

Name: _____

Hour: _____

Date: _____

Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare

Act 2 Comprehension Questions

HOW TO QUOTE SHAKESPEARE

Plays are broken down into acts, scenes, and lines. When citing Shakespeare, you're telling the person reading your paper exactly where to find the quote in the text.

In your parenthetical citation, separate the act, scene, and lines with **periods**.

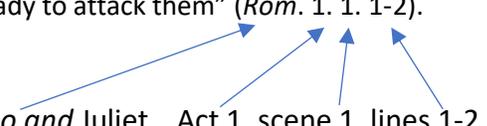
*Remember – line numbering starts at 1 in every **scene**.

Example question: What does Sampson call the Montagues in the beginning of the play *Romeo and Juliet*?

Answer in My Own Words: Sampson calls the Montagues dogs.

Answer in Quote: "If I meet any of those Montague does today, I'm ready to attack them" (*Rom. 1. 1. 1-2*).

Rom. is the abbreviation for *Romeo and Juliet* Act 1, scene 1, lines 1-2



Act 2, scene 1

1. What is the setting of this scene? *evening, a street right outside the Capulet's orchard*
2. What is the point of Benvolio and Mercutio's conversation? *They are speaking of Romeo (who can hear them) as they search for him. They describe Romeo as blinded and sickened by love.*

Act 2, scene 2

3. When Romeo says, "But soft, what light through yonder window breaks? It is the east, and Juliet is the sun," what is he commenting on? *the light in her bedroom window and Juliet's beauty*
4. What is Juliet asking when she says, "Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?" *Why do you have to be Romeo? Change your name; if you won't change your name, just swear you love me and I'll stop being a Capulet.*
5. What is Juliet saying when she states, "What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other word would smell as sweet." *It's only your name that's my enemy. You'd still be yourself even if you stopped being a Montague. What's a Montague anyway? What does a name mean? The thing we call a rose would smell just as sweet if we called it by any other name. Romeo would be just as perfect even if he wasn't called Romeo. Romeo, lose your name. Trade in your name and take all of me in exchange.*
6. How does Juliet feel when she discovers that Romeo is eavesdropping on her?
 - My Own Words: *embarrassed/nervous; who is this guy, listening to my private thoughts*
 - Quote: *"What man art thou, thus bescreened in night, so stumblest on my counsel?"*

7. What does Juliet fear?
 - My Own Words: *Romeo will change his mind; he's not serious and moving too fast*
 - Quote: *"Although I joy in thee, I have no joy of this contract tonight. It is too rash, too advised, too sudden, too like the lightning..."*
8. How does Romeo feel about his interaction with Juliet?
 - My Own Words: *It is too good to be true.*
 - Quote: *"O blessed, blessed night! I am afeard, being in night, all this is but a dream, too flattering sweet to be substantial."*
9. What two important things does Juliet tell Romeo?
 - My Own Words: *we'll talk tomorrow, make sure you're serious about marrying me*
 - Quotes:
 - We'll talk tomorrow: *"Thy purpose marriage, send me word tomorrow by one that I'll procure to come to thee..."*
 - Make sure you're serious: *"I come, anon. – But if thou mean'st not well, I do beseech thee –"*

Act 2, scene 3

10. What is the setting of this scene? *the Friar's cell*
11. What is the Friar doing? Why? *collecting herbs; he's an apothecary (herbalist)*
12. What does Romeo tell the Friar? *He loves Juliet and wants to marry her.*
13. What does Romeo want the Friar to do? *marry her*
14. Why does the Friar agree? *He hopes it will end the feud.*

Act 2, scene 4

15. What do Mercutio and Benvolio observe about Romeo? *He is no longer sad.*
16. Who shows up in this scene and why? *The Nurse and Peter to deliver/receive a message from Juliet.*
17. What is Romeo's reply to this person? What is his plan? *He loves her; they will be married at the Friar's and Juliet should pretend to go to confession.*

Act 2, scene 5

18. What is the setting of this scene? *late morning/early afternoon; the Capulet's orchard*
19. Summarize this scene. *Juliet is waiting for the nurse to return with word from Romeo. After deliberating, the Nurse reports that Romeo and Juliet will be married at the Friar's cell today.*

Act 2, scene 6

20. What is the setting of this scene? *later the same day as scene 5; Friar Lawrence's cell*

21. Summarize this scene. *The Friar marries Romeo and Juliet in secret*

Romeo and Juliet Act 2 Scene Summaries

Scene 1

- Romeo doesn't want to leave the Capulet's property, so he ditches his friends and hides out in the orchard behind the Capulet house.
- Benvolio and Mercutio try to find Romeo. Unaware that Romeo now has the hots for Juliet, they shout lot of filthy things about Rosaline hoping that Romeo will come out to defend Rosaline's honor; they have no luck.
- Eventually Romeo's bros give up and head home.

