lord in the town, Paris, in the hopes that they will marry. Romeo, Benvolio, and Mercutio, three Montagues, decide to attend the party in disguise so that Romeo will get his mind off of Rosaline, an unattainable girl who he is in love with.

From the moment Romeo sees Juliet from across the room, he is enchanted by her and forgets all about Rosaline. He talks with her and she becomes as entranced by him as he is by her, and Juliet forgets all about Paris. Juliet’s cousin Tybalt notices that Romeo and his kinsmen are trespassing at the party, but Lord Capulet forbids him from starting a fight. Romeo sneaks back into the garden, where he hears Juliet talking to herself about the danger of loving an enemy. He appears and speaks to Juliet. They exchange vows of love and plan to marry in secret the next day.

Romeo begs Friar Lawrence to marry him and Juliet. Friar Lawrence agrees, hoping that the marriage might end the feud between the families and bring peace to the town. The two lovers are married and go their separate ways, planning to meet again in the secret of the night. That afternoon Tybalt attempts to pick a fight with Romeo. Romeo refuses, knowing that he has married Tybalt’s cousin Juliet. Mercutio takes up his sword to return Tybalt’s insult. As Romeo tries to break up the fight, he restrains Mercutio. Tybalt takes advantage of this and stabs Mercutio, who is killed. Romeo, enraged at the death of his friend, kills Tybalt and is banished by the Prince.

The Nurse tells Juliet that Romeo has been sentenced to banishment for killing Tybalt. Juliet is sad that her kinsman has been slain, but sadder that Romeo is banished. Romeo and Juliet have only one night together after they are married before Romeo must leave the city. Their parting causes both of them much sadness and they both would rather kill themselves than be apart.

Unaware that Juliet has already married Romeo, the Capulets plan for her to marry Paris. Juliet goes to Friar Lawrence for help. He gives her a sleeping potion that will make her appear dead for two days and tells her to take it the night before her wedding to Paris. The Friar says he will send a message to Romeo letting him know of the plan so that he can find her in the tomb and they will be reunited when she awakes.

However, Romeo hears about Juliet’s death not through the Friar’s messenger, but from his servant. In grief, Romeo returns to the city determined to be with Juliet in her death. He goes to the apothecary and buys poison, then goes to Juliet’s tomb. There, he finds Paris who challenges him to a duel. Romeo kills Paris, then takes the poison and kills himself. Friar Lawrence arrives at the scene to find Romeo already dead. As Juliet awakens, he tries to pull her away from Romeo, but she refuses. Using Romeo’s dagger, she takes her own life. Father Lawrence arrives at the scene too late to prevent the tragedy.

The two families find Romeo and Juliet dead together in the tomb and realize that they should put their feud behind them.

