

Narrative Crossroads: Romeo and Juliet

A character analysis framework for exploring key decisions and motivations

Overview

This module adapts the *Narrative Crossroads* framework for analyzing Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet." Students will roleplay as characters at pivotal moments in the play, exploring motivations and decisions that shape the tragic narrative.

Setting Context

- **Time Period:** Renaissance Italy (14th-15th century)
- **Location:** Verona, Italy
- **Social Context:** Rigid social hierarchy, family honor, arranged marriages
- **Atmosphere:** Passionate, violent, fatalistic

Character Options

Roll	Character	Confrontation	Comprehension	Connection
1-2	Romeo	60%	55%	70%
3-4	Juliet	50%	70%	65%
5	Mercutio	70%	65%	60%
6	Friar Lawrence	40%	75%	60%

Liminal Spaces

Roll	Threshold Moment	Decision Points (with Required Skills)
1-2	The Balcony Scene	1. Deciding to pursue the relationship (Connection) 2. Planning future communications (Comprehension)
3-4	The Fight Scene (Mercutio/Tybalt)	1. Responding to Tybalt's challenge (Confrontation) 2. Choosing between revenge and restraint (Connection)
5-6	Before Taking the Potion	1. Weighing risks of Friar's plan (Comprehension) 2. Deciding to follow through (Confrontation)

Confrontation Questions (Roll 2D6)

Roll	Question
2	How do you respond to threats against your honor?
3	What would make you resort to violence?
4	How do you handle conflict within your family?
5	What physical risks are you willing to take for love?
6	How do you defend those you care about?
7	What gives you courage in moments of danger?
8	How do you react when cornered or trapped?
9	What would you physically fight for?
10	How do you respond to authority figures?
11	What fears do you struggle to overcome?

Comprehension Questions (Roll 2D6)

Roll	Question
2	How do you make difficult decisions?
3	What do you understand about love?
4	How do you view the feud between the families?
5	What secrets do you keep, and why?
6	How do you plan to overcome obstacles?
7	What role does fate play in your life?
8	How do you understand the consequences of your actions?
9	What have you learned about yourself recently?
10	How do you distinguish between infatuation and love?
11	What wisdom guides your choices?
12	How do you envision your future?

Connection Questions (Roll 2D6)

Roll	Question
2	What does your family name mean to you?
3	How far would you go for love?
4	What does friendship mean to you?
5	How do you build trust with others?
6	Who do you confide in, and why?
7	What would you risk everything for?
8	How do you navigate social expectations?

9	What do you hope others see in you?
10	Whose approval matters most to you?
11	What would make you defy your family?
12	What does honor mean to you?

Thematic Elements

- The conflict between love and family loyalty
- Fate versus free will
- The consequences of impulsive decisions
- The role of authority figures
- The nature of true love

Implementation Guide

Classroom Setup (45-60 minutes)

1. **Introduction (5 min):** Explain the *Narrative Crossroads* system and distribute materials
2. **Character Selection (5 min):** Students roll or choose their character
3. **Liminal Space (5 min):** Students roll or select their threshold moment
4. **Character Interview (15-20 min):** Students roll for and answer their three questions
5. **Decision Resolution (10 min):** Students roll for and describe key decision outcomes
6. **Reflection (10-15 min):** Students document insights and connections to themes

Materials Needed

- D6, D10, and D100 dice (or dice rolling app)
- Character sheets
- Journal sheets for responses
- Copy of relevant scenes from "Romeo and Juliet"

Assessment Options

- **Character Journal:** Students submit written responses from the character's perspective
- **Dramatic Monologue:** Students perform their character's internal thoughts at the liminal moment
- **Comparative Analysis:** Students analyze how different characters approach similar dilemmas
- **Alternate Timeline:** Students explore how different decisions might have altered the tragic outcome

ELA Standards Alignment

- Analysis of how complex characters develop (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3)
 - Analysis of theme development (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2)
 - Analysis of author's choices regarding plot structure (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.5)
 - Engaging in collaborative discussions (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1)
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Sample Play: Juliet Before Taking the Potion

Character: Juliet **Skills:** Confrontation 50%, Comprehension 70%, Connection 65%

Liminal Space: Before Taking the Potion - The moment when Juliet must decide whether to drink the Friar's potion.

Decision Point: Juliet must weigh the risks of Friar Lawrence's plan.

Required Skill: Comprehension 70%

Dice Roll: 42 against Comprehension 70% = Success

Outcome: "As you hold the vial in your trembling hand, your mind races through all possibilities. What if the potion is actually poison? What if you wake too early—or too late? What if Romeo never receives Friar Lawrence's message? Yet your analytical mind cuts through the fear. You understand that despite these risks, the

alternative—marriage to Paris while already wed to Romeo—is impossible. Your comprehension of the Friar's character also reassures you; he has been trustworthy thus far, and his plan, though desperate, is sound. With clarity amidst your fear, you raise the vial to your lips. 'Love give me strength,' you whisper, 'and strength shall help afford.' You drink, choosing temporary isolation with the promise of reunion over a life of divided loyalties."

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