

Romeo & Juliet Act I Enrichment Activity

Literary Analysis: Dialogue and Stage Directions

Dialogue is conversation between or among characters. In prose, dialogue is usually set off with quotation marks. In drama, the dialogue generally follows the name of the speaker, as in this example:

BENVOLIO. I aimed so near when I supposed you loved.
ROMEO. A right good markman. And she's fair I love.

Dialogue reveals the personalities and relationships of the characters and advances the action of a play.

Stage directions are notes in the text of a play that describe how the work should be performed, or staged. These instructions are usually printed in italics and sometimes set in brackets or parentheses. They describe scenes, lighting, sound effects, and the appearance and physical actions of the characters, as in this example:

Scene iii. FRIAR LAWRENCE's cell.
[*Enter.* FRIAR LAWRENCE *alone, with a basket.*]

As you read, notice how the dialogue and stage directions work together to help you “see” and “hear” the play in your mind.

PART I. DIRECTIONS: Read the following passages from Act I and then use the lines provided to answer the questions in complete sentences.

TYBALT. Patience perforce with willful choler meeting
Makes my flesh tremble in their different greeting.
I will withdraw; but this intrusion shall,
Now seeming sweet, convert to bitt'rest gall. (Act I, Scene v, ll. 88–91)

1. In the context of the scene, what does Tybalt mean by “this intrusion”

2. What do the lines reveal about Tybalt's personality?

3. What do the lines foreshadow for the plot of the play?

PART II. Summarizing/ Paraphrase- DIRECTIONS: Use the text to answer the following questions about what you read in Act I of the play.

1. In your own words, summarize what is happening in Verona based on lines 1–4 of the Prologue.

2. Later in Scene i, Benvolio and Montague talk about how unhappy Romeo has been. Then, they see Romeo. Benvolio tells Montague to leave so that he can talk to Romeo alone.

Montague says, “I would thou wert so happy by thy stay / To hear true shrift.”

Put this wish into your own words.

3. In Scene iii, Juliet’s mother tells her to,

“Read o’er the volume of young Paris’s face.”

Refer to that passage (lines 81–92) and restate the advice Lady Capulet gives to her daughter.