**CHARACTERS**

**THE MONTAGUES**

**ROMEO**, son of Lord and Lady Montague

**MERCUTIO**, related to Prince Escalus and a close friend to Romeo

**BENVOLIO**, Romeo’s cousin and friend

**ABRAM**, a servant of the Montagues

**THE CAPULETS**

**JULIET**, daughter of Lord and Lady Capulet

**LADY CAPULET**, the head of the house of Capulet, she is Juliet’s mother and enemy of the Montagues

**NURSE**, Juliet’s nurse

**PETER**, servant to the nurse and Juliet

**TYBALT**, Juliet’s cousin

**SAMPSON**, servant of the Capulets

**GREGORY**, servant of the Capulets

**OTHERS**

**FRIAR LAWRENCE**, a Franciscan friar and close friend to Romeo

**PARIS**, a relative of Prince Escalus and Lady Capulet’s choice of husband for Juliet

**PRINCE ESCALUS**, the prince of Verona, he is related to Mercutio and Paris
Romeo and Juliet was influenced by a number of stories of doomed lovers, dating back to ancient times. Shakespeare clearly drew from Ovid’s telling of Pyramus and Thisbe: the parents of both lovers’ hate each other and Pyramus kills himself, believing Thisbe is dead. The Ephesiaca of Xenophon of Ephesus has other elements that Shakespeare used, such as the sleeping potion. Scholars also believe Shakespeare may have drawn for Dante’s Divine Comedy where Dante refers to the two warring families, Matechhi and Cappelletti. He traces the source of the conflict between the two who are allied to different political factions. However, the overall plot of the play was based on two sources. The first was an Italian tale, The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet, translated in 1562 by Arthur Brooke and later retold by William Painter in 1567. Shakespeare borrowed heavily from both versions, but is believed to have created a number of supporting characters, such as Mercutio and Paris. It is believed that the play was written between 1591 and 1597. The play is a clear indication of Shakespeare’s growth as a dramatist as the play starts out comedic and switches to tragedy. The characters of the Nurse and Mercutio also demonstrate a growing skill to expand minor characters and use subplots to enrich the main story. His use of language was also improving; different character expressed themselves in different poetic forms, which would often change as the character develop. Romeo often uses the form of a sonnet which improves as the play progresses while Mercutio and the Nurse often speak in prose. Shakespeare also altered how the characters interacted. For example, in the original Italian story, the balcony scene only involves Juliet declaring her love to Romeo alone. This was a mirror in Shakespeare’s time of how women were expected to behave when it came to love; modest and careful. By placing Romeo in the scene, Shakespeare throws this social more out the window and immediately has the characters talking about their relationship with each other.
Audiences in Shakespeare’s Day
In Shakespeare’s day, London theaters like the Globe could accommodate up to 3,000 people watching popular plays. With theaters running most afternoons, that could mean as many as 10,000–20,000 people could see a play every week! Who were these people? Shakespeare’s audience were the very rich, the upper middle class, and the lower middle class. All of these people would seek entertainment just as we do today and could afford to spend money going to the theater. Royalty might attend the theater in a private gallery or summon the players to perform at their court, as Elizabeth I and James I did.

To get into the Globe Theatre cost a penny. In Elizabethan England, one penny would buy a loaf of bread, a pint of ale, or a ticket to the theater. Those who paid just one penny were known as Groundlings, because they stood on the ground in what was known as “the yard,” which is the area closest to the stage. For another penny, they could sit on a bench just behind the yard. For a penny more, they could sit more comfortably on a cushion. To get into the upper galleries, which were covered and had seats, cost would start at 6 pence.

Audiences in Shakespeare’s time behaved much differently than what we think of today when we go to the theater. In general, audiences were much more rowdy and directly involved in the show than modern audiences. There was no electricity for special theater lights, so both the stage and the audience were in broad daylight, allowing them to see each other and interact. Shakespeare’s soliloquies would be spoken directly to the audience, who could potentially answer back! The audience would move around, buy food and ale in the theater, clap for the hero, boo the villain, and cheer for the special effects. The audience might dance at the end of a comedy along with the characters onstage. If an audience didn't like a play, they might even throw furniture and damage the theater!

Shakespeare used several tricks to gain and hold his audience’s attention. You may notice that his plays rarely begin with the main characters onstage; usually a minor character begins the first scene. This was because at an Elizabethan theater the lights could not dim to indicate the beginning of a play, instead it would begin when characters walked onstage and started to speak, usually over the audience’s noise, as they settled in to watch. The first scene would usually set the mood of the play, but the opening dialogue would not be vital because it might not be easily heard.

Another trick that Shakespeare used was to break up the main action of the play with clowning. In most of his plays, there is comic relief in the form of “clown” or “fool” characters sprinkled throughout the show, making jokes or clowning around onstage. This ensured that even during a 3-hour history play, there would be something that appealed to everyone.

Being an Audience Today
Audiences today can learn from Elizabethan audiences about how to watch a Shakespeare play. Here are some tips:

• Remind yourself that the first scene mostly sets the mood of the play and rarely has vital dialogue, so if you miss some of the words at the beginning, that is okay. It can take a couple minutes to adjust to Shakespeare’s unusual language. It’s a little bit like listening to a friend with a heavy accent speak; at first it can be difficult to understand, but after a minute or two it’s easy. Our actors are professionally trained to make sure that you understand the words, so you’ll catch on quickly!

• Enjoy the play and feel free to express your enjoyment. Laugh at the clowns, clap for the heroes, gasp at important revelations, and applaud for the actors at the end to thank them for their work. This will keep you engaged in the show and help let the actors know that the audience is paying attention and enjoying the play.

