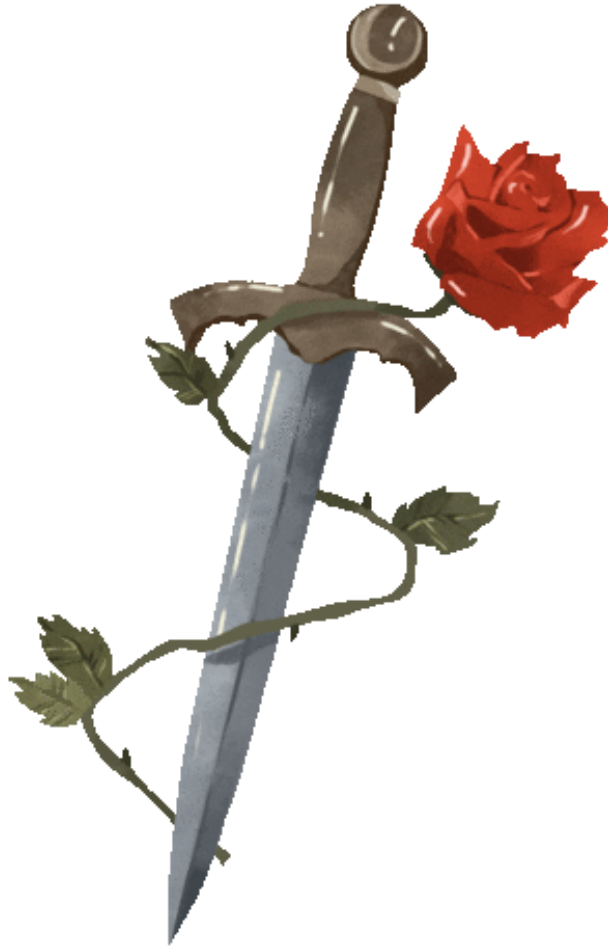


An Assembly of the Montagues and Capulets



Background Guide

Letter from the Dais

Dear Delegates,

We are excited to have you join this committee and take on a role as a member of the Assembly of the Montagues and Capulets! We hope to see many creative ideas come to life, and would love to see you bring your own take to the story of Romeo and Juliet.

Your chairs for this committee will be Piper Hefty (she/her), a Middleton High school senior, and Trinity Kulp (she/her), a Monona Grove senior. Your three sims will be Sam Schoenke (she/her) who is a senior at Middleton High School, Sofia Shepley (she/her) and Danika Castellino (she/her) who are both seniors at Edgewood High School. We are all super thrilled to meet you at MADMUN!

As a Dais, we strongly encourage everyone to explore a version of "Romeo and Juliet", whether by reading the original play or watching a movie adaptation! Approach the committee with an open mind, as we all know that Model UN sessions can take unexpected turns. We require that everyone write a position paper before the committee to fully develop your character.

In addition, we encourage you to think creatively about the historical and cultural context of Romeo and Juliet. Consider how the themes of love, conflict, and loyalty might resonate with your character. Your unique perspective can add depth and richness to the committee's discussions, making the experience more engaging for everyone involved. We hope to see all of you actively participate, including in the backroom, during this committee!

If you have any questions at all about writing your position paper or preparing for the committee, please don't hesitate to reach out to any of us! We're here to help, whether you need guidance on your character's stance, advice on how to approach the topics, or just some clarification on what to expect during the session. We want to ensure you feel fully prepared and confident as you step into your role. Your participation is crucial to the success of the committee, and we're eager to see the creative and thoughtful contributions you'll bring. We are absolutely thrilled to have you join The Assembly of Montagues and Capulets, and we can't wait to see how you shape the debates and discussions!

Sincerely,

The Assembly of Montagues and Capulets Dais

Piper Hefty: heftypiper@gmail.com

Trinity Kulp: trinity.kulp@mgschools.net

Sam Schoenke: samschoenke111@gmail.com

Sofia Shepley: sofia.shepley@edgewoodhs.org

Danika Castellino: danika.castellino@edgewoodhs.org

Topic 1: Addressing the Romantic Relationship between Romeo Montague and Juliet Capulet



Background:

The feud between the two families runs deep, however Romeo and Juliet have secretly fallen in love. In hopes of uniting their families and bringing peace to Verona. The two families have constantly feuded, and this is nothing different. But this time the couple are not giving up their hope of marriage and uniting their families.

