Performance Essay
Romeo and Juliet Final Project

In groups of no fewer than six, but no more than eight students, you will create a fifteen-minute presentation about an aspect of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*. Your presentation will be a “performance essay,” which will explain an idea or answer a question about the play using dramatized excerpts to support your points. Your group should enlighten the class about some aspect of the play and give us something new and interesting to think about. You can focus on a theme, a character, important imagery, symbols, etc…

Your group will craft a script of around 200 Shakespearean lines and at least two minutes of explanation of your idea. Each person should have at least 25 Shakespearean lines, but most people will have more than that. In addition to acting, you will be responsible for one of the production tasks explained below.

You may present a series of short excerpts or concentrate on a few longer ones; in either case, you must explain clearly how each scene sheds light on your unifying idea. Some groups will choose to create a frame story for their performance through which they will present their explanations. For example, groups past have done the following:

- Group therapy sessions between characters
- Job placement tests
- Time travelers to Verona
- Game Shows
- The Oscars

You will have class time to develop your ideas and to rehearse your presentation; however, you will also need to work outside of class in order to succeed in this group effort.

You may not change the Shakespearean language; however, you may write your narration and explanation in modern English. You will cut the scenes you choose to fit your time limit and to enhance your ideas. It would be impressive if you wrote your narration/explanation in blank verse, but this is not a requirement. You do not have to set your scenes in Verona, but the setting you choose must add meaning to the idea or theme you are presenting.

In order to earn an “A” for this performance, your group must meet the following criteria:

- Everyone’s part is memorized – this does not include narration, although use of notes should be minimal.
- Costuming contributes to the audience’s understanding of the theme or idea being presented.
- Props are used effectively.
- Scenes are well chosen and serve to prove the point, illustrate the theme, or answer the question.
- All parts of the performance and all character identities are clear with no embarrassing gaps.
- All voices are clear and audible, and there are no strange pronunciations.
- Rehearsal is obvious as is a sense of ensemble.
- The audience enjoys the performance.
Production Tasks

Note that each job involves a task that must be completed on time and in a conscientious manner. I will be watching rehearsals and the performance for evidence that each person has completed his or her task effectively.

SCRIPT EDITORS:
The script editor(s) are responsible for creating a script using the scenes the group has selected. They should download the script from the internet, assemble the scenes as revised by the group and in the order in which the group will perform them. Script editors are also responsible for preparing the narration that explains the group’s ideas to the audience. The script editors should also keep up with changes in the script as the group continues to work.

DIRECTORS:
The director(s) are responsible for creating the prompt book, making sure actors have learned their lines, running efficient rehearsals, keeping the group on schedule, and making sure that all the group’s paperwork is completed on time (a prompt book includes a diagram of the action for each scene and notes on how various lines should be delivered). Directors will make sure that someone is holding the prompt book during the performance, ready to supply lines if necessary. The directors will work collaboratively with the actors to develop the action for each scene – directors are NOT dictators!

PROPERTY MANAGER:
The property manager is responsible for identifying needed props, assigning people to create or bring in these props, and for keeping track of the props and returning them when the presentation is over. The property manager will create a written list that includes a description of each prop and how each will be used to enhance the presentation. The property manager should think creatively about props, using them to show the characters’ personalities, thoughts, and intentions.

SET DESIGNER:
The set designer is responsible for designing an appropriate set for the production within the limits of our classroom. The set designer will assign people to create or bring in pieces of scenery, and will supervise the creation of the set. The set designer will produce sketches of the set and lists of materials needed. The sets should be simple. Use hints and suggestions: you won’t have time to build complicated set pieces.

COSTUMER:
The costumer is responsible for determining the clothing the actors will wear. The costumer will also assign people to create or bring in costume pieces and keep track of them. The costumer will produce sketches of each character’s attire. Costumes should enhance the character’s personality or intent. The group can be dressed alike if you choose, and then use hats, scarves,
vests, etc… to identify individual characters. The costumer and set designer should collaborate closely.

ITEMS TO BE COLLECTED FOR A GRADE:
- Finished script
- Prompt book
- Props list (where they will come from, how they will be used, how they will enhance performance)
- Set design (sketch, list of materials, where they will come from)
Costume designs (sketches, list of materials, where they will come from)
Thesis Models (optional)

Use these if your students will have difficulty coming up with a specific, arguable, and clear thesis for their performance essay.

In R&J, Shakespeare shows that _________________ leads to/causes _________________. (be sure your theme is clearly in your thesis)

In R&J, Shakespeare demonstrates that _________________ is the result of _________________. (be sure your theme is clearly in your thesis)

In R&J, Shakespeare shows that until/as long as… _________________. (be sure your theme is clearly in your thesis)

In R&J, Shakespeare shows that despite _________________, _________________. (be sure your theme is clearly in your thesis)
Self and Group Evaluation

Think back to the criteria for an “A” performance and evaluate yourself and your group with that information in mind.

