

Shakespeare's plays are an essential part of the Key Stage 3 (and Key Stage 4) curriculum but students often get a bit stressed about studying his work because it can seem complicated when you first start to read it. Don't panic! Your teacher and this book will see you through and not only will you understand what is happening, you'll even enjoy the play and find yourself wondering which one you'll study at Key Stage 4. This book mainly draws examples from two famous plays, *The Tempest* and *Romeo and Juliet*.

Top tips when starting Shakespeare

- Give it a go and try to read the words aloud – they might look strange on the page but will often make sense when you hear them.
- Try to see the play on stage or screen, or, better still, have a go yourself!
- Try to remember who the characters are. Some of the characters can have strange or unfamiliar names so draw a family tree or cut out faces for each of the characters so you can remember who says what.
- Pull out the words and phrases that you especially like – you could make them into a poster with key images on them.
- If the plot gets complicated (and it often does) try making a plot diagram to keep track of what is happening.
- Try to have fun – there are often really funny bits in every play. Watch out for them!

Key areas to consider

You will be asked a question about one of these four aspects of the play:

- Character and motivation – who the main characters are and why they behave as they do.
- Ideas, themes and issues – the key ideas the play explores and makes you think about.
- Language – what the characters say and the impact this is intended to and does have on the audience.
- Performance – how the play works on stage and how the audience responds to it. Think about how you might put on the play if you were the director.

Pages 84–5.

Pages 86–7.

Pages 78–9 and 88–9.

Pages 90–1.

Example

Your teacher might give you a practice question like this. The labels show you how easy it is to break down a question before you start planning your answer.

Romeo and Juliet

Act 1 Scene 1, lines 98 to 232

Act 2 Scene 2, lines 1 to 157

What do you learn about Romeo's character in these extracts?

Support your ideas by referring to both of the extracts which are printed on the following pages.

18 marks

The play you have been studying. You will be given a question that relates to your play only.

The extracts that you have to refer to in your answer. You will have studied these lines (among others) in class. You will be given a copy of the extracts to refer to.

The question that you have to answer.

Two reminders:
– Refer to both of the extracts in your answer.
– Quote from the extracts.

Did You Know?

There have been over 400 films made of Shakespeare's plays.



Spot Check

True or false?

- 1 You only have to study one Shakespeare play.
- 2 You are assessed on your historical knowledge about Shakespeare's life and times.
- 3 It helps to think about how the play could be performed.
- 4 You should spend 10 minutes planning your answer.

Tragedy, comedy, history, romance

Shakespeare wrote different kinds of plays:

- Tragedies are serious and end with the main character's death. They explore power, jealousy, ambition and love. Examples: *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet*.
- Comedies are light-hearted and have a happy ending. They explore the relationships of men and women in love, and include misunderstandings and disguise. Examples: *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It*.
- Histories tell the story of English kings. They explore conflict, loyalty and what it means to be a king. Examples: *Richard III*, *Henry V*.
- Romances begin tragically and end happily. They are sometimes called 'tragicomedies'. Examples: *The Tempest*, *Pericles*.



Shakespeare's world

William Shakespeare (born 1564, died 1616) lived during the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I. The world was very different then:

- Kings and queens were all-powerful. People believed they were chosen by God to rule the country.
- The upper classes (nobles, e.g. dukes) also had a lot of power. The lower classes (ordinary people) had to respect their superiors.
- There was a lot of political conflict, including plots against the rulers.
- Men had far more power than women.
- People were very religious and superstitious. They believed in witches and magic.



Top Tip!

If you can refer to your knowledge of Shakespeare or his times in your answer that will gain you marks, but **only if it is relevant** to the question.

The theatre

- The theatre was very popular in Shakespeare's day – people had no TV or cinema. All classes of society watched his plays.
- Stage and scenery were very simple. There were many rough and ready outdoor productions.
- Masques (masked balls) were very popular in the reign of James I. They included music, dance, song and 'special effects'. *The Tempest* has masque-like features.
- Plays are divided into acts (large sections) and scenes (subsections marking a new time or place). They include dialogue and stage directions.



Example

This extract from *The Tempest*, Act 5 Scene 1, shows some of the issues that were important in Shakespeare's day.

PROSPERO But you, my brace of lords, were I so minded,
I here could pluck his highness' frown upon you,
And justify you traitors: at this time
I will tell no tales.

SEBASTIAN [*Aside*] The devil speaks in him.

PROSPERO No.
For you, most wicked sir, whom to call brother
Would even infect my mouth, I do forgive
Thy rankest fault; all of them; and require
My dukedom of thee, which, perforce, I know,
Thou must restore.

Lords and ladies were key figures in Shakespeare's day, and in his plays.

Treachery – plotting against the crown – was a real issue in the politics of the day.

Everyone believed in God and the Devil, and thought that there were good and evil spirits.

The plays often end by restoring power to the rightful ruler. What made a true ruler was a question much debated.



Did You Know?

Women were not allowed to act in Shakespeare's day, so boys played all the female roles.

Spot Check

- 1 Why did Shakespeare write about kings?
- 2 Give two differences between the theatre in Shakespeare's time and today.
- 3 Give two features of Shakespeare's comedies.