• Remember that in a play, unlike in a movie, the actors can see and hear you too! Even with more sophisticated theater lighting that keeps the stage lit and the audience dim, the actors are often very close to the first few rows, and they can definitely hear the audience. That means please don’t talk to your neighbor during the show, don’t allow your phone to make noise, and don’t text (it lights up your face!) — these can all be very distracting.

• And finally, remember that the theater is for everyone. In Shakespeare’s day it was a very affordable form of entertainment that appealed to everyone. Theater is not meant to be only for the upper class, only for college graduates, or only for older people. Shakespeare’s plays can speak to you whether you have seen lots of plays or no plays at all, if you’re rich, poor, young, old, or if you enjoy cheap jokes, amazing speeches, or action sequences. Shakespeare wrote his plays to be for everyone and that still shows through today.
MODERN SHAKESPEARE ADAPTATIONS

ROMEO + JULIET
A 1996 modernization of the story, directed by Baz Luhrmann, starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Claire Danes, and set in Verona Beach, California. Shakespeare's language is retained throughout the movie, but all of the settings and costumes are updated, and the swords and daggers are replaced with guns.

GNOMEO & JULIET
A 2011 animated adaptation of Romeo and Juliet in which Mrs. Montague and Mr. Capulet are neighbors who hate each other, and all of their garden gnomes come alive and also hate each other. The title gnomes are voiced by Emily Blunt and James McAvoy. McAvoy also stars in Bollywood Queen, a British Indian adaptation of Romeo and Juliet set in London.

WARM BODIES
A 2012 book and 2013 film adaptation of Romeo and Juliet, Warm Bodies re-casts the Montagues as zombies and the Capulets as humans fighting to stay alive. A zombie named “R” falls in love with a human named “Julie,” and they struggle to find a way to be together.

ROMEO AND JULIET
A 1968 direct movie adaptation of Romeo and Juliet, in which the title lovers are played by a 17 year old Leonard Whiting, and 15 year old Olivia Hussey. Director Zeffirelli wanted unknown teenage actors to play these parts, and adapted the script to play to the strengths and hide their weaknesses by trimming long speeches and focusing on reaction shots.

RAM-LEELA
A 2013 Bollywood adaptation of Romeo and Juliet takes place in the fictional gun manufacturing town of Ranjaar, where two rival clans have carried a feud for 500 years. Ram and Leela meet during the festival of Holi and test whether love can escape the trap of hatred.

WEST SIDE STORY
A musical written by Arthur Laurents, Leonard Bernstein, and Stephen Sondheim which takes the story of Romeo and Juliet and puts it in New York’s Upper West Side in the 1950s. The conflict between the two families became between two gangs, the Jets (a Caucasian gang which served as the Montagues) and the Sharks (a Latino gang which represents the Capulets). Shakespeare’s play serves as the outline to tell the story of the doomed lovers, but with some twists. An immense hit in 1957, it went on to an equally successful 1961 film adaptation and is still popular today.

SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE
A 1998 movie imagining Shakespeare’s romance with an actress while writing Romeo and Juliet. While the story is fictitious, the movie draws themes from Romeo and Juliet, and packs in many of the characters, lines, and plot devices common in Shakespeare’s plays.
PLACING THE PRODUCTION: ROMEO AND JULIET

Director Vanessa Miller is adding new worlds and back stories to this production of Romeo and Juliet, setting the story we all know within an otherworldly game which forces modern people to explore new versions of themselves and learn how to love. The only reason to live is to live for love — a lesson characters need to learn that before the game ends.

The production will take place in three distinct worlds: present day, the world of Romeo and Juliet, and a game orchestrated by Fate and Time.

**Present Day:** The play will begin in 2016. Actors will enter the stage as regular people who each have issues they will work through within the world of the play. They arrive as unwilling participants in modern dress, who transition into their Romeo and Juliet counterparts and become “players” in the game.

**Romeo and Juliet:** The set will have a sci-fi aesthetic, with stainless steel and plexiglass structures that function as various furniture and set pieces. The set floor will be tiled like a game board. The modern people introduced at the beginning of the production are stuck in the world of the play, and will remain onstage for the duration of the story.