Current Situation:

Romeo and Juliet, young and in love, have defied their families' expectations by secretly marrying in hopes of uniting their households and bringing peace to Verona. However, their union, far from healing the rift, has exacerbated tensions. The revelation of their marriage has sparked outrage on both sides, with each family feeling betrayed and dishonored. The Montagues view Romeo's actions as reckless, fearing they will only deepen the hatred between the families. The Capulets, on the other hand, see Juliet's disobedience as a grievous affront to their family's honor, particularly given that she was promised to another suitor, Paris, who holds significant influence in Verona.

As the families grapple with the implications of Romeo and Juliet's relationship, they have resorted to familiar patterns of aggression and retribution. Rather than seeking reconciliation, the Montagues and Capulets are doubling down on their efforts to assert dominance. This has led to increased violence in Verona's streets, with members of each household taking up arms in defense of their family's pride. The city's residents, caught in the crossfire, are growing increasingly desperate for a resolution, but the leadership of both families remains intransigent, more concerned with maintaining their power and honor than with the well-being of their children or the peace of their city.

Despite the rising tensions, there are faint glimmers of hope. Some members of both families, along with neutral parties in Verona, recognize the potential for Romeo and Juliet's love to be a catalyst for change. There are those within the Montague and Capulet households who advocate for a more diplomatic approach, urging their leaders to consider the potential benefits of Romeo and Juliet's union. They argue that the marriage could be a symbolic gesture, a first step towards reconciliation that might eventually end the feud. However, these voices of reason are often overshadowed by the louder, more aggressive factions who are determined to uphold their family's honor at any cost.

Romeo and Juliet, meanwhile, find themselves increasingly isolated. Their hopes for peace are fading as they witness the devastation their love has caused. Desperate to find a way out, they are contemplating drastic measures, aware that their options are limited in a world where their love is seen as a threat rather than a bridge between their families.

Conclusion:

In addressing Romeo and Juliet's relationship, both the Montagues and Capulets face a stark choice. They can continue down the path of violence, likely leading to further tragedy, or they can embrace the possibility of reconciliation, setting aside their pride in favor of peace. This decision is not merely about the fate of two young lovers but about the future of Verona itself. The outcome will determine whether the city remains locked in a cycle of hatred or finds a way to heal the wounds of the past. As the situation stands, the prospect of peace hangs by a thread, depending on whether the families can overcome their animosity and accept that love, even in its most unexpected forms, might be the key to ending their feud.

Topic 2: Ending the Hostility Between the Families



Background:

As you attempt to end the feud between the esteemed Capulets and the renowned Montagues, we encourage you to investigate where the problems started. Unfortunately, the violence between the Capulets and Montagues has continued for so long that *neither party* really knows how it began. It is known, however, that both families grew their wealth and power from very humble beginnings as farmers, masons, and carpenters. In their early days, the families had to compete against each other for both resources and consumers. This led to many verbal conflicts which often escalated to physical fights, particularly in the winter when crops were scarce.

Since then, both the Montagues and Capulets have grown their families and businesses beyond the fields and furnaces - yet their feud still continues. Even before the births of Romeo and Juliet, members of each family have attacked, burned, rampaged and destroyed the property and residences of the other. Despite the fact that neither family knows how it started, one can say for certain that the feud has wreaked havoc on both families, resulting in countless lives lost and even more bridges burned.

Current Situation:

At the present time, the conflicts between the families have become more frequent and violent; with seemingly no end in sight. Particularly, the conflict between Romeo of the Montague family and Tybalt of the Capulet family has led to many serious injuries for those that fight alongside them. In fact, the conflict between the two of them has soured so badly that the Prince of Verona, Prince Escalus, has issued an order making it illegal for the two to interact in any way.

Concerning a means to an end for this conflict, both families have ample manpower and resources that could permanently turn the tide of the contest, but whether the seas roll towards love or war is a choice this committee must make for itself. In light of the toll this conflict has taken on fair Verona, many influential voices have called for a cessation of hostilities, even Prince Escalus himself. It's clear that all of Verona wants the conflict to end, but that can only happen through the members and leaders of both families. So, we leave it up to you.

