

## *Romeo and Juliet Synthesis Essay*

Synthesis comes from Greek, meaning “to put together.” We are going to put together several things we have learned during our study of *Romeo and Juliet* and wrap it up in one neat essay.

**Step One:** Look over the plot summaries you have written for each Act. Revise and edit as necessary. Refer to your Step One Handout.

**Step Two:** Select a character from the list that follows

- ❖ Romeo
- ❖ Juliet
- ❖ Lord Capulet
- ❖ Lady Capulet
- ❖ Mercutio
- ❖ Friar Laurence
- ❖ Tybalt
- ❖ Prince Escalus

Write a composition describing the character you have selected (you may wish to choose the same character for which you are writing a diary, if possible). This composition requires that you state an opinion about one of the characters in William Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, much as you would state an opinion about someone you know. Begin with a thesis statement which names the character, the play, the author, and one major characteristic.

Sample: “Tybalt, a character in William Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, is a hostile character.”

Of course, your thesis statement will be much more creative than that one. Continue your composition by describing actions of the character which lead you to believe that he or she fits the label you have selected. Some possible labels you might select from are:

- ❖ hostile: Tybalt
- ❖ impatient: Mercutio, Romeo
- ❖ meddling: Friar Laurence
- ❖ immature: Romeo, Juliet
- ❖ passionate: Romeo, Juliet
- ❖ humorous: Mercutio
- ❖ troubled: Mercutio
- ❖ commanding: Prince Escalus
- ❖ authoritarian: Lord Capulet
- ❖ caring: Lady Capulet
- ❖ practical: Nurse

These are only suggestions! Do not limit yourself to those labels above. Use your own experience and imagination with regard to characterization.

Use your play text and the literary terms glossary in the back of your textbook.

The resources below provide brief essays on some of the characters of *Romeo and Juliet*, and corresponding QuickTime movies. The size of each movie file is indicated on the page which links to the movie and the essay. Since the movies are typically large graphics files, users with slow access may wish to ignore this resource in the interest of time:

- ❖ Prologue to the Play:  
<http://www.lausd.k12.ca.us/lausd/resources/shakespeare/Prologue.2.html>
- ❖ Lovesick Romeo:  
<http://www.lausd.k12.ca.us/lausd/resources/shakespeare/Romeo.1.html>
- ❖ Romeo Fearful:  
<http://www.lausd.k12.ca.us/lausd/resources/shakespeare/Romeo.2.html>
- ❖ Romeo in Juliet's tomb:  
<http://www.lausd.k12.ca.us/lausd/resources/shakespeare/Romeo.3.html>
- ❖ Juliet and her mother:  
<http://www.lausd.k12.ca.us/lausd/resources/shakespeare/Juliet.1.html>
- ❖ Juliet on her balcony:  
<http://www.lausd.k12.ca.us/lausd/resources/shakespeare/Juliet.2.html>
- ❖ Juliet in her tomb:  
<http://www.lausd.k12.ca.us/lausd/resources/shakespeare/Juliet.3.html>
- ❖ Mercutio: <http://www.lausd.k12.ca.us/lausd/resources/shakespeare/Mercutio.html>
- ❖ Tybalt: <http://www.lausd.k12.ca.us/lausd/resources/shakespeare/Tybalt.html>
- ❖ Nurse: <http://www.lausd.k12.ca.us/lausd/resources/shakespeare/Nurse.html>
- ❖ Prince Escalus:  
<http://www.lausd.k12.ca.us/lausd/resources/shakespeare/The.Prince.html>
- ❖ Friar Laurence:  
<http://www.lausd.k12.ca.us/lausd/resources/shakespeare/Friar.Laurence.html>
- ❖ Lord Capulet: <http://www.lausd.k12.ca.us/lausd/resources/shakespeare/Capulet.html>

Your character composition should:

- ❖ Begin with a strong thesis statement which names the character, the play, the author, and states your opinion using either one of the labels listed above or your own;
- ❖ Provide details of the character's actions to support your thesis statement;
- ❖ Include examples in your supporting details;
- ❖ Include a strong closing sentence stating how your details support your thesis statement;
- ❖ Follow the standard conventions of English regarding spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

**Step Three:** Synthesize the plot summary and character description by writing a composition showing how the character you described in Step Two influenced the plot you described in Step One.

The Process:

- ❖ Reread the play, if necessary. Pay special attention to how your character affects the plot.
- ❖ Read your plot description. Become familiar enough with your plot description so that you will not have to keep referring to it.
- ❖ Read your character description composition. Make notes on how he or she influences the plot.

- ❖ Begin your composition with a strong statement naming the play and the author, and stating that the character you selected strongly influenced the plot of the drama. Be sure to name the character.
- ❖ Continue by describing actions of the character which moved the plot from one important moment to another. Describe how other characters reacted to the actions of the character under discussion.
- ❖ Close with a statement regarding the importance of the character to the plot of the drama.

Your synthesis essay should:

- ❖ Begin with a strong opening statement which names the character, the play, and the author, and states that the character influenced the plot of the drama;
- ❖ Include plot details in the body of your composition and connect the character to those plot details;
- ❖ Close with a statement regarding the importance of the character to the plot of the drama;
- ❖ Follow the standard conventions of English regarding spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

By the end of this project, you will have done all kinds of amazing things to show what you know about this play:

- ❖ Written plot summaries that show how well you know what happened;
- ❖ Written a character description that shows how well you know a character;
- ❖ Used thinking skills such as rote memorization (remembering plot details), analysis (labeling a character in terms of his/her actions and describing those actions in support of the label), and synthesis (combining information gained from a variety of sources into one unified composition). These thinking and writing skills are valuable tools – they are the tools of an intelligent, thoughtful human being. Congratulations!