Different kinds of language

- Most of the lines are in blank verse (unrhymed poetry). Each line has a regular pattern of 10 syllables, with emphasis on every other syllable:
Go, charge my goblins that they grind their joints
- Some passages are in prose (ordinary writing), especially when comic characters and the lower classes are speaking: *What have we here? a man or a fish? dead or alive? A fish: he smells like a fish ...*
- Long speeches are often full of expression and feeling. Soliloquies (speeches when the actor is alone on stage) show the audience what the character is thinking and feeling.
- Characters often speak alternate lines when tense or arguing, e.g.
GREGORY Do you quarrel, sir?
ABRAHAM Quarrel sir! no, sir.
SAMPSON If you do, sir, I am for you: I serve as good a man as you.
ABRAHAM No better.

Top Tip!

Reading the script aloud, slowly, will help you to understand it. Do not pause at the end of the lines unless there is a comma or full stop.

Expressive language

- Shakespeare uses striking vocabulary (choice of words):
 - to convey a character's feelings, e.g. *To flear and scorn at our solemnity* (Tybalt saying what he thinks Romeo intends to do, in *Romeo and Juliet*).
 - to draw a vivid picture, e.g. *plunged in the foaming brine* (Ariel about the shipwreck, in *The Tempest*).
- He also uses word play, especially in comic scenes:
Though thou canst swim like a duck, thou art made like a goose (Stephano about Trinculo, in *The Tempest*).
- Sound effects such as alliteration (repeated sounds) add power to the poetry, e.g. *... the bark thy body is, Sailing in this salt flood; the winds, thy sighs* (*Romeo and Juliet*).
- Shakespeare uses imagery to draw word pictures in the minds of the audience:
 - similes: *Like a rich jewel in Ethiop's ear* (Romeo describing Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*)
 - metaphors: *My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand* (Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet*)
 - personification: *The winds did sing it to me, and the thunder* (*The Tempest*)



Unfamiliar features

Shakespeare's language is 400 years old and highly poetic. Look out for these features:

- old-fashioned words, e.g. *thee/thou* (= you), *thy* (= your), *hath/hast* (= has)
- strange word order, e.g. *Thee of thy son, Alonso, they have bereft* (= They have taken your son away from you, Alonso.)
- missing letters, e.g. *'scape* = escape, *shak'd* = shaken (shook).
Note that *shak'd* is pronounced as one syllable, *shaked* as two syllables.

Example

The spirit Ariel describes how he casts a spell on the drunken Caliban and his friends (*The Tempest*, Act 4 Scene 1). Note:

- the similes – he compares them first to young horses (colts), then to calves following the sound of the mooing of the herd
- the vivid description of the scene.

Then I beat my tabor*,
At which, like unback'd* colts, they prick'd their ears,
Advanc'd their eyelids, lifted up their noses
As they smelt music: so I charm'd their ears
That, calf-like, they my lowing* follow'd through
Tooth'd briers, sharp furzes, pricking goss and thorns,
Which enter'd their frail shins: at last I left them
I' the filthy-mantled* pool beyond your cell,
There dancing up to the chins, that the foul lake
O'erstunk their feet.

Did You Know?

Many common expressions first appeared in Shakespeare's works, including 'love letter', 'puppy dog', 'wild goose chase' and 'what the dickens'.

*drum

*not yet ridden

*mooing

*refers to the stagnant 'coat' on the pool

Spot Check

- 1 What does 'blank verse' mean?
- 2 When does Shakespeare use prose?
- 3 What is alliteration?
- 4 What two types of imagery are used in this quote from *The Tempest*?
their great guilt, like poison given to work a great time after, now 'gins to bite the spirits

Understand the question

To give a precise and relevant answer you need to think carefully about what the question is asking you to do. Look at these questions, for example:

How does Caliban's language show his feelings for Prospero?

This question is about Shakespeare's language. The focus is on Caliban's feelings for Prospero, in *The Tempest*.

What problems would the director have to solve in putting on these scenes?

The question is about performing the play. The focus is on problems in performance.

What different impressions of Romeo do we get in these extracts?

The question is about the character of Romeo. The focus is on the different sides of his character, including why he behaves as he does (his motivation).

Top Tip!

Your essay needs to be **balanced**, so make sure you cover **all the scenes** in your planning.

