

6-14-2010

# In the Space Between Action and Reaction Individuals Have Choice: Romeo and Juliet and the Consequences of Choice [8th-9th grade]

Monica Gonzalez  
*Trinity University*

Tina Harper  
*Trinity University*

Follow this and additional works at: [http://digitalcommons.trinity.edu/educ\\_understandings](http://digitalcommons.trinity.edu/educ_understandings)



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

---

## Repository Citation

Gonzalez, Monica and Harper, Tina, "In the Space Between Action and Reaction Individuals Have Choice: Romeo and Juliet and the Consequences of Choice [8th-9th grade]" (2010). *Understanding by Design: Complete Collection*. 142.  
[http://digitalcommons.trinity.edu/educ\\_understandings/142](http://digitalcommons.trinity.edu/educ_understandings/142)

This Instructional Material is brought to you for free and open access by the Understanding by Design at Digital Commons @ Trinity. For more information about this unie, please contact the author(s): . For information about the series, including permissions, please contact the administrator: [jcostanz@trinity.edu](mailto:jcostanz@trinity.edu).

# UNDERSTANDING BY DESIGN

## Unit Cover Page

Unit Title: In the Space Between Action and Reaction Individuals Have Choice:  
*Romeo and Juliet* and the Consequences of Choice

Grade Level: 8-9

Subject/Topic Area(s): English

Designed By: Monica Gonzalez and Tina Harper

Time Frame: 8 Weeks

School District: Trinity Valley School

School: Trinity Valley School- Middle School Division

School Address and Phone: 7500 Dutch Branch Road  
Fort Worth, Texas 76133

817-321-0100

### **Brief Summary of Unit** (Including curricular context and unit goals):

Middle school students struggle with the internalization that choices have consequences. Adolescence is a time in their life when, perhaps for the first time, their choices have lasting ramifications. At the same time, students are acutely aware that life is full of contradiction; certain events in life are indeed beyond their control. The choices they make in these situations may determine their direction into adulthood.

The purpose of this unit is to allow students to examine the consequences of choices made in a world that is controlled by adults. Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* serves as the vehicle toward understanding the consequences of choices. At the heart of tragedy is the real world lesson that choices made by characters seal their fate. Through purposeful analysis of characterization and the elements of tragedy, students will experience how theatre exposes that the individual still has choice.

Student analysis of language and sentence construction within *Romeo and Juliet* will also help students to understand the effects of word choice and sentence construction. Shakespeare used grammar to illuminate the personality of characters, to provide

rhythm, and to engage his audience. Students will have the opportunity to both practice and utilize sentence manipulation and word choice to exhibit their understanding of the role grammar plays in the author's ability to effectively communicate his message.

The unit culminates in student creation and performance of an original piece of work incorporating the elements of tragedy. The final product will also incorporate the manipulation of sentence structure and word choice in the revisions process to allow students the opportunity to reveal a unique message through his/her own perspective. Through the writing and performance process, students will communicate the central message, "In the space between an action and reaction you have choice." - Steven Covey

**Unit:** In the Space Between Action and Reaction Individuals Have Choice:  
*Romeo and Juliet* and the Consequences of Choice

**Grade:** 8/9

## Stage 1: Desired Results

### Established Goals (Standards)

#### *TEKS or Scope & Sequence (Grade 9)*

(1) Reading/Vocabulary Development. Students understand new vocabulary and use it when reading and writing. Students are expected to:

(2) Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Theme and Genre. Students analyze, make inferences and draw conclusions about theme and genre in different cultural, historical, and contemporary contexts and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding. Students are expected to:

(4) Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Drama. Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of drama and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to explain how dramatic conventions (e.g., monologues, soliloquies, dramatic irony) enhance dramatic text.

(5) Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Fiction. Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of fiction and provide evidence from text to support their understanding.

(13) Writing/Writing Process. Students use elements of the writing process (planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing) to compose text.

(14) Writing/Literary Texts. Students write literary texts to express their ideas and feelings about real or imagined people, events, and ideas. Students are responsible for at least two forms of literary writing.

(24) Listening and Speaking/Listening. Students will use comprehension skills to listen attentively to others in formal and informal settings. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to:

25) Listening and Speaking/Speaking. Students speak clearly and to the point, using the conventions of language. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to give presentations using informal, formal, and technical language effectively to meet the needs of audience, purpose, and occasion, employing eye contact, speaking rate (e.g., pauses for effect), volume, enunciation, purposeful gestures, and conventions of language to communicate ideas effectively.

### Understandings

*Students will understand that...*

- 1. Each choice has consequences*
- 2. Every word in a sentence has purpose*
- 3. The way a sentence is constructed affects meaning*
- 4. Great stories communicate authentic emotion*
- 5. The effectiveness of a performed piece depends on audience engagement*

### Essential Questions

1. How much control does one have over his/her own life?
2. What role does emotion play in great stories?
3. How does grammar help me communicate exactly what I want to say?
4. How do I communicate with my audience so that they will listen?

