

# Distinguishing social bounds in romeo and juliet with language essay sample

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Language is a tool everybody uses everywhere and all the time. Whether verbal or non-verbal, it helps each and every one person to communicate. Although, language is most likely used to help convey different message, the use of language in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* is how the audience gets a sense of different types of character. Language can be used to show literary devices and tell the audience about the dialogue in the play. The use of language is significant in revealing different social classes and character types in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Literary devices are used more frequently by high class citizens when compared to citizens of low class. A literary device such as foreshadowing is commonly used by main characters in the play. Juliet says to Romeo, "Methinks I see thee, now thou art below, as one dead in the bottom of a tomb. either my eyesight fails, or thou look'st pale" (3. 5. 55-57).

Foreshadowing gives subtle clues and helps prepare the audience for important upcoming events. This line which gives prompts about Romeo being dead, is between two main characters. Shakespeare, would not let a low class character such as the nurse to reveal a major part of the play since this play is a tragedy. Additionally, high class characters use metaphorical language throughout the play to a greater extent as to low class characters.

In the play, Romeo compares Juliet to the sun " But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks? It is the east, and Juliet is the sun." (2. 2. 2).

Shakespeare made main characters use metaphors often because the literary device adds complexity and depth to speech given out by a character. Thus, metaphors will help develop the character and show the viewer about his or her emotions. With speech from a high-class character <https://assignbuster.com/distinguishing-social-bounds-in-romeo-and-juliet-with-language-essay-sample/>

being complex, the audience will spend more time on the main character rather than characters of the lower classes. Literary devices not only bring more attention upon the high-class citizens in *Romeo and Juliet*, but they also add depth and a dramatic affect throughout the play.

In Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, the dialogue can distinguish different levels of social class. The content, what the characters speak about, can show what social class they fall under. In the play low class servants such as Sampson and Gregory talk about topics insignificant to the plays plot. They state many puns and play on words when speaking. Sampson says to Gregory " Ay, the heads of the maids, or their maidenheads, take in what sense thou wilt." (1. 1. 23). However, Lord Capulet, who is associated among the high class characters, speaks upon important issues such as marriage in the play. Shakespeare let high class characters talk about important matter in the play because the content is what develops the plot and when the main characters develop the plot, viewers connect to the main character through emotional involvement which hooks the audience to the play.

Furthermore, the structure, how the characters speak, can also separate low and high class citizens in *Romeo and Juliet*. One can easily tell if a character is high or low social class if that character uses the word ' sir' in his speech. The servingmen in the play always address high class characters as ' sir'. For example, a servingman says to Capulet, " You shall have none ill, sir, for I'll try if they can lick their fingers." (4.. 2. 3). In contrast, when low class characters talk to other low class characters neither say ' sir' to one another. Also, when high class characters talk to characters of low class they address

low class characters by name. These examples shows that high class characters have authority over low class characters. When one addresses another as ' sir' it shows that they are at the lower end of the authority scale; which in turn can also mean they are at the lower end of the social class scale. Shakespeare uses and elements of texts very well in conveying which characters are where on the social class hierarchy.

Characters are well differentiated from the many social class levels in Romeo and Juliet because of the literary techniques used and the aspects of text in the play. Determining social class in a play written in the 1800's can definitely help the audience understand and get a sense of the different character and their emotions throughout the plot.