CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES GUIDE
The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey’s production of

Romeo and Juliet
By William Shakespeare
Directed by Ian Belknap
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One of the principal goals of The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey's education programs is to demystify the classics, take them “off the shelf,” and re-energize them for students and teachers alike. Toward these goals, this Classroom Activities Guide, used in conjunction with our Audience Guide, provide educators with tools to both allay their own concerns and to expand the theatre-going experience for their students beyond the field trip to The Shakespeare Theatre.

The information included in this guide will help you expand your students’ understanding of classic literature in performance, as well as help you meet many of the New Jersey Common Core Standards. We encourage you to impart as much of the information included in the Classroom Activities Guide and the Audience Guide to your students as possible. The following are some suggestions from teachers on how you can best utilize elements of these guides given limited classroom time.

**JUST THE BASICS:** Many teachers have found that distributing or reading the **Synopsis** and **Who’s Who** pages from the Audience Guide has greatly increased students’ understanding and enjoyment of the production. It provides the students with a general understanding of what they will be seeing and what they can expect. Some teachers simply take the last five minutes of a class period to do this with very positive results.

**MINI TEAM-RESEARCH PROJECTS:** When more class time is available prior to your visit, we recommend incorporating the background information on the era in which the play is set as well the play itself. One teacher divided her class into groups and assigned each group research topics based on the divisions found in this guide as well as the Audience Guide. Using a copy of the corresponding Audience Guide page as a launch pad, the students had one week to research the topics. The students then presented their information to the class in three- to five-minute oral reports. Including the questions that evolved from the presentations, the entire project took only one class period.

**POST-SHOW DISCUSSION:** Using the questions found in the “**Topics for Discussion,**” many teachers will opt to take a class period after their trip to The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey to discuss the play with their students. The questions help keep the comments focused on the production, while incorporating various thematic and social issues that are found in the play.

**GET ON YOUR FEET:** One school spent two days working through performance-based activities (a few of which are suggested in the “**Follow-Up Activities**” section) with a particularly “difficult and rowdy” class. They were astounded with the results.

Again, we hope you will incorporate as many portions of this guide as you are able into your classroom experience. If you have any suggestions for activities or topics not already found in the Audience Guide, please contact our Education Department. We are always interested in hearing new ways to excite young people (and teachers) about Shakespeare and live theatre.

Happy Teaching,

Brian B. Crowe,
Director of Education

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**“What’s My Line?” Promoting Active Listening**

Teacher-tested, student-approved!

Try this exercise with your students:

Before attending the production, give each student one line from the play to listen for. Discuss the meaning of the line and encourage their input in deciphering what the intention of the line might be. How would the student perform the line? Why is the line important to the play? Does it advance the plot, or give the audience particular insight into a character or relationship?

Following the production, discuss the line again. Did the actor present the line in the way your student expected? If not, how was it different?
William Shakespeare, widely recognized as the greatest English dramatist, was born on April 23, 1564. He was the third of eight children born to John Shakespeare and Mary Arden of Stratford-upon-Avon in Warwickshire, England. Shakespeare’s father was a prominent local merchant, and Shakespeare’s childhood, though little is known about it for certain, appears to have been quite normal. In fact, it seems that the young Shakespeare was allowed considerable leisure time because his writing contains extensive knowledge of hunting and hawking. In 1582, he married Anne Hathaway, the daughter of a farmer. She was eight years his senior, and the match was considered unconventional.

It is believed that Shakespeare left Stratford-upon-Avon and went to London around 1588. By 1592, he was a successful actor and playwright. He wrote approximately 38 plays, two epic poems, and over 150 sonnets. His work was immensely popular, appealing to members of all social spheres, including Queen Elizabeth I and King James I. While the plays were well-liked, Shakespeare’s work was not considered by his educated contemporaries to be exceptional. By 1608, Shakespeare’s involvement with theatre began to dwindle, and he spent more time at his country home in Stratford. He died in 1616.

Most of Shakespeare’s plays found their first major publication in 1623, seven years after Shakespeare’s death, when two of his fellow actors put the plays together in the First Folio. Other early printings of Shakespeare’s plays were called quartos, a printer’s term referring to the format in which the publication was laid out. These quartos and the First Folio texts are the sources of all modern printings of Shakespeare’s plays.
London in the late 16th and early 17th centuries was a bustling urban center filled with a wide variety of people and cultures. Although most life centered around making a living or going to church, the main source of diversion for Londoners was the theatre. It was a form of entertainment accessible to people of all classes; The rich and the poor, the aristocrats and the beggars all met at the theatre. Though often appeasing the church or the monarchy, theatre at this time did experience a freedom that was unknown in previous generations. Evidence of this can be found in the numerous bawdy and pagan references found in Shakespeare’s plays. This relative artistic license and freedom of expression made theatre extremely unpopular among certain members of society, and it was later banned entirely by the Puritans. It was not until the reign of Charles II (1660-1685) that the theatre was restored to the status it held in Shakespeare’s day.