1. How well do you think your group did on the items listed above? Were you pleased with the group’s performance?
2. How well do you think YOU did on the items that pertain to your performance? Were you pleased with your performance?
3. What would you change about your own or your group’s performance?
4. What was your job and how well do you think you did it?
5. If you had a partner, was the work shared equally, or did one person do more?
6. How well did your group work together during the presentation and rehearsal?
7. List the names of your group members, including yourself, and award each person from 1 to 10 points for his or her work, and explain why you allotted points as you did.
**Romeo & Juliet Performance Essay Rubric**

_____/20  Everyone’s part is memorized

_____/10  Minimal use of notes during narration

_____/10  Costumes contribute to audience’s understanding of theme or idea

_____/5   Props used effectively

_____/20  Scenes are well-chosen and prove a point

_____/5   All parts of the performance are clear and audible (no strange pronunciations)

_____/20  Rehearsal is obvious, as is a sense of ensemble

_____/10  Audience enjoys the performance

Total: _____/100

Teacher Comments
Acting Mini-Projects


2) Actor’s Script—Prepare your script as an actor, marking your thoughts on how your character (and others in your scene) should act. You may use a dictionary, the Folger glosses, and me for help as you work through your scene and characterization. You may also use Wikipedia or another resource if you choose the annotation option.

3) Motivation—Attached to your Actor’s Script, explain your thoughts on these questions vital for any actor:
   a) What do you (as your character) want in this scene? How do you know?
   b) How far are you willing to go to get it? What tells you this?
   c) How do you feel at the end of this scene, having gotten or not gotten what you wanted? How do we know? What might this cause later in the play or what caused your actions at the end of the scene?

4) Memorizing all of your lines fluidly and dramatic delivery and preparation is extra credit.

5) Practice the entire scene according to your script, and be ready to perform and try some new ideas in class! We look forward to your thoughtful and engaged performance!

Class-Acted Scenes and Acting Roles Available

Directions: Read all carefully.

Note: The numbers next to the roles denote the number of roles available for performance. There are 26 roles, so this is perfect for a classroom of 26 students. For larger classes, a scene may need to be performed more than once, or additional scenes can be added.

You will present your lines to the class as a part of the scene with the other actors. Your performance should be lively, entertaining, and instructive on your character and the situation. Turn in your actor’s script right after you perform with any accompanying charts and diagrams stapled to your script.
## Roles:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I.i: The Discussion (entire script may start at l. 83)</th>
<th>II.i: The Balcony, II (entire script is ll. 112-end)</th>
<th>III.v Fight (entire script is ll. 131-215)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Benvolio, ll. 163-247</td>
<td>9 Romeo, ll. 112-end</td>
<td>18 Juliet II, ll. 131-215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Romeo, ll. 163-247</td>
<td>10 Juliet, ll. 112-end</td>
<td>19 Lord Capulet, ll. 146-215</td>
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<tr>
<th>I.v: The Party</th>
<th>II.i: The Balcony, I (entire script is ll. 1-111)</th>
<th>IV.i: Juliet Drinks</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 Capulet, ll. 18-47, 61-104</td>
<td>7 Romeo, ll. 1-111</td>
<td>20 Juliet, ll. 15-59</td>
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<td>4 Tybalt, ll. 18-47, 61-104</td>
<td>8 Juliet, ll. 26-111</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Romeo, ll. 48-60, 105-134</td>
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<td>6 Juliet, ll. 48-60, 105-134</td>
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<tr>
<th>II.ii: The Party</th>
<th>II.iii: Drugs</th>
<th>IV.v: Juliet “Dead”</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 Capulet, ll. 18-47, 61-104</td>
<td>11 Friar Lawrence, ll. 1-31</td>
<td>21 Nurse, ll. 1-101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Tybalt, ll. 18-47, 61-104</td>
<td>12 Romeo, whole scene</td>
<td>22 Lord Capulet, ll. 1-101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Romeo, ll. 48-60, 105-134</td>
<td></td>
<td>23 Friar Lawrence, ll. 1-101</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 Juliet, ll. 48-60, 105-134</td>
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<tr>
<th>III.v: The Morning After (entire script is ll. 1-130)</th>
<th>III.v Fight (entire script is ll. 131-215)</th>
<th>V.iii: Dead (entire script is ll. 1-175)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16 Juliet I, ll. 1-130</td>
<td>19 Lord Capulet, ll. 146-215</td>
<td>25 Romeo, ll. 22-120</td>
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<tr>
<td>17 Lady Capulet</td>
<td></td>
<td>26 Juliet, ll. 74-175</td>
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