**The Game:** This world is ruled over by “Fate and Time,” an added character, who manipulates the action of the play, assisted by “Dream and Death.” They have set up a game — the play of Romeo and Juliet — that the present day characters must play to the end before they can leave. These two will move other actors around the stage and step in as minor characters who permanently alter the sequence of events. For example, they will play Peter, the servant who accidentally invites Romeo to the Capulet ball, and Friar John, who is held up on his way to Mantua and fails to deliver Friar Lawrence’s important message to Romeo. Other minor characters will also act as “workers” in the game, helping to move characters and set up the scenes as they occur.

The audience will be in “alley” or “tennis court” style seating, with the play taking place down a long runway between two banks of audience. This will invoke a sense of watching a game or sport. There will also be mirrors across the top of the stage and hexagonal spaces painted onto the floor, bringing even more focus down onto the game board stage.

As you watch the play, keep an eye out for the transitions between scenes, as the present day characters reveal more about themselves and how they intersect with their Romeo and Juliet persona. Also watch for ways that our game masters (Fate and Time, and Dream and Death) push the story along and manipulate the characters.
PLACING THE PRODUCTION: ROMEO AND JULIET

Romeo and Juliet

Mike Dooly/Lord Capulet

Anastasia Higham/Juliet

Romeo and Juliet
PRE-SHOW REFLECTION QUESTIONS: ROMEO AND JULIET

These questions will help students to think about some of the big ideas behind the play before watching it.

Family rivalry is a major theme in Romeo and Juliet. Can you think of a time when you were in a rivalry with another person or group of people? What about a rivalry between schools? Between cities? Between countries? What causes these rivalries?

Have you ever kept a big secret from your friends? Your family? Why did you keep that secret? How did it make you feel to leave your friends or family in the dark about something?

POST-SHOW REFLECTION QUESTIONS: ROMEO AND JULIET

The following questions are to help lead a discussion with your class after seeing the play. For all of these, there are many possible answers and student responses will vary. There is no wrong answer, as long as students use examples from the play to back up their opinions. Some possible responses are provided.

Images of light and darkness run throughout the play. Think about all of the references to night, dawn, sun, moon, torches and lightning in the play. Why do you think Shakespeare included this motif in the play? How does it add to the story?

• Light and darkness could represent openness and secrecy, hiding things from other people in darkness, and “shedding light” on the truth.
• Light and darkness could also be a metaphor for the good and bad things that happen. Darkness could be Mercutio’s death, Romeo’s banishment, and the ongoing feud.
• Light represents the good, young, idealistic characters like Romeo and Juliet. They talk about light, and believe that the light will never fade.

Who is/are the “villain(s)” of the story? Who is responsible for all of the tragic events?

• The villain is Tybalt. He incites Romeo and Mercutio to violence. Even after death, he still keeps Romeo and Juliet apart.
• The villain are Lord and Lady Capulet. If they weren’t so intent on getting Juliet married off — at the threat of disowning her — she and Romeo might have ended up all right. Their feud with the Montagues also kept the lovers apart.
• Even though he’s not really a villain, Romeo is responsible for the tragic events. If he hadn’t been in such a hurry and so hot-headed, they probably could have figured out a way to live happily ever after.
• He’s not quite a villain, but the Friar is responsible for the ultimate tragedy and deaths. He married Romeo and Juliet in secret, then gave Juliet a sleeping drug and failed to let Romeo know what happened!

If Romeo and Juliet had lived, do you think they would have been a happy couple? Why or why not?

• Yes! They were both young, kind individuals. They would have tried very hard to make each other happy for a long time.
• Yes. Their families were both very wealthy, so if their marriage had forged a peace they would have lived very comfortably.
• Probably not. Their families hated each other, so they would probably face a lot of challenges around their secret marriage when it was finally revealed. Juliet might have even been disowned for marrying Tybalt’s killer.
• Definitely not! Romeo and Juliet don’t even know each other! They rushed right into marriage, and that’s a recipe for disaster.