Scene 2

- Romeo is wandering aimlessly around the Capulet backyard when Juliet appears on the balcony. "What light through yonder window breaks?" he asks.
- He then answers his own question. "It is the East, and Juliet is the sun!"
- Just when you think Romeo is cray-cray, Juliet is talking to herself, too. "O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?" she asks.
- You might wonder, "why is she asking where Romeo is?" Well, as it turns out, "Wherefore" doesn't mean "where." *It means "why."* Juliet is saying, "**Why does the guy I love have to be a Montague?**"
- Juliet goes on talking to herself about how amazing Romeo is.
- Romeo is smart enough to keep his mouth shut and listen. Finally, he can't resist anymore, and he calls out to her.
- Juliet is super embarrassed until she realizes that it's Romeo hiding in the bushes. This is bad news, because if her family finds Romeo, they'll kill him.
- Luckily, she gets over her shock fast enough to enjoy the most romantic love scene in the history of Western literature.
- There's lots of poetry, vows of love that sound a lot like religious worship, baffling language, and teenage melodrama.
- Then Juliet basically proposes to Romeo when she says, "If that thy bent of love be honourable, / Thy purpose marriage, send me word tomorrow." **Translation: "If you love me and want to marry me, let me know ASAP."**
- Romeo is game. They end up setting up a way to send messages the next day so they can plan the wedding.
- Eventually, Romeo and Juliet run out of things to talk about and start babbling just so they don't have to leave each other—kind of a "I love you," "No, I love you MORE," deal.
- But, in Shakespearian terms, "I love you" is actually "Parting is such sweet sorrow / That I shall say goodnight till it be morrow."
- Juliet finally drags herself away to bed and Romeo hightails it off to Friar Laurence, his favorite priest, to figure out the wedding plans.

Scene 3

- Romeo sure is fast because the next thing we know, Romeo tracks down Friar Laurence, who has been out foraging for medicinal plants and herbs for one of his concoctions.
- (Note: historians tell us that it wasn't uncommon for clergymen to practice or dabble in medicine—after all, a visit to the physician was an expense that many people couldn't afford and priests often needed to supplement their income.)
- **Get your highlighters out, because this is important:** Friar Laurence delivers a speech about how herbs and plants have the potential to be healing and medicinal, but if they're misused, they can be deadly poison.
- Friar Laurence looks at Romeo and notices that loverboy hasn't "been in bed tonight" and assumes that he must have finally hooked up with Rosaline. He also notices that Romeo is suddenly cheerful after weeks of moping around.
- Nope, Romeo's totally over Rosaline and into this chick Juliet. Will Friar Laurence perform the ceremony?
- The Friar's response: "Holy Saint Francis!" (OMG)
- Friar Laurence provides a much-needed reality check: Romeo has been switching girls like highway lanes.

- The Friar decides to help Romeo out but not because he's a romantic: he's got political motives—a marriage between Romeo and Juliet just might end the two families' feud.
- So, in the name of reducing the yearly street-brawl-murder rate in Verona, Friar Laurence skips the lecture on fidelity and commitment and goes right to agreeing with the marriage.

Scene 4

- Mercutio and Benvolio still haven't figured out where Romeo is.
- It turns out that Tybalt has sent Romeo a message that goes something like this: "I'm going to beat you up with my sword."
- But lovestruck Romeo is in no condition to face Tybalt in a duel, right?
- (History Snack: Many Elizabethans believed that love (between a man and a woman that is) basically turned men into sissies. Being "effeminate" didn't mean you were *like* a woman—it meant you were too *into* women.)
- Of course Mercutio also uses the opportunity to take a dig at Tybalt, who takes himself and his sword fighting skills way too seriously.
- Romeo finally shows up, and he's dropped the depressed "Rosaline doesn't love me" act.
- The fellas engage in one of their favorite pastimes, talking trash and telling some of the dirtiest jokes in Western literature. You know, just a few bros chillin' together.
- As planned, the Nurse shows up to meet with Romeo. She looks ridiculous, apparently, and Mercutio can't resist flirting with her, mocking her, and talking dirty to her. He first says that the fan she's using should be used to cover her face since it's more attractive than she is. Then, when the Nurse questions him about the time of day, and he manages to turn a description of a clock into, yet another, dirty joke.
- In between all these antics, Romeo manages to take the Nurse aside and tell her that Juliet should find an excuse to come to Friar Laurence's church—where she will be married.
- [FYI: Romeo's keeping his wedding plans from everyone (except the Nurse and Juliet), including his best friends.]

Scene 5

- In an orchard at the Capulet place, Juliet waits for Nurse to come back with a message from Romeo.
- When Nurse comes back, she plays a little game by refusing to tell Juliet anything and complaining about her aching back.
- Finally, the Nurse gives in and tells Juliet to run to Friar Laurence's cell (a "cell" is just a room) where Romeo is waiting so they can get married.
- Before the scene ends, the Nurse says she'll "fetch a ladder" for Romeo to climb up so the lovers can spend their wedding night together. She also manages to turn her description of Romeo "climbing" the ladder into Juliet's "bird's nest" into, you guessed it, *another* inappropriate joke.

Scene 6

- Back at Friar Laurence's place, the priest tries to convince Romeo to calm down a little. Marriage is for the long term, you see. "These violent delights have violent ends," he warns. (**foreshadowing much?**) Unfortunately, it goes in one ear and out the other.
- Juliet runs in. The room's hormonal level skyrockets. Romeo and Juliet can barely keep their hands off each other, even in the presence of a priest.
- Friar Laurence takes them off to be married them so they can move on to the highly anticipated honeymoon phase.