

# Freshman English

## Romeo & Juliet Essay

### **THE STAKES:**

This essay is worth 90 points (writing category), towards your **4<sup>th</sup> quarter** grade. Remember that the writing category comprises 20% of your quarter grade and usually consists of only a few assignments. Additionally, this essay is the equivalent of **four and a half** online journal assignments. In short, the stakes are high. Proceed accordingly.

### **ASSIGNMENT:**

Using the 5 paragraph essay format, respond to any **one** of the following essay prompts:

#### **Prompt #1: Causes of a Crisis**

*Essay Question:* What caused this crime?

*Your Task:* Find an intense scene in the play, involving violence and/or death, such as when Mercutio and Tybalt fight, or when the Capulets discover Juliet “dead” in her bed. You must decide what caused the crime.

*Essay Structure:*

- Paragraph 1, YOUR THESIS: Identify three key character actions that resulted in a crisis. Note: You do not have to accuse anyone of being a criminal, since you may find more than one person at fault. Your job is to list all probable causes.
- Paragraphs 2-4, IDENTIFYING THE CAUSES: Explain how each of these causes (actions taken by particular characters) led to the crime.
  - Begin each paragraph with a topic sentence that states one of the causes.
  - For every cause, provide at least two pieces of evidence. At least one piece of evidence must be a quotation from the play, with an in-text citation.
  - Discuss only one cause per paragraph.
- Paragraph 5, RESTATEMENT OF YOUR THESIS: Summarize the key actions that caused the crisis. If you wish to recommend that one character be held more responsible than any other, you may make that recommendation, but be sure there is enough evidence.

#### **Prompt #2: Judgment of a Tragedy**

*Essay Question:* Who is to blame?

*Your Task:* Review all of the most intense moments of the play and investigate how the action boiled over to result in the two deaths of Romeo and Juliet. Who should be punished by the Prince?

*Essay Structure:*

- Paragraph 1, THESIS: Identify three key character actions that resulted in these deaths. Name a single person most responsible for the tragedy.
- Paragraphs 2-4, IDENTIFYING THE ACTIONS: Explain how each of these causes (actions taken by particular characters) led to the deaths of Romeo & Juliet.
  - Begin each paragraph with a topic sentence that states one of the actions.
  - For every action, provide at least two pieces of evidence. At least one piece of evidence must be a quotation from the play, with an in-text citation.
  - Discuss only one action per paragraph.
- Paragraph 5, RESTATEMENT OF YOUR THESIS: Summarize the key actions that caused the deaths.

### **Prompt #3: Let Me Tell You What Love Is**

*Essay Question:* What is true love?

*Your Task:* Create a definition of love and use it to evaluate Romeo's and Juliet's devotion to each other. Does their love meet the criteria you established?

*Essay Structure:*

- Paragraph 1, YOUR THESIS: Define true love by identifying at least three aspects of love that a couple must demonstrate.
- Paragraphs 2-4, EVALUATION: Explain how each of these aspects is or is not demonstrated by Romeo and Juliet as a couple.
  - Begin each body paragraph with a topic sentence that states one aspect of true love.
  - For every aspect, provide at least two pieces of evidence. At least one piece of evidence must be a quotation from the play, with an in-text citation.
  - Discuss only one aspect per paragraph. You may also include extra examples, such as those from personal experience, current events, or pop culture and its celebrities.
- Paragraph 5, RESTATEMENT OF THESIS: Summarize the aspects of true love that Romeo and Juliet did or did not demonstrate.

### **Prompt #4: True Friendship**

*Essay Question:* What is a true friend?

*Your Task:* Create a definition of friendship and evaluate Romeo and Mercutio's or Romeo and Benvolio's friendship with each other. Does their friendship meet the criteria you've established?

*Essay Structure:*

- Paragraph 1, YOUR THESIS: Define true friendship by identifying at least three aspects of friendship that two friends must demonstrate.
- Paragraphs 2-4, EVALUATION: Explain how each of these aspects is or is not demonstrated by Romeo and Mercutio or Romeo and Benvolio as friends.
  - Begin each paragraph with a topic sentence that states one of the aspects of true friendship.
  - For every aspect, provide at least two, if not three, pieces of evidence. At least one piece of evidence must be a quotation from the play, with an in-text citation.
  - Discuss only one aspect per paragraph. You may also include extra examples, such as those from personal experience, current events, or pop culture and its celebrities.
- Paragraph 5, RESTATEMENT OF THESIS: Summarize the aspects of true friendship that Romeo and Mercutio or Romeo and Benvolio did or did not demonstrate

**SUBMISSION:** You will be submitting your essay to Turnitin.com AND turning in a print copy (typed, double-spaced, with 1" margins), in class, on the due date. Always save your essay on a USB drive, with a backup on your home computer, so you do not lose it.

**GRADING:** This essay will be graded using the six traits rubric. Each of the six traits will be worth 1-6 points, with a possible maximum of 36 (6 X 6). This score is then multiplied by 3, with a possible maximum score of 108. The essay is graded out of 90. So scores above 100% are possible; they are also rare. If past experience is any indication, there will be very few 100+% essays over all five sections of my Freshman English classes. I am a hard grader when it comes to essays. Trust me when I advise you to turn in your very best work on this assignment.

**DUE DATE:** Friday, March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Essays will be scored over spring break and the first week or two back from break. You can check online throughout break to see if your essay has been scored.