The Globe Theatre, the resident playhouse for Shakespeare’s company of actors, was easily accessible to Londoners and an active social center. Actors and performers were also regularly brought to court or to private homes to entertain. Despite their popularity, actors maintained a relatively low social status, sometimes no better than a common beggar or rogue. Most performers were forced to earn a living doing trade work. The aristocracy’s desire for entertainment, however, did spur the development of numerous new theatre pieces. Often a nobleman would become a patron to an artist or company of actors, providing for their financial needs and sheltering them to some degree from official sanctions. In return, the company would adopt the name of the patron. Shakespeare’s acting company was originally named “Lord Chamberlain’s Men” after their patron Henry Carey, the Lord Chamberlain. Later, under the patronage of King James I, they were known as “The King’s Men,” an unprecedented honor at the time.

Despite the flourishing of the arts at this time, London was sometimes a desolate place. Outbreaks of the Black Death (the bubonic plague) frequently erupted, killing thousands of citizens. Theaters, shops, and the government all shut down during these times in hopes of preventing the spread of the disease. Elizabethans were unaware that the disease was being spread by the flea and rat populations, which well outnumbered the human population of London at that time.
Are You SURE This Is English?

Contrary to popular belief, Shakespeare and his contemporaries did not write in Old English, or even Middle English. PLAYWRIGHTS OF THE 16TH AND EARLY 17TH CENTURIES WROTE IN MODERN ENGLISH. Shakespeare spoke (and wrote in) the same language which we speak today. It is possible to be thrown a bit by grammatical “carry-overs” from earlier English (“thhee” and “thou” instead of “you”) and the poetic liberties that Shakespeare took, but there is no doubt that the words and syntax used in his plays can be understood today without any “translation.” To help clarify this point, here are some examples of Old, Middle, and Modern English.

OLD ENGLISH (500 - 1150 CE)

When Julius Caesar invaded Britain in BCE 55-4, the Celtic (pronounced KEL-tic) tribes lived in the British Isles. Their languages survive today in the forms of Gaelic (Scotland and Ireland), Welsh (Wales), and Manx (Isle of Man). The Romans brought Latin to Britain. However, early English developed primarily from the language of tribes which invaded and settled England from what is now Germany. This language, known as Old English, was also influenced by the Latin spoken by Catholic missionaries from Rome as well as the Scandinavian dialects of Viking raiders and settlers.

Selection from BEOWULF
Author unknown, ca 800 CE

Oft Scyld Scèfing sceæðena prèstum,  
monegum mægðum meodo-setla oftèah,  
egsode eorlas. Sydðan ærert weard  
fèasceæft funden, hè þæs frofre gebàd,  
wèox under wolcnum, weorð-myndum þàh,  
oð-þæt him aeghwylc ofer hron-ràde  
goð-hyrdaland. þæt wæs god cyning!

MODERN ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

Often Scyld the Scefing from squadroned foes,  
from many a tribe, the mead-bench tore,  
awing the earls. Since first he lay  
friendless, a foundling, fate repaid him:  
for he waxed under welkin, in wealth he throve,  
till before him the folk, both far and near,  
who lived by the whale-path, heard his mandate,  
gave him gift: a good king he!

MIDDLE ENGLISH (1150 - 1450 CE)

The conquest of England by the Norman army in 1066 brought great changes to English life and the English language. The Old French spoken by the Normans became for many years the language of the Royal Court and of English literature. Over time, the spoken English still used by the lower classes borrowed about 10,000 words from French, as well as certain grammatical structures. By the time English reappeared as a written, literary language in the 14th century, it only distantly resembled Old English. This German-French hybrid language is known as Middle English.

Selection from THE CANTERBURY TALES
By Geoffrey Chaucer, ca 1390 CE

But natheless / while I haue tyme and space  
Er that I ferther / in this tale pace  
Me thynketh it acordant to resoun  
To telle yow / al the condiciun  
Of eeche of hem / so as it seemed to me  
And whiche they weere / and of what degree  
And eek in what array / that they were inne  
And at a knyght thanne wol I first bigynne.

