

Romeo and Juliet



Question Book:

Year 6, pages 28-29

Author / Source:

William Shakespeare (adapted)

Genre:

Classic fiction — playscript

Cross-curricular links:

- Drama (performance)
- Art (wanted posters)
- History (Shakespeare)

Introduction

Romeo and Juliet is one of Shakespeare's most well-known tragedies. The play explores the themes of love, family and fate, as two young lovers from rival families try to overcome the feud that divides their households. Although this extract has been rewritten into modern English, it retains some of the imagery used by Shakespeare in the original playscript. Some pupils may find the extract difficult to follow at first, but reading the extract several times or focussing on one character at a time may help to consolidate understanding.

Answers

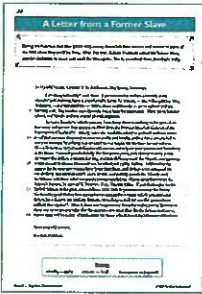
1. "Will you draw out your sword by his ears?"
2. E.g. Enthusiastic, because he starts the fight with Tybalt. He also warns him to "Be quick" or else he'll begin to attack before Tybalt is ready.
3. E.g. Romeo tries to break up the fight between Tybalt and Mercutio, but Tybalt stabs Mercutio under Romeo's arm and then leaves.
4. a. Romeo and Tybalt b. E.g. That both of their families should be punished for Mercutio getting stabbed.
5. E.g. Guilty, because his friend was hurt when Romeo tried to break up the fight.
6. Any appropriate answer. E.g. Yes. Mercutio thinks that he's going to die because he says that by tomorrow he will be "a grave man" and implies that the wound is "enough" to kill him. OR E.g. No, because I think Mercutio is overreacting. Romeo says "surely it cannot hurt too much".



Extra Activities

- As a class, rewrite this extract as part of a novel. Remind pupils that they'll need to add descriptions and consider how different characters might be feeling at different points in the extract.
- The story of *Romeo and Juliet* has been retold in many different formats. Give pupils a simple summary of the play, then show them an example of a modern written adaptation and its blurb, e.g. *Daz 4 Zoe* by Robert Swindells. Ask pupils to think of their own modern-day version and create a blurb for it.
- Shakespeare created and popularised many words that are still used in the English language today. Challenge pupils to research words that he invented and ask them to come up with amusing Shakespearean insults, e.g. 'You zany, frugal moonbeam!' Read the best ones out to the class.
- Split the class into groups of four. Ask each group to memorise the extract and perform it to the class. Pupils should then vote for their favourite performance, explaining the reasons for their choice.
- Explain that after this scene, Romeo kills Tybalt and flees. Ask pupils to design a wanted poster for Romeo. The poster should tell people what happened between Romeo and Tybalt and whether a reward is offered. It should also instruct the public on what to do if they see Romeo.
- As a class, make a list of the kinds of information usually included in a biography. Then ask pupils to use the list to research Shakespeare. Pupils should use their findings to create a short biography about him.

A Letter from a Former Slave



Question Book:

Year 6, pages 30-31

Author / Source:

Jourdon Anderson

Genre:

Non-fiction — letter

Cross-curricular links:

- History (slavery; abolitionism)
- PSHE (modern slavery; freedom)

Introduction

Between the 1500s and the early 1800s, Britain was heavily involved in the Atlantic slave trade. Britain abolished the slave trade in 1807 and outlawed slavery in most of the British Empire in 1833. In the USA, however, slavery remained central to the society and economy of many southern states. It was only at the end of the American Civil War in 1865, that slavery was abolished throughout the USA. This letter, written in August 1865, offers a fascinating insight into one freed slave's attitude towards his former master. Before pupils read the letter, make sure they understand the concept of slavery, and explain that in the USA slaves were forced to work in brutal conditions on sugar, cotton, tobacco and rice plantations.

Answers

1. E.g. To show that he doesn't need to go back to work for the Colonel because things are much better for him now than when he was a slave.
2. E.g. That he doesn't need the Colonel to give him his freedom because he's already officially free.
3. E.g. Because she's worried that he might treat them badly or force them to be slaves again.
4. a. E.g. To pay the money he owes Jourdon and Mandy for all the years they worked for him as unpaid slaves. b. Any appropriate answer. E.g. Yes, because it was unfair for the Colonel to benefit from Jourdon and Mandy's hard work when they didn't get anything in return.
5. E.g. People who don't pay their workers will be punished in the end.
6. Any appropriate answer. E.g. He feels angry about the way the Colonel treated him in the past — he says what the Colonel did was wrong and calls it fraud. He also feels that the Colonel isn't really trustworthy — he doesn't want to work for him because he doesn't think he will keep his promises.

Extra Activities

- Ask pupils to identify features of the text that show it is a letter. What other layout features are usually found in formal letters? Get them to create a labelled template explaining how to set out a formal letter.
- Get pupils to research the countries involved in the slave trade, and the movement of slaves and the goods they produced around the world. Ask them to produce a map labelling the countries involved and the different commodities that were traded, e.g. sugar, rum, tobacco, cotton and coffee. Are pupils shocked to learn that slavery played such a central role in the global economy?
- Explain to pupils about the abolition movement. Show them images designed by abolitionists to campaign against slavery, such as Josiah Wedgwood's 'Am I not a man and a brother?' Pupils should then produce their own poster to support the abolition movement.
- Explain to pupils that millions of adults and children are still treated as slaves today. Ask pupils to write a speech arguing for the abolition of modern slavery.
- Ask pupils to explain what freedom means to them. Are the pupils' ideas about freedom similar or different? Why is freedom important? How do they think it would feel to lose their freedom?