

## AP English Literature and Composition 2020 Summer Assignments

During the summer weeks, please **read and annotate** William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. I suggest you read the Shakespeare Folger Library version of the text which many of you already have, and stay away from any "Shakespeare made easy" books and SparkNotes. The idea is for you to **wrestle with the language** and attempt to understand it and its development of the characters and theme. Interpret what you read using your existing knowledge and intuition. You've got literary "Spidey senses"—Use them.

Oppositions and contrasts abound in *Romeo and Juliet*. The action begins with a violent clash between the feuding families and throughout the play, divisions and conflicts beset the doomed lovers, ultimately leading to their deaths, but there are many speculations as to why the lovers die.

So, who is to blame? What is to blame?

For hundreds of years, people have argued over the reason for the death of the lovers. Conduct your own inquiry into the causes of the tragedy—there are many to choose from. Don't simply try to pin blame on particular individuals. Seek other reasons for the tragedy. Below are suggestions you can use to investigate what caused the deaths of Romeo and Juliet. Choose one or come up with your own and be prepared to take a stance.

1. **Was it fate?** Were the deaths foretold in the stars? There are many suggestions in the play hinting the deaths were determined by fate. Collect references to the inevitability of the tragedy. Use the text to help you make your case.
2. **Was it chance?** Was it just bad luck? Fortune is fickle, so maybe no one is responsible. It was only a series of accidents. Collect examples of chance and accident, for example, the accidental meeting of the servant by Romeo and Benvolio.
3. **Was it adolescent passion?** Some critics have laid the blame on the folly of Romeo and Juliet in their youthful haste and passion, but how much of the blame falls on the lovers? Is adolescent love at first sight the cause of the tragedy? Collect examples of haste and passion in the play to use as evidence.
4. **Was it a male dominated society?** Verona is a patriarchal city. Fathers virtually hold absolute sway over their daughters. They may give them to whom ever they choose and feel a deeply insulted if their daughters choose otherwise. Together with patriarchy goes all of the machismo of men in general—the sexual innuendos, lack of sensitivity, and unmitigated wrath. Collect examples that help you prove that the male dominated society in Verona is responsible for the death of the lovers.
5. **Was it something else?** Perhaps you've captured something I've missed. Feel free to come up with your own ideas/interpretation.

## Take a Stand

One of the first skills you will learn in AP Literature and Composition is how to make a claim. A claim persuades, argues, convinces, proves, or provocatively suggests something to a reader who may or may not initially agree with you. After you have finished reading and annotating the play *Romeo and Juliet*, you will write an analysis paragraph that responds to one of the questions above. Keep in mind there is no correct answer to this question. But when you make a claim, you must **prove** you are correct. As a general rule, when we write about literature we avoid saying “I think” or “you” because it weakens the argument.

**Claim:** How would you answer the question you have chosen? This should be written in a complete sentence.

**Evidence:** Find one quote from the play that supports your position. Include the act, scene, and line numbers.

**Commentary:** Why/how does this quote show you are correct? The commentary makes connections between the evidence and the claim.

**Evidence:** Find a second quote from the play that supports your position. Include the act, scene, and line numbers.

**Commentary:** Why/how does this quote show you are correct?

\*\*When you are done filling in the information above, put it all together in a **well written** paragraph. You can type or handwrite your paragraph.

## Character One-Pager

A one-pager is a way to visually share key ideas and information from what you have learned about the novel so far. When you create a one-pager, you are trying to use both visual symbols and important words to clearly and concisely share your most important takeaways with someone else. You will be graded on how well you support your position and on your representation of the characters. For this assignment, you will be creating a one-pager for three characters in *Romeo and Juliet*. You can choose Romeo and/or Juliet as one of the characters you want to profile, but I highly recommend you explore other characters as well—the Nurse, Friar Laurence, Tybalt, Benvolio, Lord Capulet, Lady Capulet, Paris, Mercutio. So many to choose from. Challenge yourselves to look at the characters that are so often overlooked because they are Romeo and Juliet. You will have three separate sheets—one per character. This activity will be an introduction to characterization.

