

# [Themes in romeo and juliet](https://assignbuster.com/themes-in-romeo-and-juliet/)

[](https://assignbuster.com/)[Literature](https://assignbuster.com/essay-subjects/literature/), [William Shakespeare](https://assignbuster.com/essay-subjects/literature/william-shakespeare/)

Themes in Romeo and Juliet The story of Romeo and Juliet continues to interest and engage viewers and readers to the present day. One of the reasons for this may be that it explores universal themes which are still of interest and concern to everyday people. The play makes us think about issues, such as love, loyalty to one’s family and friends, authority, and fate. Each of these themes is discussed below in relation to the play. Loyalty Romeo and Juliet contains many examples of loyalty of one person or group to another person or group. Loyal actions in the play do not always have positive results and cannot always be seen to have been the best course of action. At times, as we see in the opening of the play, loyalty can lead to violence and people behaving dishonestly or wrongly. Student Tasks 1. In your groups, discuss and decide on a definition of loyalty. In your answer consider the following: What is loyalty and how does a loyal person behave? Where does loyalty start and stop? 2. Think of at least three examples of when a person or group shows loyalty in Romeo and Juliet. Write down: a. Who was loyal to whom? b. How they were loyal–what did they do that showed loyalty? c. What the result of their actions–did their loyalty have positive or negative outcomes in the end? 3. Using the scenes of Romeo and Juliet that we have studied in class, find three quotations that show that a character is feeling torn or pulled in two directions by their loyalties. Write down the quotation and explain what it shows about the character and to whom they are loyal. Authority Authority is illustrated and explored in Romeo and Juliet. In Shakespeare’s time, authority was very closely linked in people’s minds to the natural order of the world and to the will of God. For example, the authority of the king or queen was believed to be given to them by God. Therefore, anyone who went against the authority of the king or queen would be considered to be committing a crime or sin against the wishes of God. People who went against authority were seen as going against the natural order and many people believed that this could only end in disaster. Student Tasks 4. There are many other words related to the word ‘ authority’. For example: authoritarian, authorize, authoritative. Look up each of these words and find out what form of word that they are, for example, noun, adjective, adverb. Write a brief definition for each of the words including the word ‘ authority’. 5. Find and write down three examples from the play where one person or group has authority over another group. 6. Describe three situations in the play when a person or group disobeys authority. What is the end result in each situation? Which of these examples of disobedience are the most serious ones in your opinion? 7. Are there any situations in Romeo and Juliet where people in authority do not do their jobs properly? For example, do the people in authority always carry out their jobs as carefully and as well as they should? 8. What message or idea do you think Shakespeare might have wanted to say in Romeo and Juliet about the nature of authority and about obeying authority? Love Love in Romeo and Juliet is presented almost as a disease that makes you physically ill and that makes you behave in a foolish way. Student Tasks 9. Read the two statements about the theme of love in Romeo and Juliet. As a group, choose the statement that you agree with more and find quotations and examples from the play to support your opinion. Be prepared to contribute your ideas to a class discussion. a. “ Romeo and Juliet" is one of the greatest love stories of all times. " b. “ Romeo and Juliet" is more about passion, hate, and the importance of obedience than it is about love. " Fate versus free will In Shakespeare’s time, fate was seen as your personal fortune or destiny that was predetermined by God. You could escape or avoid it. Your fate was said to be aligned with the stars (that is why astrologers have such importance for some people). On the other hand, there is free will. This is where a person takes control and makes his or her own destiny thereby changing the will of God. This was seen as a sin. Student Tasks 10. Write down three examples of fate or free will from Romeo and Juliet. 11. What message was Shakespeare trying to convey about fate and free will?