MODERN ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

But nonetheless, while I have time and space  
Before I continue in this story  
I think it appropriate to speak of,  
To tell you, the condition  
Of each of them, as it seemed to me.  
And who was who, and of what degree,  
And in what fashion each was dressed.  
And with a knight then I will begin.
MODERN ENGLISH (1450 - present day)

With the invention of the printing press in the 15th century, the English language began to develop and alter at an unprecedented rate. Books, previously a precious and expensive commodity, were now widely available to anyone with basic literacy. Works in Latin, Italian, Spanish, French, and Portuguese were translated by the hundreds, and the translators found it necessary to borrow and invent thousands of new words. English trade and exploration fueled even more cultural and linguistic exchange. The early Modern English of Shakespeare and his contemporaries has been referred to as “English in its adolescence:” daring, experimental, innovative, and irreverent.

Selection from ROMEO & JULIET
By William Shakespeare, ca 1595 CE

Well, you have made a simple choice; you know not how to choose a man: Romeo!
No, not he; though his face be better than any man’s, yet his leg excels all men’s; and for a hand, and a foot, and a body, though they be not to be talked on, yet they are past compare...

WHAT DID SHAKESPEARE SOUND LIKE?

While we may associate Shakespeare with the “refined” British accent of Sir Ian McKellen or Dame Judi Dench, linguistic scholars suggest that the closest approximation to the London accent of Shakespeare’s day is the accent heard nowadays in the Appalachian region of the United States.

Follow this link to hear how Shakespeare’s language might have sounded:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gPlpphT7n9s

To hear how Old and Modern English sound, follow these links:

OLD ENGLISH (Beowulf):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0zorjLzrrvA

MIDDLE ENGLISH (The Canterbury Tales):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qov0L9fPaCQ

THE HEART OF THE POETRY

Shakespeare most often wrote in a style known as blank verse, an unrhymed regular verse structure, specifically referring to unrhymed iambic pentameter. This structure typically includes five (penta) feet of alternating unstressed and stressed syllables called iambs. Each 10-syllable verse line has a distinctive sound similar to the beating of a human heart: da-DUM-da-DUM-da-DUM-da-DUM-da-DUM.

A MAN OF MANY WORDS

Shakespeare used over 20,000 different words in his plays and poems. Of these, 8.5% (1,700 words) had never been seen in print before Shakespeare used them.

To give you a sense of just how extraordinary this is, consider that the King James Bible uses only 8,000 different words. Homer is credited with using approximately 9,000 different words in his works. Milton is estimated at using 10,000 different words in his works.
Shakespeare’s

Common Tongue

alack — expression of dismay or shock
anon — soon, right away
aught — nothing
avaunt — go away
er — before
hath — has
hence — away (from here)
henceforth — from now on
hither — here
lest — or else
naught — nothing
oft — often
perchance — by chance, perhaps, maybe

sirrah — [pronounced SEER-uh] “hey, you” as to someone of lower status
thee — you
thence — away, over there
thine — yours
thither — there
thou — you
thy — your
whence — where
wherefore — why [literally: “where is the ‘for’ or ‘reason?’ ”]
whither — where

Terms and Phrases

Found in the Play

PROLOGUE
civil blood makes civil hands unclean— citizens soil their hands with each other’s blood
star-cross’d— born under unlucky stars

ACT I
mistempered— angry
bred of an airy word— started because of something someone said
God gi’go-den— God give you a good evening
Lammastide— August 1, a harvest holiday
man of wax— a model (as if made by a sculptor), thus: a perfect man
ambuscadoes— soldiers participating in an ambush

ACT II
demesnes— estates, lands, domain
wherefore art thou Romeo?— why are you named Romeo?
doff— remove
wanton— an undisciplined or lewd person
shrift— to confess a sin and receive absolution
pricksong— a counter-melody to a simple tune
pox— a disease marked by skin lesions (smallpox, chickenpox, e.g.)
bawd— a brothel-keeper or prostitute
flirt-gills— flirty or loose women

skains-mates— cutthroats or rogues (the skain was a long Irish knife)
jaunce— a long walk, a journey

ACT III
zounds— God’s wounds (an oath or exclamation)
Phaeton— in Greek myth, the son of the god Apollo. His rash decision to drive his father’s sun-chariot resulted in his death.
choplogic— chopped logic, mixed-up or unreasonable thought
fettle— prepare
puling— whining

ACT IV
no pulse shall keep his native progress— your pulse will stop
surcease— completion, ending
environed— surrounded

ACT V
Capel’s monument— the Capulet family tomb
restorative— power of transference (i.e. “restore me to you.”)
scourge— literally, a whip; metaphorically, a severe and painful punishment
Who Said That?