## Enduring Understandings (Character)

Characters in literature allow readers to study and explore a range of values, beliefs, assumptions, biases, and cultural norms represented by those characters.

### Guidelines:

1. Fill the entire page, very little white space should be showing. NO PENCIL ALLOWED! Written work must be in ink, so it stands out.
2. Use markers/colored pencils/pens/crayons for illustrations/drawings
3. At least **4 or more quotations** relating to the character that are especially important. Be sure to include the act number, the scene number, and line numbers that match your book.
4. A personal response to each quotation you selected (an interpretation/explanation of its significance - answer "Why did I choose this quote?" and "Why is it significant to the literature?")
5. At least **3 graphics or symbols** which relates to the character—this is can be literal or interpretative.

Put your name, date, and period on the back of the one-pager.

You can either use my template or create your own version but be sure to mark the sections

Read the descriptions for each of the boxes of the one-pager. The boxes refer to a specific skill under the category of character.

Below you will find skills that you need to be privy to in regard to characterization. You do not need to answer each of the questions, but you should be actively thinking about how each of the questions below applies to the character or characters you have chosen to complete the one-pagers about. You may use the questions as guide to help you choose good quotes for your particular characters.

## CHR-1.A: Identify and describe what specific textual details reveal about a character, that character's perspective.

This skill has you analyze how the character is **described**, what the character **says**, and what the character **does**. In this box, you should include words you associate with the character, bits of dialogue (Cite them) that showcase the personality of the character, items the character carried (physical, emotional, or symbolic), and important actions of the character. Using markers or colored pencils, you should fill the box with words, images, details that you associate with the character. Don't worry if you're not an artist.

Questions to Consider:

1. How is the character described physically, emotionally, and/or psychologically?
2. What do you know about the character's background? How does this background influence the character?
3. What drives the character to think, feel, and/or act in the manner he or she does?
4. What do you associate this character with? These things can be physical, emotional, or symbolic.

**CHR-1.B: Explain the function of a character changing or remaining unchanged.**

A Character's growth or the lack of growth is often used by the author to illustrate the theme of the novel. Using markers or colored pencils, you should fill the box with words, images, details that you associate with the character.

Questions to Consider:

1. During the chapters you read, does the character change or stay the same?
2. Does a character's changing constitute progress or decline?
3. How does the author want you to feel about this character?
4. Is the characterization positive or negative? How can you tell?
5. How does the author use this character to convey the themes of the novel?

**CHR-1.C: Explain the function of contrasting characters.**

In literature, a **foil** is a character that shows qualities that are in contrast with the qualities of another character. Lennie and George are foil characters because they are direct opposites physically and mentally. The objective of this section is to highlight the traits of the **other character**. You should be considering why the author has created this foil character. How does this foil character connect to the work as a whole (theme)? Using markers or colored pencils, you should fill the box with words, images, details that you associate with the **foil character**.

Questions to Consider:

1. How do comparable traits of two or more characters contrast?
2. What do the differing traits between characters reveal about them individually, their relationships with one another, and their relationships with other characters?
3. How does considering the significance of a contrast between characters contribute to meaning in the text?
4. Do their differences help them or hurt them?

**CHR-1.D: Describe how textual details reveal nuances and complexities in characters' relationships with one another.**

For this skill, you will consider how the language (diction) that the character uses (dialogue) when interacting with other characters. You should also consider how the author has established this character's relationship with the other characters. How well does this character get along with others?

Questions to Consider:

1. Which particular images, character speech, and textual details are relevant for examining characters' relationships?
2. How is the character's speech similar or unique to the other characters?
3. How do images, character speech, and other textual details reveal how characters interact?
4. How do diction and the details that a narrator or speaker offers (or does not offer) convey a particular perspective, ambiguity, and/or inconsistency and convey nuances and complexities in character relationships?