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Reflections: A Student Response Journal



Romeo and Juliet
William Shakespeare



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Response Journal

To The Student

Although we may read a novel, play, or work of non-fiction for enjoyment, each time we read one, we are building and practicing important basic reading skills. In our ever-more complex society, in which reading has become more and more crucial for success, this, in itself, is an important reason to spend time reading for enjoyment.

Some readers, however, are able to go beyond basic reading techniques and are able to practice higher thinking skills by reflecting on what they have read and how what they read affects them. It is this act of reflection—that is, stopping to think about what you are reading—that this journal is attempting to encourage.

To aid you, we have included writing prompts for each section; however, if you find something that you wish to respond to in the book more compelling than our prompts, you should write about that. We hope you enjoy reading this book and that the act of responding to what you have read increases this enjoyment.

After you read the indicated sections, choose the questions to which you will respond. Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers to these prompts, and there is no one direction in which you must go.

Romeo and Juliet

Act I, Scene I

1. Sampson describes women as being “the weaker vessels.” Consider the role that women play in society today. Do you feel that the Women’s Liberation Movement made a positive or negative effect on women’s role in society? Explain your answer.
2. Gregory chastises Sampson for having poor manners and a crude tongue. Write a paragraph about a character from a book, movie, or real life that you consider rude. Why do you consider this character’s behavior impolite?
3. Prince Escalus is tired of the warring between the Capulets and Montagues. In order to curb the violence, the prince threatens death to anyone caught fighting. Compose a diary entry in which you give your opinion of the death penalty. When, if ever, do you feel the death penalty is justified?
4. The Capulets and Montagues are involved in an age-old conflict. Write an article for your school newspaper about a quarrel or feud that exists between two groups today. Be sure to include how the conflict began and if it seems likely for the two sides to be at peace with each other.
5. Romeo’s family and friends are concerned about his moodiness. He remains aloof by taking long walks and avoiding company. Describe whether you ever felt the need to be alone for any reason. What did you do when you felt this way?

Response Journal

15. Relate a dream you had recently.
16. Romeo has a premonition that something is about to begin which will lead to his death. Some people believe in extrasensory perception (ESP). Have you or someone you know ever experienced an occurrence of ESP? Explain this in a letter to a psychic.

Act I, Scene V

17. Romeo's frame of mind quickly changes when he sees Juliet. He immediately forgets about Rosaline, and Juliet becomes the center of his attention. Write a gossip column for a newspaper in which you discuss Romeo's fickle behavior. Direct the letter to Romeo. You might begin like this:

Dear Romeo,

You claim to love Rosaline totally and completely, yet...

18. Capulet keeps the peace when he prevents a quarrel from starting at his party. Think about someone from history whom you consider a peace-keeper, and compose an epitaph for this person's tombstone.
19. Write a paragraph explaining your thoughts about love at first sight.

Romeo and Juliet

Act II, Scene IV

28. Tybalt challenges Romeo to a fencing duel because Romeo attended the Capulets' party. Imagine you are Tybalt and write a note challenging Romeo to a duel. Explain in the note why you want to fight with him to the death.
29. Mercutio explains to Benvolio that Tybalt is known for his excellent fencing techniques. Write an autobiographical page about at least one skill or talent in which you take pride. How did you develop this skill, why does the skill come naturally to you, what do you like most about it, etc?
30. Mercutio torments Juliet's nurse with bold statements and sarcastic remarks. While the nurse is not amused, Mercutio thinks of himself as a funny person. Imagine your class is trying to decide whom to name as "class clown" in the yearbook. Complete the following discussion by telling your friend whom you nominate as class clown and why.

Friend: I'm not sure whom to choose as class clown. Who are you picking?

You: I think the best person to nominate is...

Act III, Scene II

39. Juliet takes the side of her husband, Romeo, when he is banished for killing Tybalt. She says to her nurse, "Shall I speak ill of him that is my husband?" Create a newspaper article called "Until Death Do Us Part." In the column, discuss your opinion of how much a person should defend and support his or her spouse, even when the spouse has done something wrong. Be sure to back up your opinions.

Act III, Scene III

40. Friar Laurence tells Romeo, "Affliction is enamour'd of thy parts, / And thou art wedded to calamity." Think of someone you know about, either real or fictional, who believes he or she has bad luck. Write a letter to this person explaining your perspective of whether a person can actually be plagued with bad luck, or whether there is another contributing factor, such as a person's attitude.
41. Romeo cannot bear to leave his home and wife. Imagine you have been banished from your country. Make a list of ten places in the world that you would want to visit or live. Explain why each one would lure you to it.
42. Make a list of ten things about your home that you would miss the most if you had to leave. Across from each item, write a short description of why you would miss it.