Match the spoken line to the character who speaks it. Some characters match more than one line, some match none.

A. “Ay me! Sad hours seem long.”

B. “Too soon marred are those so early made.”

C. “I will make thee think thy swan a crow.”

D. “Well, think of marriage now. Younger than you, Here in Verona, ladies of esteem Are made already mothers.”

E. “I talk of dreams; Which are the children of an idle brain.”

F. “O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!”

G. “I will withdraw; but this intrusion shall, Now seeming sweet, convert to bitterest gall.”

H. “Tis but thy name that is my enemy.”

I. “Wisely and slow. They stumble that run fast.”

J. “Men’s eyes were made to look and let them gaze. I will not budge for no man’s pleasure, I.”

K. “There is no world without Verona walls, But purgatory, torture, hell itself.”

L. “Would none but I might venge my cousin’s death!”

M. “My bounty is as boundless as the sea, My love as deep. The more I give to thee, The more I have, for both are infinite.”

Answers available on Pg. 12
What Did They Say?

This is an opportunity to test your comprehension of Shakespeare's language. Below you will find passages from Romeo and Juliet. Answer the questions for each passage as specifically as possible.

PRINCE ESCALUS
Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace, 
Profaners of this neighbour-stainéd steel—
Will they not hear? What, ho! You men, you 
beasts, 
That quench the fire of your pernicious rage 
With purple fountains issuing from your veins! 
On pain of torture, from those bloody hands 
Throw your mistempered weapons to the 
ground 
And hear the sentence of your movéd prince. 
Three civil brawls, bred of an airy word 
By thee, old Capulet, and Montague, 
Have thrice disturbed the quiet of our streets... 
If ever you disturb our streets again, 
Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace.

JULIET
The clock struck nine when I did send the 
nurse; 
In half an hour she promised to return. 
Perchance she cannot meet him. That’s not so. 
O, she is lame! Love’s heralds should be 
thoughts, 
Which ten times faster glide than the sun’s 
beams... 
Now is the sun upon the highmost hill 
Of this day’s journey, and from nine till twelve 
Is three long hours; yet she is not come. 
Had she affections and warm youthful blood, 
She would be as swift in motion as a ball... 
But old folks, many feign as they were dead— 
Unwieldy, slow, heavy and pale as lead.

1. To whom is the Prince speaking?
2. What are the circumstances that led up to this speech? Based on the language the Prince uses, what is happening while he speaks?
3. What are “neighbour-stainéd steel” and “mistempered weapons”?
4. What are “civil brawls bred by an airy word”?
5. What does the Prince mean when he says “Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace.”

1. To whom is Juliet speaking?
2. What are the circumstances that have led up to this speech?
3. How long has Juliet been waiting? What is she waiting for? Based on her language, is she waiting patiently or impatiently?
4. What time of day is it?
5. Juliet compares the speeds of young people and elderly people in this speech. Which specific lines address this comparison?
6. What does she mean when she says that “old folks...feign as they were dead”? 

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Test Your Understanding

Circle the letter that BEST answers the question.

1. Shakespeare wrote in what language?
   a) Old English  b) Middle English
   c) early modern English  d) Latin

2. Mercutio is killed by___________.
   a) Tybalt  b) Lord Capulet
   c) poison  d) Romeo

3. When we first meet Romeo, he is pining for___________.
   a) an invitation to the party  b) Rosaline
   c) Juliet  d) an opportunity to fight

4. “Romeo, Romeo. Wherefore art thou Romeo?” means:
   a) “Romeo, where are you?”  b) “Why is your name ‘Romeo?’”
   c) “Romeo, what does your name mean?”  d) “Why do you create art, Romeo?”

5. Which of these characters does not die in the course of the play?
   a) Juliet  b) Romeo
   c) Benvolio  d) Tybalt

6. Which character asks Capulet for Juliet’s hand in marriage?
   a) Paris  b) Tybalt
   c) Romeo  d) Benvolio

7. Mercutio refers to the Fairy Queen who sneaks into people’s dreams. What is her name?
   a) Rosaline  b) Titania
   c) Hecate  d) Mab

8. The name “Benvolio” literally means___________.
   a) “one who is a woman”  b) “good will”
   c) “player of the violin”  d) “born of violence”

9. When he is banished, Romeo flees to what city?
   a) Verona  b) Padua
   c) Illyria  d) Mantua

CONTINUED >>
Test Your Understanding

CONTINUED

10. A sonnet is___________.
   a) any short poem by Shakespeare  b) a 14-line poem with a fixed rhyme scheme
   c) a short sword for fencing  d) a bouquet of flowers

