

The Prologue, *Romeo and Juliet*

With a partner, use the annotation guide below to add notes to the Prologue.

[1] Two households, both alike in dignity,
status

beautiful
 In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,

old feud rebellion
 From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,

civilized
 Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.

[5] From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
deadly offspring enemies

ill-fated
 A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life;

unfortunate pitiful
 Whose misadventured piteous overthrows
 connotation)

argument
 Do with their death bury their parents' strife.

The fearful passage of their death-mark'd love,

[10] And the continuance of their parents' rage,
continuing anger

not
 Which, but their children's end, nought could remove,

subject
 Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage;

The which if you with patient ears attend,

work
 What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.

Who/Where: There are two rich families in a beautiful town called Verona.

What/Why: There is an old disagreement that is causing new problems.

Who/Where: The children of the enemies will fall in love and commit suicide.

Words associated with nobility/peace (positive)

What: The children's deaths will end the feud.

Overwhelmingly negative, morbid, violent diction--since there is more negative than positive word choice, we know that the outcome will be tragic.

How: Their death is the only way that the feud would stop.

What: Their story is the subject of the play; listen carefully, and if you miss anything, we will try to fill you in.

Annotation Guide

Step 1: Use a dictionary to choose a synonym for the underlined words. Write the synonym above each word, and make sure that you are using the appropriate part of speech. One partner should then read the new “translation” aloud.

Step 2: Annotate directly on the text for details. Consider the following questions:

- o **Who** are the characters?
- o **Where** is this story taking place? What is the setting?
- o **When** does the action take place?
- o **What** seems to be the conflict?
- o **Why** is there a conflict? Is there any background information?

Step 3: Determine the meanings of words and phrases with figurative or connotative meanings. What patterns emerge? Highlight these patterns, and note the effect of these words and phrases. (Orange for positive diction, and red for negative diction.)