

Comparative Study of *Romeo and Juliet* and *West Side Story* Unit of Work

(NSW English Stage 5 Syllabus
for the Australian curriculum)

Unit overview and lessons
based on a comparative
study of *Romeo and Juliet* by
William Shakespeare and
West Side Story by Jerome
Robbins and Robert Wise

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Quiller



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and *West Side Story*:
Unit of Work

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Unit of work:	Comparative Study of <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> and <i>West Side Story</i>	Year: 9/10	Stage: 5
Duration:	8 weeks	Assessment:	Comparative essay
Text types:	Film, drama	Language:	Film language
Concept:	Comparative study, argument, intertextuality		
Learning experiences: reading, writing, viewing Links to other learning areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History General capabilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy • Critical and creative thinking • Ethical understanding 			

Essential Learning Goal	Overarching Questions	Key Learning Ideas
For students to undertake a comparative study of texts from different time periods and contexts.	What are the similarities and differences between key texts from different time periods? Why do we compare texts?	How to compare texts from different time periods. Social and historical context of <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> and <i>West Side Story</i> . The narrative elements of <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> and <i>West Side Story</i> .

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Links to NSW English Syllabus for the Australian Curriculum: Stage 5

Objective A: Outcome 2

A student: effectively uses and critically assesses a wide range of processes, skills, strategies and knowledge for responding to and composing a wide range of texts in different media and technologies EN5-2A

Sub-strands	Content descriptions
Develop and apply contextual knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> evaluate the ways film, websites and other multimedia texts use technology for different purposes, audiences and contexts to convey ideas and points of view
Understand and apply knowledge of language forms and features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand that authors innovate with text structures and language for specific purposes and effects (ACELA1553)
Respond to and compose texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand and apply a wide range of reading strategies to enhance comprehension and learning for a range of print, multimodal and digital texts use comprehension strategies to compare and contrast information within and between texts, identifying and analysing embedded perspectives, and evaluating supporting evidence (ACELY1744, ACELY1754) identify, explain and discuss how narrative viewpoint, structure, characterisation and devices including analogy and satire shape different interpretations and responses to a text (ACELT1642)

Objective B: Outcome 3

A student: selects and uses language forms, features and structures of texts appropriate to a range of purposes, audiences and contexts, describing and explaining their effects on meaning EN5-3B

Sub-strands	Content descriptions
Engage personally with texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> engage with a range of increasingly complex language forms, features and structures of texts in meaningful, contextualised and authentic ways analyse and explain how text structures, language features and visual features of texts and the context in which texts are experienced may influence audience response (ACELT1641)
Understand and apply knowledge of language forms and features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> evaluate techniques (eg contrast, exaggeration, juxtaposition or changing chronological order) used in spoken, written and visual texts to, for example, construct plot and create emotional responses
Respond to and compose texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> compose and respond to a wide range of visual texts, eg picture books, graphic novels and films, using a range of appropriate techniques and metalanguage

Objective C: Outcome 5

A student: thinks imaginatively, creatively, interpretively and critically about information, ideas and arguments to respond to and compose texts in a range of contexts EN5-5C

Sub-strands	Content descriptions
Develop and apply contextual knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• compare ways in which spoken, written, visual, multimodal and digital texts are shaped according to personal, historical, cultural, social, technological and workplace contexts• critically respond to texts by drawing on knowledge of the historical context in which texts were composed through a program of wide reading and viewing
Understand and apply knowledge of language forms and features	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• understand and use the language of argument, eg the use of logic, evidence, refutation, ellipsis, irrelevance and circumlocution, and analyse how it affects responses• respond to and compose texts that use inference and figurative language, eg symbolism and allusion, in complex and subtle ways
Respond to and compose texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• respond to and compose a range of sustained imaginative, informative and persuasive texts which are increasingly demanding in terms of ideas, arguments and linguistic, structural, cognitive, emotional and moral complexity• pose increasingly perceptive and relevant questions, make logical predictions, draw analogies and challenge ideas and information as presented by others and in texts• understand and explain the ways in which composers transform ideas and experience into and within texts, including consideration of their insight, imaginative powers and ingenuity

Objective C: Outcome 6


A student: investigates the relationships between and among texts EN5-6C

Sub-strands	Content descriptions
Engage personally with texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• explore and appreciate the similarities and differences between and among more demanding texts
Develop and apply contextual knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• investigate, hypothesise and explain the ways a concept may be reinterpreted over time through different texts and media
Understand and apply knowledge of language forms and features	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• compare the purposes, text structures and language features of traditional and contemporary texts in different media (ACELA1566)• analyse and evaluate text structures and language features of literary texts and make relevant thematic and intertextual connections with other texts (ACELT1772, ACELT1774)• use appropriate metalanguage to identify, describe and explain relationships between and among texts

Respond to and compose texts

- create imaginative texts that make relevant thematic and intertextual connections with other texts (ACELT1644, ACELT1773)

NSW Board of Studies, *NSW Syllabus for the Australian Curriculum: English K-10 Syllabus*, 2012, pp 134-151

Content descriptions	Lesson Outline	Suitable for homework	Resources
<p>Outcome 2 understand and apply a wide range of reading strategies to enhance comprehension and learning for a range of print, multimodal and digital texts</p> <p>Outcome 3 compose and respond to a wide range of visual texts, eg picture books, graphic novels and films, using a range of appropriate techniques and metalanguage</p>	<p>Analysis of Romeo and Juliet</p> <p>Courtly love in the play</p> <p>Guidance</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain, discuss or read notes from the worksheet about courtly love in the play. 2. Ask students to complete the exercise below: <p>Exercise</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Write a list of all the different types of love that exist. 2. What complications (problems) can be found in each of these? 3. Is there always a cost involved in love? What are the potential costs? 4. What internal and external obstacles could prevent the following people from achieving their goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a girl dating a boy gets into trouble with the law - a Muslim girl dating a non-Muslim boy? <p>Romantic tragedy</p> <p>Guidance</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain, discuss or read notes from the worksheet about romantic tragedy. 3. Ask students to complete the exercise below: <p>Exercise</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work in pairs to discuss the balcony scene and write your responses. 2. What is Romeo saying about Juliet in the first eight lines? 3. Juliet is out on her balcony by herself. Consider the context: it is late at night after the ball at which she met Romeo. What mood do you think she is in and what is she thinking about? Use evidence from the text to support your answer. 4. The stage direction ‘aside’ indicates that a character’s words are heard by the audience but not heard by other characters on 		<p>Courtly love in the play worksheet</p> <p><i>Romeo and Juliet</i>, Act 2, Scene 2</p>

	<p>stage. Juliet does not hear Romeo say ‘Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?’ Why does he not speak to her? What do you think he is feeling at this point?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Juliet’s words, ‘O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?’ are sometimes thought to mean ‘where are you, Romeo?’, meaning that she wants to see him. However, the word ‘wherefore’ does not mean ‘where’. Look closely at the context, especially the rest of Juliet’s words and try to work out what Juliet is saying. What point do you think Juliet is making? What does ‘wherefore’ mean? 6. What does Juliet mean when she says the following? ‘What’s in a name? That which we call a rose By any other word would smell as sweet.’ 7. What indications are there in this extract that indicate ‘courtly love’? <p>Interpreting romantic tragedy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A romantic tragedy must have elements of romance. What clues are there in this extract that this a romance? 2. A tragedy must have elements of chaos. What happens in the play that makes this a tragedy? 3. A tragic hero is someone who is noble and worthy. Is Romeo noble and worthy? What makes you think this? Think about what he does and says in this scene and other scenes. 		
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