11. Friar Laurence agrees to marry Romeo and Juliet because___________.
   a) he has been bribed by their parents  b) he realizes they are truly in love
   c) he believes it will bring peace between their families  d) Romeo has threatened him

12. Romeo purchases poison from___________.
   a) Friar Laurence  b) Friar John
   c) an apothecary  d) Mercutio

13. The feuding families in this play are:
   a) the Hatfields and the McCoys  b) the Veronas and the Mantuas
   c) the Capulets and the Montagues  d) the Montagues and the Parisses

14. Romeo says “The love I bear thee doth much excuse the appertaining rage to such a greeting” to whom?
   a) Tybalt, who calls him a villain  b) Mercutio, who mocks him for being in love
   c) Juliet, who is angry at the death of Tybalt  d) his father, who chides him for falling in love
   with a Capulet

15. Shakespeare’s plays are most often written in___________.
   a) rhyming couplets  b) Old English
   c) blank verse  d) prose

Answers available on Pg. 12
Topics for Discussion

ABOUT THE PLAY:
1. Romeo and Juliet’s world is, to some extent, defined and constricted by their families. How is each of them affected by his/her family? Compare and contrast their family environments. In what way does each of them construct an “alternate family” that makes up for the shortcomings of their biological families, and with whom do they choose to form these families?
2. Several significant obstacles prevent a happy ending to this story. What are they? Could any of them be prevented? Some scholars contend that Romeo and Juliet had to die young, because such love is too perfect to last. Imagine them as a middle-aged couple with two kids and a dog. Do you think this marriage would have been happy and successful? Why or why not? Support your answer with evidence from the text.
3. At the end of the play, Capulet and Montague vow to reconcile their differences and end their long-standing feud. Does this mean that Romeo and Juliet also has a positive ending? Can a play have both a positive and a tragic ending? Do you believe that the peace between the families will last?
4. Romeo is an only child, as is Juliet. How are the families additionally affected by this fact? Have they wiped themselves out by their hatred and violence? Support your answer.
5. The Prologue reveals, from the opening moments of the play, that the two main characters will die in the end. Why does Shakespeare give away the plot? Can you think of contemporary plays, movies or television shows in which you already know the end of the story when it begins?

ABOUT THIS PRODUCTION:
1. The scenery for this production is clearly not a literal depiction of medieval Verona. What are the predominant visual elements of the set design. How are the scenic elements transformed throughout the show to depict different locations? Why do you think these choices were made by the director and scenic designer? How does this approach to the show engage the audience, and encourage them to use their imagination?
2. How are costumes used to help tell the story? How does the design use color and tone to suggest family allegiance and status? Why do you think that the director and costume designer chose a Renaissance style for the costumes? Support your answer.
3. The violence in this play might have struck you as different from the violence that is portrayed in movies and on television. Without the benefit of spurtng “blood” and camera cut-aways, combat directors for the live theatre must use different techniques to depict violence. How realistic and effective did you find the violence to be in this production? Does the violence feel different to you as a viewer when seeing in on stage as compared to a more detached viewing of violence on film or television? How so?
4. How does this production compare and contrast with what you visualized when reading the play? Were any characters different than you pictured? How so? Was there a part of the story you found confusing when reading the play, but that was much clearer seeing it performed? If so, what, and how was it clearer?

WHO SAID THAT? Answer Key
A. Romeo  B. Lord Capulet  C. Benvolio  D. Lady Capulet  E. Mercutio  F. Romeo  G. Tybalt  H. Juliet  I. Friar Lawrence

TEST YOUR UNDERSTANDING Answer Key
1. c  2. c  3. b  4. c  5. b  6. c  7. c  8. c  9. c  10. c  11. c  12. c  13. c  14. a  15. c
Follow Up Activities

1. “Critics’ Corner” Write a review of this production of Romeo and Juliet. Be sure to include specific information and your own reactions to both the acting and the design elements (set, costumes, lighting, and sound). Explain what you liked and disliked, and support your opinions. Then submit your review to The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey’s Education Department, or see if it can be published in your school newspaper.

NJ CORE STANDARD: Visual & Performing Arts 1.4

2. “Alert the media!” If Verona had a cable news network, it would have featured 24-hour coverage of the events in this play: riots in the streets lead to murders, the government issues a proclamation of death, a rich family plans the wedding of the year, the city’s most eligible bachelor is exiled, and a young heiress dies under mysterious circumstances. Assign these and other big events of the play to members of the class. Create appropriate television or newspaper coverage.