The Nurse and Mercutio are both bad news in the lives of Romeo and Juliet. How do each of them push the story toward its final tragic ending?

• The Nurse helps Juliet get together with Romeo, but in the final test she refuses to help Juliet get out of her engagement to Paris, and won’t stand up to Juliet’s parents.
• Mercutio also gives Romeo such a hard time about love, that he does not want to talk to his friends about Juliet. Mercutio fights Tybalt when Romeo would not, and further widens the divide between the two families with his posturing, insults, and ultimate death.

In this play, Juliet is the only daughter of the Capulet family, and her parents expect her to marry a wealthy, powerful man. Think of a time in your life when your parents set out expectations for you, either explicit or implied. Was the expectation reasonable for them to ask? Was it something you were willing to do?

Images of light and darkness run throughout the play. Think about all of the references to night, dawn, sun, moon, torches and lightning in the play. Why do you think Shakespeare included this motif in the play? How does it add to the story?

• Light and darkness could represent openness and secrecy, hiding things from other people in darkness, and “shedding light” on the truth.
• Light and darkness could also be a metaphor for the good and bad things that happen. Darkness could be Mercutio’s death, Romeo’s banishment, and the ongoing feud.
• Light represents the good, young, idealistic characters like Romeo and Juliet. They talk about light, and believe that the light will never fade.
CROSS THE LINE — QUOTES

OBJECTIVES:
• To introduce Shakespeare into daily lives of students
• Provide a low-stakes physical warm-up

TIME: 5 minutes

STUDENT SKILLS:
• Following directions
• Identifying quotes and phrases

TO PREPARE
Ask your students to dress for action and be prepared to sit on the floor. Allow time before and after the activity for moving furniture.

INSTRUCTIONS
• Push all the desks to the periphery of the room. Have students create two rows facing one another, with about 5 to 7 feet between them. Let the students know that this is a game to be played without talking.
• Tell the students that you will be saying a series of quotes/lines that start with the phrase “Cross the line if you have ever heard . . .” If they have heard the phrase, they should silently cross the line, without making comments about other student’s choices. It is up to the individual to decide if they want to cross the line.
• Feel free to pick and choose from the list, or to reorder the list to suit the class.
• Variation: This can be changed by instructing them how to move (slink, hop, run, glide, etc).
• Ask for observations. Tie what they have seen to their perceptions of what they know about Shakespeare.

Cross the line if you have ever heard:
To be or not to be — Hamlet
Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo? — Romeo and Juliet
Out! Out! Damned spot! — Macbeth
Fair is foul and foul is fair — Macbeth
There is something rotten in the state of Denmark — Hamlet
Friends, Romans, Countrymen, lend me your ears — Julius Caesar
Double, double, toil and trouble, fire burn, and cauldron bubble — Macbeth
A dish fit for the gods — Julius Caesar
A horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse — Richard III
A plague on both your houses — Romeo and Juliet
A rose by any other name would smell as sweet — Romeo and Juliet
Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio — Hamlet
All that glisters is not gold — The Merchant of Venice
All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players — As You Like It
All’s well that ends well — All’s Well That Ends Well
And thereby hangs a tale — As You Like It
As dead as a doornail — King Henry VI
As good luck would have it — The Merry Wives of Windsor
Beware the ides of March — Julius Caesar
But screw your courage to the sticking-place — Macbeth
But, for my own part, it was Greek to me — Julius Caesar
Discretion is the better part of valour — Henry IV, Part One
Eaten out of house and home — Henry V Part 2
Et tu, Brute — Julius Caesar
Eye of newt and toe of frog, wool of bat and tongue of dog — Macbeth
Fie, foh, and fum, I smell the blood of a British man — King Lear
Flesh and blood — Hamlet
Frailty, thy name is woman — Hamlet
For ever and a day — As You Like It
Foul play — Pericles
His beard was as white as snow — Hamlet
I have not slept one wink — Cymbeline
I will wear my heart upon my sleeve — Othello
In a pickle — The Tempest
Love is blind — The Merchant of Venice
Much Ado about Nothing — Much Ado about Nothing
Neither a borrower nor a lender be — Hamlet
Now is the winter of our discontent — Richard III
Off with his head — Richard III
Pound of flesh — The Merchant of Venice
Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day? — Sonnet
Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon ’em — Twelfth Night
The course of true love never did run smooth — A Midsummer Night’s Dream
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune — Hamlet
To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there’s the rub — Hamlet
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers — Henry V
What a piece of work is man — Hamlet
COMPLIMENTS AND INSULTS

