

Who Am I? (One 60 minute lesson)

In this lesson, students will use quotations from 'Romeo and Juliet' as inspiration to write their own prose descriptions of the characters. They will learn to write their descriptions by showing, rather than telling, the reader what their character feels, thinks and does.

Who is it for?

This learning resource is for students studying Literacy at Key Stage 2 (years 5 & 6).

Learning outcomes

Learners will:

- Plan their writing - selecting the appropriate form and use similar writing models for their own
- Draft and rewrite by structuring their text and making appropriate vocabulary and grammar choices
- Assess the effectiveness of their own and others' writing

You will need

- Access to the production of 'Romeo and Juliet' in the On Demand player.
- A list of quotes from the play, which can be found in the appendix

Activities

1.

Watch the entire play, or a single scene of your choice. The writing exercise will need to focus on characters who appear in whichever scene(s) you choose to show the class.

2.

Explain to the class that every time someone puts on a production of 'Romeo and Juliet', or any play, or any story, they are presenting their interpretation of a character. Tell them it is less important what a character looks like, and more what type of person they are, and how they react to other people.

3.

Divide the class into pairs, and give each pair some quotations from the play about different characters, and see if they can sort them into who they are describing: Romeo, Juliet, Mercutio or Tybalt. As they work, ask them to discuss the meaning of the words in the quotation - it's less important they get the name in the right group, and more important that they understand what kind of character is being described.

4.

Once the pairs have finished, ask each pair to explain a choice they made about one of their quotations to the rest of the class. What did the words in their quotation mean, and why did that make them think about

their chosen character?

5.

Tell the class they will now be writing their own descriptions of the characters, writing about them as they appear to others at different points in the story. Assign each pair (or individual, if you would rather your pupils worked alone), one of the following questions, or another of your own invention:

- Who is Juliet? - What does Romeo think of her when he sees her at the party?
- Who is Juliet? - What is her father's impression of her when he finds out that she won't marry Paris?
- Who is Romeo? - What does Juliet think of him when she sees him at the party and doesn't know who he is?
- Who is Romeo? - What does Tybalt think of him when he sees him at the party?

6.

Model how they should write their answers from the perspective of the observing character, and remind them to **SHOW** the reader who the character is, rather than **TELLING** them. For example, do not write "she is sad", but rather "she throws herself to the floor and slams her fists against the ground". The purpose of this exercise is to have the pupils develop their ability to observe how people act differently at different times, and are seen differently by different people.

7.

If the class find this hard to do using the characters from the play, you could work together on one character in one scene as an example, showing it to them several times. You could also show them pictures of people displaying certain emotions - and ask them to suggest ways to describe how they are feeling by showing, not telling. For example, "he is showing his teeth and frowning" rather than "he is very angry". You could also try calling out different emotions - upset, thrilled, confused - have some members of the class mime that emotion, and have others describe their appearance after they do.

8.

Once the class have written descriptions of how the characters appear in a scene to another character, have some pupils read out their descriptions, and discuss the choices they made, and why.

Appendix

ROMEO:

"He is not the flower of courtesy"

"His face is better than any man's"

"A villain that is hither come in spite, to scorn at our solemnity each night"

"Verona brags of him to be a virtuous and well-governed youth."

"he will make the face of heaven so fine that all the world will be in love with night and pay no worship to the garish sun"

"Beautiful tyrant" Fiend angelical! Dove-feathered raven! Wolvish-ravening lamb!"

JULIET:

"A stranger in the world; she hath not seen the change of fourteen years."

"She doth teach the torches to burn bright! It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear."

"A snowy dove trooping with the crows"

"You green-sickness carrion! You baggage! You tallow-face!"

"Young baggage! Disobedient wretch!"

"The sweetest flower of the field"

MERCUTIO:

"You have dancing shoes with nimble soles: I have a soul of lead so stakes me to the ground I cannot move."

"Thou talk'st of nothing"

"He jests at scars that never felt a wound."

"You have dancing shoes with nimble soles"

TYBALT

"A saucy boy"

"The best friend I had! Honest gentleman!"

"I love thee better than thou canst devise"

"You rat-catcher, will you walk?"

"My dear-loved cousin, and dearer lord"

"Prince of cats"