NJ CORE STANDARD: Visual & Performing Arts 1.3

3. “I learn by this letter...” Write a letter or diary entry from the point of view of one of the characters, discussing an event or situation in the play. For example, love letters between Romeo and Juliet, a letter from Rosaline to Romeo explaining why she can’t return his affection, a letter from Romeo to the Prince asking for pardon, or a letter from Juliet to Romeo before she drinks the sleeping potion. Alternatively, write a sonnet or other love poem.

COMMON CORE STANDARD: Language Arts Literacy 3.1

4. “15-minute Shakespeare” Divide into five groups, and have each group take one act of the play. Your task is to create a three-minute version of your act, using only Shakespeare’s words. Choose carefully the lines from your act that carry the most important information and advance the story. When each group is done, you will have a 15-minute version of Romeo and Juliet which you can perform for one another. Afterwards, discuss both the process of adaptation and how your “abridgment” compared to the more modest cuts which the director made for this production.

COMMON CORE STANDARD: Language Arts 3.1, 3.2, 3.3

5. “A Director Prepares” Romeo and Juliet has long captured the imaginations of directors and designers for stage and screen. Individually or in small groups, come up with your own scenic or costume designs for the play. Find a line or image expressed in the play as your “launch pad.” You can use drawings and collage as well as writing to explain and justify your design to the class.

NJ CORE STANDARD: Visual & Performing Arts 1.1

6. “Speak the Speech...” In small groups, work to present a small piece of the text (the opening prologue works well) to the class. Each group should come up with its own unique presentation: different rhythms, echoing or underscoring key words or phrases, simple props, movement, etc. After each group has presented its interpretation of the text, discuss what was successful about each one. From this, you can develop a rubric for what makes a good performance.

COMMON CORE STANDARD: Language Arts Literacy 3.3

NJ CORE STANDARD: Visual & Performing Arts 1.1, 1.3

7. “Girl Power!/Boy Power!” Choose one of the scenes from the play that has both male and female characters and act it out in class three times: once with an all-male cast, once with an all-female cast, and once with the roles assigned according to gender. How does it affect the scene? Discuss this in light of the fact that, in Shakespeare’s time, Juliet, the Nurse and Lady Capulet would have been played by boys and men.

NJ CORE STANDARD: Visual & Performing Arts 1.1, 1.2, 1.3

8. “Play/Pause/Rewind” Available versions of Romeo and Juliet on video include the 1968 Franco Zeffirelli film, and Baz Lurhmann’s Romeo + Juliet, as well as the 1954 film. Choose two versions of the same scene, such as the street fight between Mercutio, Tybalt and Romeo, and show each to the students, asking them to observe how the actors in each production speak, interpret and move to the language. Make liberal use of the pause button to stop and ask specific questions, then rewind and let them watch the entire scene through uninterrupted. Teachers may consider (based on the age of the students) looking at films inspired by Romeo and Juliet, such as West Side Story, Gnomeo and Juliet, or even Underworld or Private Romeo for this project.

NJ CORE STANDARD: Visual & Performing Arts 1.4
Meeting the Common Core Standards

In 1996, the New Jersey State Board of Education adopted the Core Curriculum Content Standards that set out to clearly define what every New Jersey student should know and be able to do at the end of their schooling. The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey is committed to supporting teachers by ensuring that our educational programs are relevant to the evolving standards of modern education.

Viewing a performance at The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey and participating in the post-performance discussion can serve as a powerful springboard for discussion, writing, and other outlets for higher-order thinking. On this page, you will find suggestions for ways to align your study of our production to each standard.

**LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY STANDARDS**

As a theatre dedicated to the classics, we are continually engaged in exploring some of the world’s greatest literature and the relationship between the written text and performance. Our philosophy and practice follow the underlying assumptions of the Language Arts Literacy CCSS: That “language is an active process for constructing meaning”; that “language develops in a social context”; that language ability increases as learners “engage in texts that are rich in ideas and increasingly complex in language”; that learners achieve mastery not by practicing isolated skills but by “using and exploring language in its many dimensions.”

In the practice of theatre, we merge all areas of the language arts, as the standards suggest “in an integrated act of rehearsal, reflection, and learning.” Below, you will find just a few of the possibilities for aligning your study of our productions to each of these standards.

**NJSLSA.R1.** Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences and relevant connections from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

- Read a scene from the play as a class and use context clues to interpret new words and expand vocabulary.