OBJECTIVES:
• Help students approach Shakespeare’s language as fun and understandable
• Provide a low-stakes physical warm-up

TIME: 5–10 minutes

STUDENT SKILLS:
• Determine the meaning of words and phrases
• Present to the class, speaking clearly

TO PREPARE
Ask your students to dress for action and be prepared to sit on the floor. Allow time before and after the activity for moving desks and chairs.

INSTRUCTIONS
• Have students pair up and look through the list of insults and compliments. They should work together to decide what they might mean — are they insulting or complimentary? — and choose their favorite way to address each other. Then go around the room and hear everyone’s lines. Students should stand up to address each other and use their biggest, broadest acting voices!
• Help students reason out what each of the insults or compliments mean. For example, what might it mean if someone was called “unmuzzled”? What about “eye-offending”?

COLUMN A
divine
sweet
fruitful
gentle
sugared
flowering
precious
gallant
delicate
celestial
unmuzzled
greasy
saucy
bawdy
vacant
peevish
impish

COLUMN B
honey-tongued
well-wishing
fair-faced
best-tempered
tender-hearted
smooth-faced
thunder-darting
sweet-suggesting
young-eyed
angel-haired
eye-offending
dim-witted
onion-eyed
rug-headed
empty-hearted
mad-brained

COLUMN C
toast
nose-herb
wafer-cake
pigeon-egg
valentine
true-penny
song
dogfish
maypole
maypole
egg-shell
buzzard
ruffian

Opening phrases:
“You are my…”
“Halt! Thou…”
“Never did I see a more…”
“What, ho…?”

Adapted from activities from Folger Shakespeare
DIARY / BLOG

INSTRUCTIONS
Have each student choose an important moment in the play: Romeo and Juliet’s first meeting, their marriage, Tybalt’s death, Romeo’s banishment, Juliet planning her “death”, Romeo hearing about Juliet’s death, etc. Then have each student write a diary or blog entry as either Romeo or Juliet. What happened that day? How do they feel about it? What do they need to hide from their friends and parents?

Use the space provided (or separate sheet if you need more room) to write the diary/blog entry:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Lesson expansion: Have students “comment” on each others’ blog entries. They can pretend to be Romeo and Juliet’s parents, their friends, their scorned loves (Rosaline or Paris), or they can be anonymous.

OBJECTIVES:
• Identify themes
• Relate stories to students’ own lives
• TIME: 10 minutes

STUDENT SKILLS:
• Listening
• Choice-making
• Observation

OBJECTIVES:
• Use context from the story to expand a character’s inner life
• TIME: 15 minutes

STUDENT SKILLS:
• Inferring information from reading
• Creative writing

CROSS THE LINE: THEMES

TO PREPARE
Ask students to dress for action and be prepared to sit on the floor. Allow time before and after the activity for moving furniture.

INSTRUCTIONS
• Push all the desks to the periphery of the room. Have students create two rows facing one another, with 7–10 feet between them. Point out that there is an imaginary line in the middle between the two rows. Tell the students that this is a game to be played without talking.
• Tell the students that you are going to be saying a series of quotes/phrases that start with the instruction phrase, “Cross the line if . . .”
• Ask for observations. What did the students find surprising?

Cross the line if . . .

(For Romeo and Juliet)
. . . if you have ever been confused at why two groups of people hated each other.
. . . if you have ever liked someone you weren’t supposed to like.
. . . if you have had friends who fought with each other.
. . . if you have gotten conflicting advice from authority figures.
. . . if you have felt unsupported by the adults in your life.
. . . if you have gotten into a situation that seemed like it had no way out.
In this activity, students each choose a character and create a Facebook-style profile page for them, including friends, status updates, and likes. While students can draw much of this information from the play, they should also generate new information about the character, based on what they already know from the play.