Conclusion:

While not much is known about the roots of the conflict, the destruction and violence caused by it is known all too well by both families. With that, it is up to you, the representatives from both families in this Assembly, to determine how the feud will end. Given that the roots of the conflict are unknown, *can it be stopped through democracy, communication, and humility? Or, is it so important to defend your ancestors' honor that you are willing to risk life and limb in order to name a victor?*

Questions to Consider

- 1.** What sort of effect can the relationship between Romeo and Juliet have on the citizens of Verona? Will the union of the families help or harm them?
- 2.** Can Romeo and Juliet's relationship be beneficial to the families? Or will it tear them apart?
- 3.** How could you convince the other family of whether or not Romeo and Juliet do belong together?
- 4.** How can the families' deeply ingrained sense of honor and pride be addressed in a way that does not lead to further conflict?
- 5.** What are the potential risks and benefits of involving external powers or alliances in resolving the feud?
- 6.** How does your character relate to the others in the novel? What are your ambitions, ideals, or goals?
- 7.** How does the drama of Romeo and Juliet affect the life of your character?
 - a. How does your character feel about their relationship?
- 8.** How can the Montague and Capulet families be persuaded to end their feud?
- 9.** What measures can be taken to prevent further violence in Verona?
- 10.** Is Friar Laurence responsible for the tragedy due to his role in secretly marrying Romeo and Juliet?
- 11.** What responsibility do Lord and Lady Capulet bear for Juliet's fate?
- 12.** What if Juliet had confided in her parents about her marriage to Romeo?
- 13.** What if Friar John had successfully delivered the letter to Romeo?
- 14.** What if Tybalt had restrained his anger and not confronted Romeo?
- 15.** How should the Prince address the issues of governance in Verona to prevent future unrest?

Character Summary

Lord Montague: The patriarch of the Montague family, Romeo's father. He is concerned about Romeo's melancholy at the beginning of the play and the feud with the Capulets.

Lady Montague: Romeo's mother and Lord Montague's wife. She is deeply concerned about her son and dies of grief after Romeo is exiled.

Benvolio: Romeo's cousin and friend, known for his peacekeeping nature. He often tries to defuse violent situations and looks out for Romeo.

Mercutio: A close friend to Romeo and relative of Prince Escalus. Mercutio is witty, playful, and often provides comic relief, though he also has a darker, cynical side.

Balthasar: Romeo's dedicated servant, who brings Romeo the news of Juliet's "death," which leads to the tragic conclusion of the play.

Lord Capulet: The head of the Capulet family, Juliet's father. He is hot-tempered and authoritative, but also cares deeply for Juliet, wishing to arrange a good marriage for her.

Lady Capulet: Juliet's mother and Lord Capulet's wife. She is eager for Juliet to marry Paris and is more distant in her relationship with Juliet.

Tybalt: Lady Capulet's nephew and Juliet's cousin. Tybalt is aggressive, fiery, and despises the Montagues. His actions contribute significantly to the tragic events of the play.

Nurse: Juliet's faithful nurse and confidante. She has cared for Juliet since infancy and is more of a mother figure to her than Lady Capulet. The Nurse provides comic relief but also plays a key role in Juliet's secret romance with Romeo.

Sampson: A servant of the Capulet household. He is involved in the opening brawl of the play and expresses his loyalty to the Capulets through his disdain for the Montagues.

Friar Laurence: A Franciscan friar who is a confidant to both Romeo and Juliet. He marries the couple in secret and devises a plan to reunite them after Romeo's banishment, which ultimately fails.

Friar John: A fellow friar tasked with delivering a crucial message from Friar Laurence to Romeo. Unfortunately, he is unable to deliver the message, leading to the tragic ending.

Rosaline: The woman Romeo is infatuated with at the beginning of the play. Her rejection of Romeo sets the stage for his meeting with Juliet.

Paris: A nobleman and kinsman to Prince Escalus. He is chosen by the Capulets as a suitor for Juliet, but his intentions are thwarted by Juliet's love for Romeo.

Prince Escalus: The Prince of Verona who seeks to maintain peace between the feuding Montague and Capulet families. He is authoritative and impartial, but ultimately powerless to prevent the tragedy.