Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *Romeo and Juliet* Unit

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Act Two Language Guide

Act 2, scene 1

The conflicts of love (play continues to explore complexities of love)

* Why does Shakespeare have Mercutio speak in sexual **puns**?
* “Love” language used by Mercutio: similar viewpoint and expression as the Nurse (1.3)? Different?
  + List 1 comment made by Romeo’s friends he would find amusing:
  + List 1 comment made by Romeo’s friends he would find offensive:
* On Romeo’s new-found love: “Blind is his love, and best befits the dark” (2.1.32). What does Mercutio mean?

Act 2, scene 2

Romeo becoming more isolated from Mercutio and Benvolio

* Romeo says, “He [Mercutio] jests at scars that never felt a wound” (2.2.1). What does Romeo mean?
* Romeo’s view of Juliet
  + In lines 1-32: ‘light-giving’ and ‘upward’ phrases
  + Ex: “light”; “sun”; “arise”; “moon”; “pale”
  + How does Romeo feel about Juliet?
* Thinking about Juliet?
  + Lines 1-32 could be a **soliloquy** (Juliet speaks at line 25)
  + Where does Romeo speak directly to Juliet? To the audience?
  + Romeo thinking about what it feels like to be in love OR about Juliet herself?
* The ‘balcony’ scene (2.2)
  + Word is never used by Shakespeare and not in the stage directions
  + Perhaps due to Romeo’s opening lines, which suggest he is looking upwards.
* What’s in a name?
  + Juliet: “That which we call a rose / By any other name would smell as sweet (2.2.43-4).
  + She points out that what really matters is the object itself, not the name we use to label it. Whatever it were called, its essential quality would remain unchanged.
  + What dramatic effects does Shakespeare achieve by using so many names (lines 33-61) in this exchange?
* **Imagery**: life as a hazardous voyage
  + Lines 82-4: Romeo uses image as a merchant adventurer who would brave dangerous sea journeys to gain the reward of Juliet herself (pilot=sailor).
  + Life as a perilous sea is a tragic theme throughout the play.
  + Why do you think this image would have such a powerful impact on an audience watching the play in Shakespeare’s time? 21st Century image?
  + Romeo compares Juliet to ‘merchandise’: complimentary or condescending?
* Juliet’s language—simple and true? (Lines 90-106)
  + 2 Examples spoken directly and simply:
  + 2 Examples spoken with formality:
* Juliet describes love: five significant **images** connected with love
  + Lines 109-11:
  + Line 114:
  + Lines 118-20:
  + Lines 121-2
  + Lines 133-5
* Juliet’s journey from ‘innocent’ daughter to independence and adult responsibilities of a marriage against her parent’s wishes:
  + Appears 1.3: emphasized she is very young and naïve
  + 1.5: meets Romeo
  + 2.2: pledges to marry Romeo

Act 2, scene 3

* Characters: Focus on Friar Lawrence
  + 1st appearance: Romeo tells him about falling in love & to ask for help
  + **Symbolism**: Why do we see the Friar gathering herbs at daybreak?
  + Why does Romeo talk to Father Lawrence and NOT his own father?
* A world at odds with itself
  + **Antithesis** examples lines 1-30. Find two:
  + Why does Friar Lawrence voice so many antheses when he first appears?

**Theme**: Youth vs. Age (passion/caution; old/young)

**Theme**: Fast vs. Slow

* Romeo—impetuous, full of urgency🡪Rush into marriage w/ Juliet
* Friar Lawrence—Cautious & thoughtful🡪Acting with speed/rashness can = accidents
* Friar Lawrence criticizes Romeo for fickleness and inconsistency in love, BUT agrees to marry them to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the feud between the Montagues and Capulets.

Act 2, scene 4

* Friendship under pressure?
  + Mercutio questions Benvolio—thinks Romeo still loves Rosaline
  + Shakespeare emphasizes how Romeo has withdrawn from friends
* But is it fair?
  + In patriarchal, male-dominated world of the play, young men seem to think it’s acceptable to treat the Nurse (who is probably much older than they are) without much respect. But the Nurse shows real concern for Juliet’s well-being, warning Romeo that he should not seduce Juliet
  + Would you have a different view about her treatment in today’s society?
* Language in the play: verse and prose
  + Most of this scene is in prose, but a few short sections are in verse
  + Why does Shakespeare switch between prose and verse here?

Act 2, scene 5

**Theme**: Fast vs. Slow

* Juliet sent the Nurse at 9 AM, but she met Romeo at noon (2.4.92-3). (No one knows what the Nurse was doing). This increases Juliet’s eagerness for news.
* In this scene, Shakespeare builds up a sense of urgency in Juliet’s **soliloquy**.
* Then, he has the Nurse use all kinds of delaying tricks that frustrate Juliet and increase her impatience.
* Find two techniques the Nurse uses:

Act 2, scene 6

Language in the play: **Personification**

* Romeo: “Love-devouring Death” (2.6.7).
* Personification of Death marrying Juliet keeps appearing in the play (Juliet: 1.5. 134).
* Friar: “The heavens” (2.6.1): heavens “smile” on the marriage vows
* Friar: “after-hours” (2.6.2): the future sorrowfully tells off himself and Romeo
* Why does Shakespeare give the Friar these **images** at this point in the play?

Language in the play: **Imagery**—the Friar warns and praises

* Find and record the lines that create the following images:
  + Image#1: Joyous love as fire and gunpowder, which destroy at the very moment of meeting:
  + Image #2: How over-sweet honey can become revolting and can destroy the appetite:
  + Image #3: How someone in love seems to float on air:
* Can true love be measured?
  + Romeo invites Juliet to tell of their love like a rich description, but Juliet argues that true love does not need words. It is so rich, it cannot be measured, nor can it ever be fully described.
  + Some critics: Here the couple speak to each other like mature and experienced lovers, not youthful and impulsive
  + Do you agree? How has their relationship developed since end of the Act 1?
* Stagecraft: a pause in the action?
  + Many productions insert a break/intermission here? Why?