**NJSLSA.R8.** Analyze and reflect on how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

- Compare this production to another Shakespeare play or to a piece you are reading in class.

**NJSLSA.R10.** Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently with scaffolding as needed.

- Analyze a portion of the text, isolate specific imagery, meanings, references, and then compare those instances to other passages in the play.

**W.3.6.** With guidance and support from adults, use technology to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others.

- Compare and contrast the printed text with the staged version viewed online.
- Maintain a journal or blog that classmates can comment on using specific prompts about the play.

**SL.3.1.** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.

- Participate in a post-show discussion.

**L.6.3.** Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

- Write a new ending for the play in modern prose.

**VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS STANDARDS**

Both the CCSS and the Every Student Succeeds Act promote the inclusion of “programs and activities that use music and the arts as tools to support student success through the promotion of constructive student engagement, problem solving, and conflict resolution” (ESSA 2015). Performances, workshops, and study guide exercises developed by The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey strive to address the Visual and Performing Arts Standards.

Below, you will find a few possibilities for aligning your study of our production to each standard.

**Standard 1.1** The Creative Process: All students will demonstrate an understanding of the elements and principles that govern the creation of works of art in dance, music, theatre, and visual art.

- Write a review of the production using domain-appropriate terminology; develop a class rubric for effect theatrical presentations

**Standard 1.2** History of the Arts and Culture: All students will understand the role, development, and influence of the arts throughout history and across cultures.

- Discuss the representation of social issues (class, politics, etc.) in the play; research how the historical period affected the writer’s work; compare the play to work from other historical periods.

**Standard 1.3** Performing: All students will synthesize skills, media, methods, and technologies that are appropriate to creating, performing, and/or presenting works of art in dance, music, theatre, and visual art.

- Perform a monologue or scene from the play; participate in a classroom workshop that develops the physical and technical skills required to create and present theatre.

**Standard 1.4** Aesthetic Responses & Critique Methodologies: All students will demonstrate and apply an understanding of arts philosophies, judgment, and analysis to works of art in dance, music, theatre, and visual art.

- Participate in a post-show discussion of elements such as physicality and creating motivated action; discuss the relationship between play text and production design.
Sources and Further Reading

THE ANNOTATED SHAKESPEARE, Introduction by A.L. Rowe
ASIMOV’S GUIDE TO SHAKESPEARE by Isaac Asimov
THE COMPLETE IDIOT’S GUIDE TO SHAKESPEARE, by Laurie Rozakis
THE ESSENTIAL SHAKESPEARE HANDBOOK, by Dunton-Downer and Riding
FREEING SHAKESPEARE’S VOICE by Kristin Linklater
THE FRIENDLY SHAKESPEARE by Norrie Epstein
A READER’S GUIDE TO SHAKESPEARE by Muriel B. Ingham
SHAKESPEARE A TO Z by Charles Boyce
SHAKESPEARE AFTER ALL by Marjorie Garber
SHAKESPEARE FOR BEGINNERS by Brandon Toropov

SHAKESPEARE FOR DUMMIES by Doyle, Lischner, and Dench
SHAKESPEARE IN PERFORMANCE, Consultant Editors Parsons and Mason
SHAKESPEARE: THE INVENTION OF THE HUMAN by Harold Bloom
SHAKESPEARE OUR CONTEMPORARY by Jan Kott
THEATRE: A WAY OF SEEING, Third Edition by Milly S. Barranger
SHAKESPEARE SET FREE, edited by Peggy O’Brien
SHAKING HANDS WITH SHAKESPEARE, by Alison Wedell Schumacher

Plays by William Shakespeare:

_The History Plays_
Henry VI, Part I
Henry VI, Part II
Henry VI, Part III
Richard III
King John
Richard II
Henry IV, Part I
Henry IV, Part II
Henry V
Henry VIII

_The Comedies_
The Comedy of Errors
The Taming of the Shrew
The Two Gentlemen of Verona
Love’s Labour’s Lost
A Midsummer Night’s Dream
The Merchant of Venice
The Merry Wives of Windsor
Much Ado About Nothing
As You Like It
Twelfth Night, or What You Will
Troilus and Cressida
All’s Well That Ends Well
Measure for Measure

_The Tragedies_
Titus Andronicus
Romeo and Juliet
Julius Caesar
Hamlet
Othello
King Lear
Macbeth
Anthony and Cleopatra
Coriolanus
Timon of Athens

_The Poems_
Venus and Adonis
The Rape of Lucrece
The Phoenix & the Turtle
A Lover’s Complaint
The Sonnets

