

Romeo and Juliet Coursework Year 10

Essay title:

Examine the significance of the character of
Mercutio in Romeo and Juliet

Name: _____

Introduction

This will be your
introduction

Romeo and Juliet is one of Shakespeare's most famous plays. Love is the play's most dominant theme, particularly the power of love at first sight. Despite being known as the most famous tragic love story in literature, Romeo and Juliet is also humorous and light-hearted in parts. Mercutio, Romeo's best friend, is a highly entertaining, quick-witted character who amuses the audience greatly in the first half of the play. In many ways he is the complete opposite to Romeo and yet the pair appear to share a strong friendship.

Mercutio first appears in Act 1, scene 4....

Mercutio is (explain what kind of mood he is in)

In contrast, Romeo is (explain how Romeo is feeling)

Mercutio shows he is a good friend by (explain what he does)

Romeo says love is....

Mercutio responds by showing he views love as a physical act (explain what he says and how the audience would react to this. What does it reveal about his character?)

Romeo mentions a dream he has had (explain what dreams meant to people in Shakespeare's time)

However, Mercutio (explain how Mercutio responds to Romeo's talk of dreams)

He entertains the audience with an imaginative speech about....(explain what his speech is about and use a couple of quotations)

His speech becomes more sinister towards the end (provide a quotation and explain)

When Romeo calms him down and states that he, "talks of nothing", Mercutio says...(explain what he says and what it shows?)

Overall, the scene shows Mercutio to be (explain what the audience's impression of Mercutio would be by the end of the scene)

Writing
about act
1, scene 4

Set the scene - Explain why Mercutio and Benvolio are looking for Romeo. Explain where Romeo has gone and comment on how the audience know this but the characters don't.

Mercutio calls out ... Explain how Mercutio calls out to Romeo. Explain what it shows about him and refer to how the audience would react.

Mercutio further entertains the audience by... Explain his pretending to be a conjuror. Explain what his comments about Rosaline show about his view of love.

Mercutio is annoyed that Romeo is still depressed over his unrequited love because... Explain how Mercutio believes there is no point in loving someone who does not love you back.

End by describing how Mercutio and Benvolio leave without Romeo because they realise he does not want to be found.

Writing about Act
2, scene 1

Conclude by stating how this scene is effective – Its is short and lively whilst the scene either side are long and more romantic – clever juxtaposition to maintain audience interest.

Set the scene – Who enters the stage. What has happened in the scene before unbeknown to Benvolio and Mercutio?

Mercutio enters the stage and asks... What does he ask and what does it show about his friendship with Romeo?

When Benvolio reveals that Romeo has not been home all night, Mercutio assumes he...

He calls Rosaline a_____. Explain what this reveals about his view of women. Explain how the audience know more than Mercutio

Benvolio reveals that Tybalt has sent a challenge to Romeo. Explain how Mercutio responds to this. What metaphors does he use? Does he think Romeo is fit to encounter Tybalt at the moment?

Mercutio then gives a lively explanation of Tybalt's fighting style. He mocks Tybalt humorously. Provide examples. What does it show about Mercutio? Why would it entertain the audience? What is the audience's view of Tybalt?

When Romeo arrives, Mercutio makes fun of him. Explain how and why he mocks Romeo.

Mercutio scolds Romeo for giving them the 'slip' last night but Romeo insists he had good reason which he cannot reveal. Mercutio assumes - explain what Mercutio thinks Romeo was doing – use a quote and show what it reveals.

Mercutio is pleased Romeo is in a better mood - use a quotation - **and they engage in some clever word play** – provide examples and explain how this shows the audience what their friendship is like when Romeo is back to his usual self.

When the Nurse arrives, Mercutio shows a lack of respect towards her by saying – explain what he says and what the audience would think of this.

Mercutio sings a rhyme about the Nurse – explain what it shows about his character.

Mercutio leaves Romeo conversing with the Nurse. He has no idea what they are speaking about and sadly never learns the reason for Romeo's improved mood.

Act 3, scene 1

Mercutio's final scene is Act 3, scene 1. The scene begins ...describe how the scene begins. Comment on the atmosphere created using language analysis from your grid notes. Comment on the moods of both Benvolio and Mercutio.

Mercutio replies ...explain how he replies to Benvolio's words of concern. What does it show?

Tybalt arrives with other Capulet friends. Explain how this is dramatically effective. What is Mercutio's response to the arrival of Tybalt?

When Tybalt asks to have a word with Mercutio, he replies... Use quotation and explain why he responds in this way.

Tybalt asks if Mercutio "consort'st" with Romeo and Mercutio replies by... Explain how he changes the meaning of the word and uses it to mock Tybalt. How is this typical of Mercutio's character?

To add dramatic tension, Benvolio says...What does he say and why?

However, Mercutio will not back down... Use quotation. Mercutio is not a Montague so why is he so confrontational with Tybalt?

When Romeo arrives, adding further tension, Mercutio expects him to take on Tybalt's challenge...Use quotation. Remember that Mercutio has no idea about Romeo's marriage to Juliet so he has no reason to expect Romeo to refuse Tybalt's challenge.

Tybalt insults Romeo by calling him ... What does he say and why was it such a bad insult in Elizabethan times?

However, to Mercutio's surprise, Romeo replies ... What excuse does Romeo give. How would this be dramatically effective. Remember that the audience know Romeo's reason but Mercutio doesn't.

Mercutio is angered by Romeo's apparent cowardice....Explain what he does and why.

Tybalt is reluctant to fight with Mercutio at first but ...Why does he retaliate?

Romeo tries to stop the fight... Explain how he attempts to intervene – use quotations – detail the consequences of his interference.

The next section which sees Mercutio staggering around the stage and using effective language to describe his wound, is very important. Explain who he blames, how he uses language effectively including similes and metaphors and describe how his initial joking is typical of his character. What does he say to Romeo about his interference and why is this emotive and tragic? This section will be quite detailed and requires you to use your scene and your grids to help you.

Romeo realises he must avenge his friend's "untimely" death – Explain how he realises he is at fault.

Conclude by stating how Mercutio's death is a turning point in the play. Use your notes to help you to sum up how significant he is as a character.