#### **Knowledge**

*Students will know...*

#### **Skills**

*Students will be able to...*

1. The elements of tragedy
2. Vocabulary necessary to understand the story
3. Characterization
4. The historical context of Shakespeare and *Romeo and Juliet*
5. Sentence elements/construction
6. Active listening/speaking
7. Literary elements and devices

- *Identify and implement the elements of tragedy*
- *Construct and manipulate sentences*
- *Identify the elements of a sentence*
- *Identify and incorporate new vocabulary in writing*
- *Provide evidence to support their answer*
- *Perform a piece of writing using active speaking*
- *Identify and employ active listening*
- *Analyze literary elements and poetic devices for purpose and effect*

## Stage 2: Assessment Evidence

### Performance Task:

1. **Students will create a piece of writing using the elements of tragedy in the genre of their choice.**
2. **Students will follow the writing process to ensure strong development of character and thought, imitating the steps writers utilize to strengthen their work.**
3. **Students will perform their piece for classmates and family on stage.**

### Other evidence:

*(quizzes, tests, academic prompts, self-assessments, etc.)*

*note – these are usually included where appropriate in Stage 3 as well)*

*In Class Performance of Romeo and Juliet*

*In Class Discussion*

*Active Listening Quiz*

*Readers/Writers Notebook*

*Thayer Method Questions*

*Romeo and Juliet Study Guide*

*Romeo and Juliet Shield*

*Tragedy Process Assessment*

*Writers Circle*

## Stage 3: Learning Activities

*(Steps taken to get students to answer Stage 1 questions and complete performance task)*

### Day 1:

- Introduce Essential Questions- As students walk into the room have them write the unit questions in their reader's/writer's notebook along with the first 3-5 words that come to mind when they view each question. Divide class into 4 groups; give each group one of the unit questions. Have each group come up their best group answer to the questions assigned and share with the class.
- **How much control does one have over his/her own life?** *Sides Debate:* After reading "Appointment in Baghdad," a short story illustrating the lack of control over one's own destiny and *Invictus*, by William Ernest Henley a poem about man's control over his fate, have students determine whether they believe man has ultimate control over his destiny or whether man is at the mercy of fate. Mark one side of the room as man's control and the other side of the room as fate's control. Allow time for each side to organize a cogent argument for their choice. Have each side present and allow students to move sides if they are convinced by the opposing view point. Explain to students that *Romeo and Juliet* centers around decisions made by two young lovers surrounded by a world controlled by their parents.
- Class discussion- How might the desires of *Romeo and Juliet* conflict with the desires their parents have for them?
- HW: Read the Prologue for *Romeo and Juliet*; in your reader's notebook make predictions about the decisions the main characters will make based on the setting.

### Day 2:

- Entrance/Exit Ticket- as students walk into class pass out post-it notes and ask them to answer the question: What does the word “tragedy” mean in your world? Think-Pair-Share
- As a class discuss why writers choose tragic stories: **What role does emotion play in great stories?**
- Create a class list of reasons for tragic writing and the types of words and emotions present in tragic works based on previous readings.
- Pass out Romeo and Juliet Study Guide Part A: Elements of Tragedy, the History of Shakespeare and His Work and the List of Characters. Show clips of modern tragedy exhibiting the main elements of tragedy (the tragic hero, tragic flaw, ending of death). Using “Elements of Tragedy” handout, have students work in groups to create a visual representation of the elements of tragedy. Have each group present their work and hang it on the walls around the room for the remainder of the unit (throughout the unit students will have the opportunity to add specific examples of tragedy from *Romeo and Juliet* to their Visual Representation)
- Exit Slip- Predict elements about the culture of Elizabethan England (the time of Shakespeare) that might have caused Shakespeare to write a tragedy?
- Homework: Read “The History of Shakespeare” in your study guide; in your readers/writers notebook, explain whether or not your prediction was correct and write one questions about the historical context in which Romeo and Juliet was written.