_The Romances_
Pericles
Cymbeline
The Winter’s Tale
The Tempest
The Two Noble Kinsmen*

*The Two Noble Kinsmen is sometimes classified by some scholars as a Romance, and by some as a Comedy.
The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey, 2019

**About The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey**

The acclaimed Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey is one of the leading Shakespeare theatres in the nation. Serving approximately 100,000 adults and young people annually, it is New Jersey’s largest professional theatre company dedicated to Shakespeare’s canon and other classic masterworks. With its distinguished productions and education programs, the company strives to illuminate the universal and lasting relevance of the classics for contemporary audiences. The longest-running Shakespeare theatre on the East Coast and the seventh largest in the nation, The Shakespeare Theatre celebrates its 57th anniversary in 2019.

The Company’s dedication to the classics and commitment to artistic excellence helps set high standards for the field. Nationwide, the Theatre has emerged as one of America’s most exciting companies under the leadership of Artistic Director Bonnie J. Monte, who has been with the company since 1990. It is one of only a handful of Shakespeare Theatres on the East Coast, and in recent years has drawn larger and larger audiences and unprecedented critical acclaim. The opening of the intimate 308-seat F.M. Kirby Shakespeare Theatre in 1998, provided the Theatre with a state-of-the-art venue with excellent sightlines, and increased access for patrons and artists with disabilities.

The company’s 2019 Main Stage Season features five productions presented in the Kirby Shakespeare Theatre from June through December. Each summer, an Outdoor Stage production is also presented at an open-air amphitheatre nestled in a hillside on the campus of the College of Saint Elizabeth in nearby Florham Park. The Theatre is proud to have launched into its second half-century with a brand new support facility housing all its administrative and technical shops, as well as a new rehearsal hall, classroom spaces, and extensive costume, property and scenic inventory in the nearby town of Florham Park.

In addition to being a celebrated producer of classic plays and operating Shakespeare LIVE! (one of the largest educational Shakespeare touring programs in the North East region), The Shakespeare Theatre is also deeply committed to nurturing new talent for the American stage. By providing an outstanding training ground for students of the theatre, and cultivating audiences for the future by providing extensive outreach opportunities for students across New Jersey and beyond, The Shakespeare Theatre is a leader in arts education and professional training. For additional information, visit our web site at [www.ShakespeareNJ.org](http://www.ShakespeareNJ.org).

The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey is a member of ArtPride, The Shakespeare Theatre Association, Madison Cultural & Arts Alliance, and is a founding member of the New Jersey Theatre Alliance.

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The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey is a founding member of Shakespeare in American Communities, a program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest.

Additional Opportunities for Students and Teachers

THE SHAKESPEARE THEATRE ACADEMY
The Shakespeare Theatre now offers youth and adult classes in a wide range of disciplines connected with the classics and the art of theatre. Each series of classes meets once a week in one of the Theatre’s beautiful facilities, and gives participants the opportunity to work under the instruction of The Shakespeare Theatre’s artistic and educational staff as well as guest teaching artists. Spring and Fall Classes Available.

SHAKESPEARE LIVE! TOURS AND WORKSHOPS
This acclaimed touring program brings dynamic and visually engaging one-hour productions of Shakespeare’s classics directly into the schools. Each performance includes a comprehensive study guide and a post-performance discussion with the actors. Fun and interactive workshops give students a chance to explore the actor’s approach to bringing Shakespeare’s language to life. In 2019 we will be offering productions of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *Romeo & Juliet*!

PAGES TO PLAYERS: IN-SCHOOL RESIDENCIES
Residencies provide an opportunity for classroom English teachers in grades 4–8 to partner with the Theatre’s skilled teaching artists to explore Shakespeare’s text in-depth, in an exciting, performance-based technique that promotes collaboration, self-confidence, and creativity, while always strengthening Language Arts skills.

SHAKESPERIENCE: NJ STUDENT SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL
This annual spring festival, developed in partnership with the Folger Shakespeare Library and Rider University, gives middle and high school students the opportunity to spend a day at the Theatre experiencing Shakespeare as both actors and audience members. The Shakesperience: NJ Festival celebrates the power of performance as a teaching tool on a statewide scale.

THE JUNIOR / SENIOR SHAKESPEARE CORPS AND THE YOUNG SHAKESPEAREANS
Young actors are given the opportunity to participate in the excitement of the Theatre’s summer season through this program, which offers classes, a final presentation, as well as behind-the-scenes and front-of-house experience. Geared for students ages 10 to 18, admission to this program is through an audition and/or an interview.

www.ShakespeareNJ.org/Education