**OBJECTIVE:**
Have students draw on information they know about characters, and infer additional information based on what they know.

**TIME:** 30 minutes

**INSTRUCTIONS**
- Print out a copy of the following “Shakesbook” blank profile page for each student in class. Students can work individually or in pairs. Ask students to choose a character from *Romeo and Juliet* and create a profile page for them. Possible choices include: Romeo, Juliet, Benvolio, Tybalt, Mercutio, Friar, Nurse.
- Instruct students to fill in all areas of the profile with the following information. Students should draw from information that they know from the play already (Mercutio is a trickster and can be unpredictable) and imagine additional information that fits with what they already know (Mercutio lists “Saturday Night Live” and “pranking people” in his likes).
  - Name
  - Basic Information
  - Education and Networks
  - Likes
  - Friends (at least four)
- Students should also choose a cover photo and a profile picture for their character. Cover photos are often representative of something the character likes or a place they have been. Profile pictures do not necessarily have to be pictures of the actual characters — sometimes they are photos that the character feels represents them.

**STUDENT SKILLS:**
- Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what text says explicitly, as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- Produce writing in which the style is appropriate to purpose and audience.
- Make strategic use of digital media.

- Fill in the character's wall with at least four updates. These can be:
  - Status updates by the character
  - Articles shared by the character
  - Messages left by a different character
  - Photos or albums posted by the character
  - Photos that the character is tagged in
- Post these “Shakesbook” pages around the room, and give students a chance to look at all of them. Then lead a group discussion about the process of creating these pages.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**
- What was the easiest part of creating these profile pages? What was the most difficult?
- What is your favorite element of your profile page that you imagined about your character — something that was not explicitly mentioned in the play?
- Do you feel like your character was fully created in the world of the play? Or did you have to make up a lot of information about your character?
- If your character was actually on Facebook, how do you think social media might have changed the course of the play?
Mission Statement

With the plays of William Shakespeare at our core, Seattle Shakespeare Company engages our audiences, our artists and our community in the universal human experience inherent in classic drama through the vitality, immediacy and intimacy of live performance and dynamic outreach programs.

ABOUT US

Seattle Shakespeare Company is the Puget Sound region’s year-round, professional, classical theatre. The company’s growing success stems from a deep belief in the power and vibrancy of the time-tested words and ideas of Shakespeare and other classical playwrights along with a commitment to artistic excellence on stage. The results have been provocative performances that both challenge and delight audiences while fostering an appreciation for great stage works.

Our combined programs — which include indoor performances, free outdoor productions, regional tours, educator and youth programs — reach across barriers of income, geography, and education to bring classical theatre to Washington State.

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

In-School Residencies, Matinees, and Workshops

- In-School Residencies bring active, customized curriculum into schools across Washington State. Professional teaching artists plan with teachers to tailor each residency to fit the needs and objectives of the classroom. Seattle Shakespeare Company residencies inject vibrant, active exercises into lessons that unlock the text, themes, and actions of a Shakespeare play.
- Student Matinees bring over 3,000 students annually to our mainstage productions in the Seattle Center. Teachers are provided free study guides, and student groups are invited to stay after the show for a free Q&A session with the cast.
- Pre-show and post-show workshops can be booked to accompany mainstage matinees. These workshops include an introduction to the play itself, student activities, and insights into direction and design choices of our specific production.

Touring Productions

- Fresh and accessible 90-minute productions tour across Washington State each Spring, reaching more than 14,000 students and adults. These nimble productions perform as easily in school gymnasiums as professional theatre facilities. Teachers are provided free study guides and students enjoy free post-show Q&A sessions with the cast.
- Schools have the opportunity to book accompanying in-school residencies with touring productions, led by members of the touring cast and additional teaching artists.

Camps and Classes

- Our summer “Camp Bill” series in Seattle and Edmonds offers young actors a variety of camps to choose from or combine. Camps range from a One-Week Introduction to a Three-Week Production Intensive, with many options in between.
- In our Fall and Spring after-school “Short Shakes” programs, young actors develop their skills and gain hands-on performance and production experience.
- Seattle Shakespeare Company occasionally offers adult classes and workshops to our community featuring guest artists who work on our stage.

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