#### Day 3-4:

- Discuss homework, answer questions
- “Pecha Kucha” (Japanese chit chat style of presentation) about the historical context of *Romeo and Juliet*
- Character Introductions- Wagon Wheel: give each student a character from the character list in the study guide. Have each student use the study guide to assume the personality of the character descriptions. Who are their enemies? Who do they love? Who is their family?
- Pass Out Study Guide for Act I
- Pass Out and Explain Shield Assignment (Act I Shield to be completed as a class)
- Read and Discuss Act I
- HW: Study Guide (Diagram vocabulary sentences)

#### Day 5:

- Discuss Homework- **How does grammar help me communicate exactly what I want to say?** Discuss the language of Shakespeare- how does his language both hinder and add to the message he is trying to communicate? What impact does the method of communication (drama) have on the effect of his language? How does his language impact characterization?
- Romeo and Juliet Act I read and discuss in class
- Possibilities for Act I Shield
- HW- R&J Act I Study Guide

#### Day 6-7:

- Read and discuss Act I in class
- Class Shield for Act I
- HW- R&J Act I Study Guide Due Tomorrow

#### Day 8:

- **Act I Shield Due**
- Groups add elements of tragedy to illustrated definition of tragedy on the wall
- Pass out Act II Study Guide; discuss vocabulary and sentence structure
- Reader’s/writers notebook- write your favorite vocabulary sentence from the study guide and diagram the sentence; share. Why do you enjoy this sentence? How does the sentence structure impact meaning and emotion?
- Read and discuss Act II in class
- HW- R&J Act II Study Guide; Extra Credit- Act II Shield

#### Day 9-11:

- Read and discuss Act II in class
- HW- R&J Act II Study Guide; Extra Credit- Act II Shield due day 12

#### Day 12-14:

- Discuss study guide
- Groups add elements of tragedy to illustrated definition of tragedy on the wall
- Wagon Wheel (now it should be a deeper conversation reflecting your understanding of characterization from our readings, the study guide and your shields)
- Read and discuss Act III in class
- HW- R&J Act III Study Guide; Act III Shield Due Day 15

Day 15-18:

- Discuss Act III study guide
- Groups add elements of tragedy to illustrated definition of tragedy on the wall
- The heroes' tragic flaws Discussion with textual support; how have/will decisions seal their fate?
- Read and discuss Act IV in class
- HW- R&J Act IV Study Guide; Act IV Shield Due Day 19

Day 19-24:

- Discuss Act IV study guide
- Groups add elements of tragedy to illustrated definition of tragedy on the wall
- What does it mean to make an emotional decision? Is it ever the best choice?
- Students will read and compare the messages behind to poems, one using logic rather than emotion to express thoughts, "Shall I Compare Thee to A Summer's Day" vs. "Madness" by Joclyn Stott where emotion caused an act that created meaning for the poet.
- Read and discuss Act V in class
- HW- R&J Act V Study Guide; Act V Shield Due Day 24

Day 25:

- Introduce performance assessment directions and rubric and discuss expectations for performance of piece
- Get in groups or chose to work independently to brainstorm ideas for original tragedy. **What will your hero be like? What is his tragic flaw?**
- Group discussion or individual brainstorming: Select a genre and begin a **narrative plan** (or alternate graphic organizer) as a prewriting strategy. Complete as homework

Day 26:

- Review elements of tragedy and think about the impact that individual choices have on one's life and future choices
- Keeping in mind that your protagonist must be a generally good, likeable character with a tragic flaw, complete a cause-effect chart for your tragic hero. **What can your audience learn about this character? What is his tragic flaw?**

Day 27:

- Begin writing first draft of tragedy. Keep in mind the question "**What role does emotion play in great stories?**"
- Check draft for all elements of tragedy on rubric
- HW-Bring completed draft for Writer's circle peer revision tomorrow

Days 28-29:

- Bring copy of completed draft for writer's circle peer revision
- Conduct writer's circle

[Note: for this schedule students are on Thanksgiving break for one week between Days 29 and 30, allowing time for them to put their pieces aside and come back to them with a fresh perspective a week later.]

Days 30-31:

- Teacher Conference
- Self Revision—select 5 "plain, boring" sentences to revise, demonstrating an understanding of the connection

Day 32:

- Continue polishing essay and complete final revisions
- Complete self assessment of final draft

Day 33:

- Gather all materials to submit for grading
- Submit final draft, self assessment and process packet

Day 34:

- Drama teacher presents workshop: Performing Shakespeare

Day 35-36:

- Discuss expectations for audience members
- Work on implementing strategies from drama workshop
- Practice presentation for performance on Days 38-39

Day 37:

- Dress Rehearsal for presentation
- Discuss protocol for presentations

Days 38-39:

- Performance of tragedy pieces for an audience of family and peers.

***Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare**  
**Shield Assignment (3 Quiz Grades)**

You will be creating a visual organizer called a shield (see sample from Act I of *The Taming of the Shrew* on page 2 of this handout) for three of the five acts of the play: Act I; Act II or Act III; Act IV or Act V. Each shield will be worth 1 quiz grade for a total of 3 quiz grades for the entire assignment. Each shield will be created on unlined paper and will include the following five (5) sections:

**PLOT ELEMENTS (3 points for each act)**

You will identify four (4) key plot events for each act and list each one separately in the upper right hand corner of the shield:

- Each plot element will be identified in a short phrase or sentence and listed chronologically.
- Each plot element will include the act, scene and line numbers from the play.

