‘Romeo and Juliet’: Knowledge Organiser

Plot breakdown

P	**The Prologue** outlines the main conflict in the play and warns the audience of the tragic fate of Romeo and Juliet.
1.1	The Montagues and Capulets fight in the streets of Verona. Prince Escales swears that any further fighting will be punished by death.
1.2	Paris asks Lord Capulet about marring his daughter Juliet. Capulet tells Paris to wait as she is too young.
1.3	Lady Capulet advises Juliet to agree to marry Paris.
1.5	At the Capulet’s masked ball, Romeo sees Juliet and falls in love with her. They talk, kiss, and fall in love. As they depart, they learn they are from feuding families.
2.2	In the balcony scene, Romeo and Juliet fall deeper in love. They agree to get married.
2.3	Romeo asks Friar Lawrence to marry him and Juliet. Lawrence agrees, thinking it will unite the warring families.
2.6	Friar Lawrence marries Romeo and Juliet.
3.1	Montagues and Capulets fight in the streets. Tybalt kills Mercutio; Romeo kills Tybalt. Prince Escales decides to banish Romeo from Verona.
3.4	Lord Capulet tells Paris that he can marry Juliet in three days’ time.
3.5	After their wedding night, Romeo leaves Juliet for the last time. They have a vision of the other’s death. After Romeo leaves, Lord Capulet orders Juliet to marry Paris, threatening to disown her if she disobeys.
4.1	Friar Lawrence comes up with a plan: Juliet must pretend to be dead and then escape Verona with Romeo. She agrees to the plan.
5.3	Romeo does not learn of Friar Lawrence's plan. He sneaks back into Verona and visits Juliet’s tomb. He thinks she is dead, and kills himself with poison. Moments later, Juliet wakes up. She finds Romeo’s body and kills herself with his dagger. The two families agree to end their feud.

Characters

Romeo (Montague)
Young man. Falls in love with Juliet. Kills himself at the end of the play. “*Did my heart love till now? forswear it, sight! For I ne’er saw true beauty till this night*”; “*Thus with a kiss I die*”

Juliet (Capulet)
13-year old girl. Falls in love with Romeo. Kills herself at the end of the play. “*Wherefore art thou Romeo? Deny thy father and refuse thy name*”; “*O happy dagger, This is thy sheath; there rust, and let me die*”

Lord Capulet (Capulet)
Head of the Capulet family. Juliet’s father. Orders her to marry his friend, Paris. “*She will be ruled In all respects by me*”

Paris (no family)
Nobleman of Verona. Wants to marry Juliet. Killed by Romeo at the end of the play.

Friar Lawrence (no family)
Religious leader in Verona. Agrees to marry Romeo and Juliet, thinking it will bring peace to the city. “*For this alliance may prove To turn your households’ rancour to pure love*”

Mercutio (Montague)
Romeo’s friend. Killed by Tybalt. “*A plague a’both your houses!*”

Prince Escales (no family)
Ruler of Verona. Wants to bring peace to the city. “*If ever you disturb our streets again, Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace*”

Structure of Shakespearean tragedy (Bradley)

Exposition Introduces the main characters and the obstacles they will overcome in the play.

Rising tension The heroes try to overcome the obstacles they face. They suffer.

Catastrophe The play ends with the deaths of the heroes.

Key words

tragic – describes something as being very sad, or as part of a tragedy.

prologue – the introduction to a book, film, or play.

sonnet – a type of love poem. It has 14 lines, a strict rhyme scheme and 10 syllables per line.

feud – a serious argument and sometimes violent argument between two people or groups that continues for a long time.

shrine – a holy place that people go to pray.

status quo – the situation that exists now, without any changes.

obstacle – a problem that must be overcome.

soliloquy – a speech in a play where the character speaks to himself or herself.

hyperbole – exaggeration.

tragic flaw - a character has a tragic flaw when what makes them so special also brings about their downfall.

exile (vb.) – to force them from their home and live in another place.

foreshadow – to show or warn that something bigger, worse, or more important is coming.

catastrophe – a terrible accident.

thesis – the main idea that you want to discuss throughout an essay.

Features of Shakespearean tragedy (Bradley)

The characters are ‘**high-status**’ – they are important people.

The tragic hero **acts**: they **try to do things**. They don’t just let things happen to them.

Whatever they try to do, it always **puts them in a worse situation**.

They are **exceptional** – there is something that makes them special.