**TRAGIC ELEMENTS (3 points for each act)**

William Shakespeare expertly used elements of comedy in *Romeo and Juliet* for the singular purpose of amusing Elizabethan audiences. In the lower right hand corner of the shield, you will complete an analysis of three (3) comic elements in each act. For each comic element selected, you will:

- identify the comic element.
- give a specific example of that comic element.
- provide the act, scene, and line numbers of the example.

**CHARACTER MOTIVATION (3 points for each act)**

Motivation is the driving force behind the actions and words of the characters in *Romeo and Juliet*. You will identify the motivating force behind one of the significant characters in each act. For each character, you will list the following in the upper left hand corner of the shield:

- character and his/her actions and/or words.
- motivating force (love, jealousy, greed, pride, etc.).
- act, scene and line numbers references.

**QUOTE INTERPRETATION (3 points for each act)**

You will select and document correctly one quote from each act and provide the following information in the lower left hand corner of the shield:

- quote with proper documentation.
- explanation of the significance of the quote to plot, character motivation, etc.
- explanation of how sentence structure impacts meaning

**SYMBOL (3 points for each act)**

You will draw a different picture or illustration that provides a symbol for a key message, tone, theme, etc. for each act. This symbol will be drawn in the center of each shield.

## **Personal Narrative Essay Grading Rubric**

**Throughout our reading of *Romeo and Juliet* we will study the elements of tragedy and how Shakespeare uses language to move characters towards a tragic ending. In groups or individually it will be your job to write a tragedy in the genre of your choice to perform/present to an audience of your peers and family.**

### **Your Tragedy Must Include:**

- **The Elements of Tragedy**
- **Purposeful Word Choice to Include an Invented Word**
- **5 Examples of Manipulated/Changed Sentence Structure**
- **Thoughtful/Engaging Performance of Your Piece**

**Use the rubric on the back to ensure a quality piece of writing.**

- Step 1:** Choose to work independently or in a group of no more than four classmates.
- Step 2:** Determine the genre that might best serve to communicate your message. Remember that your writing must incorporate the essential elements of tragedy. Think about the genres we have studied thus far in class; all are possible venues toward communicating tragedy.
- Step 3:** Pre-writing. You must use one of the forms of prewriting introduced in this class and discuss your prewriting with another group or individual.
- Step 4:** Rough Draft #1
- Step 5:** Self Revision/Edit Using Checklist (RD #2)
- Step 6:** Peer Revision/Edit Using Checklist (RD #3)
- Step 7:** Teacher Conference
- Step 8:** Focused Self Revision Using Teacher Conference Notes (FD)
- Step 9:** Turn in Final Draft with Self Assessment
- Step 10:** Performance Practice

**\* The Reward - 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Performance for Family and Peers \***

## Performance Assessment Rubric

ELEMENT	Points Possible
<b>Elements of Tragedy</b>	<b>30</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Setting: Unity of Time, Place and Action</li> <li>✓ Characters:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Hero has a tragic flaw that leads to poor choices and ultimate downfall</li> <li>○ Character foil who provides contrast to the protagonist for emphasis</li> <li>○ Characters make choices that have significant consequences</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ Plot/Theme               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Happiness/glory turns to suffering and calamity as a consequence of hero's tragic flaw.</li> <li>○ Suffering and calamity extend beyond protagonist and become the chief source of tragic emotions, especially pity, for all characters.</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ Resolution: Character is defeated by the problem               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The <b>resolution</b> is clear to the reader and reflects tragic ending</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<b>Organization</b>	<b>15</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Beginning of essay captures reader's interest and establishes goal of hero</li> <li>✓ Organized structure enhances the reading experience               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Each event/action has a specific purpose that leads to tragic ending</li> <li>○ If dialogue is included, it should move the reader through the piece and heighten description</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ Ending is a well-integrated part of the whole piece and brings closure</li> </ul>	
<b>Word Choice</b>	<b>20</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The writer's choice of words adds clarity and meaning to the ideas expressed:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Precise language is used to both describe emotion of characters/scene and to evoke sympathy from the audience</li> <li>○ Character names symbolically reflect the characters' traits</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ Invented Language               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Following Shakespeare's influence, at least one invented word is used to express precise meaning in a unique and meaningful way</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<b>Grammar and Mechanics</b>	<b>15</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Complete, correctly written sentences</li> <li>✓ Overall attention to grammar and mechanics adds clarity</li> </ul>	
<b>Quality Sentence Structures</b>	<b>20</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Five sentences exhibit variety, demonstrating an understanding of the connection of style to meaning and purpose</li> </ul>	

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>_ / 100</b>
<b>Comments:</b>	