Re-read the extracts

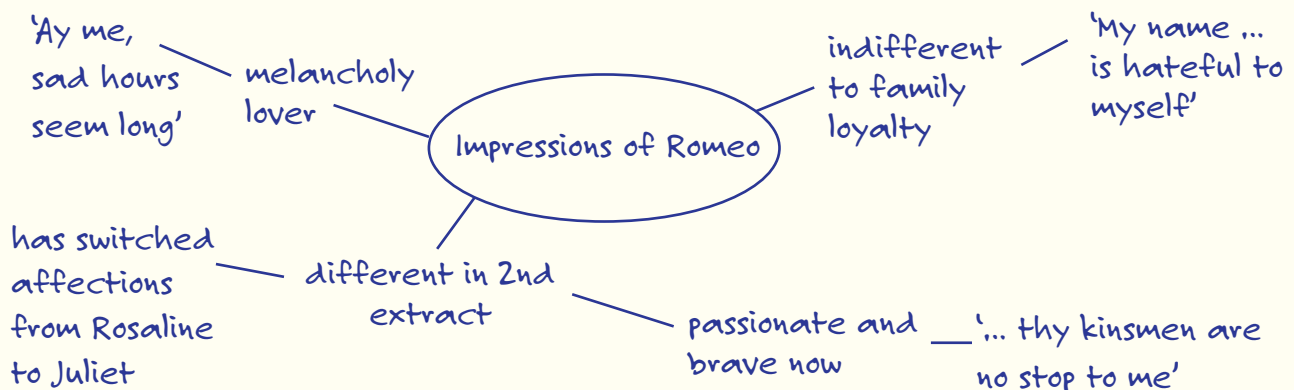
- You should read the extracts again, with the question in mind.
- Highlight the key words or passages that relate to the question.
- Add any short notes in the margin that occur to you as you read.



Brainstorm ideas

- Jot down some key words or ideas, and add some thoughts and quotations next to them. Use a spider diagram or other planning tool to help you, as in the plan for this question about *Romeo and Juliet*:

What impressions do we get of Romeo in these extracts?



- Use this as the plan for your answer.
- Decide on the order in which you will discuss each main point. Number them on your plan.

Example

Here is a completed plan to answer the question:

What impression do we get of Romeo in Act 1 Scene 1 and Act 2 Scene 2?

<u>Intro</u>	- both scenes are key for R's character
<u>Act 1 Scene 1</u>	
melancholy	- 'Ay me, sad hours seem long'
in love	- 'I do love a woman'
in turmoil	- 'cold fire, sick health'
warm friend	- 'Good heart' (to Benvolio)
witty	- 'A right good mark-man!'
<u>Act 2 Scene 2</u>	
in love	- 'It is my lady! - O, it is my love!'
romantic	- 'O that I were a glove upon that hand'
not proud	- 'My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself'
brave	- 'thy kinsmen are no stop to me'
witty	- '... love from love, toward school with heavy looks'
<u>Conclusion</u>	- moping at first, but boldly passionate about Juliet

Did You Know?

The 'Reduced Shakespeare' theatre company have summarised all 37 of Shakespeare's plays and turned them into one fast-moving comedy lasting an hour and a half.

- Note that this plan takes each scene in turn.
- If you are confident, you could take each impression of Romeo in turn, and discuss how he appears romantic, clever, etc. in both scenes:

Intro - both scenes are key for R's character. Moping in first, passionate in second.
 Lover: 'I do love a woman' (Act 1); 'O, it is my love!' (Act 2)
 Witty: 'A right good mark-man!' (Act 1); ... toward school with heavy looks'

- This approach is more difficult to follow, but is more focused and impressive when you carry it off.

Spot Check

What are these questions asking you to focus on? Match each question with a focus.

Questions

1 How is the idea of forgiveness explored in the final scene of *The Tempest*?

2 Explain whether you think Caliban is foolish in these scenes.

3 How do Ferdinand and Miranda show in their words that they are deeply in love?

4 What advice would you give the actor playing Ariel in these scenes?

Focus of the question
a language

b theme

c performance

d character

Begin and end effectively

- Begin with an introduction. This should:
 - show that you understand the question, without giving a detailed answer.
 - refer to the key words in the question, e.g. *Romeo's language* or *Caliban's feelings*.
 - refer to the context, e.g. *in these scenes* or *in Act 1 Scene 3*
- The final paragraph should be a conclusion. This should:
 - return to the focus of the question, e.g. *Romeo's language, therefore, ...*
 - draw together the key points, e.g. *We have seen that Caliban's feelings are wide-ranging: first he is ...*

Refer to the extracts

- Often you can summarise or paraphrase the evidence. This means using your own words, e.g. *Antonio suggests a brutal plot to murder the sleeping king.*
- You also need to quote directly from the extracts. This helps you make your point, and shows the examiners that you understand the play. Use inverted commas to show you are quoting.
- You can embed short quotations in your sentences, e.g. *In a powerful image, Ariel describes Ferdinand's hair as standing up 'like reeds'.*
- Longer quotations should start a new line, and be indented. Keep them as short as you can but still make your point.
- Remember: Point – Evidence – Comment. Begin by making your own point, in your own words. Then quote from the extract to back up your point. Finally, use your own words to explain how the quotation backs up your point.

Top Tip!

For each main point that you make in your answer, give a quotation from the extracts and explain why it is relevant.

Page 83. 

Write well

- Write clearly. Use one paragraph per point. Use connectives to link your ideas, e.g. *in addition, by contrast, also, however.*
- Write with style. Make your answer stand out from the others. Think of interesting words to use, vary your sentence structure and be bold in expressing your opinion.
- Keep your tone formal.
- Don't just give a brief discussion of each point – develop your points in a thoughtful and convincing way so that your answer thoroughly analyses the issue.

Did You Know?
You can rearrange the letters in 'William Shakespeare' to make 'I am a weakish speller'.

Example

This is the beginning of an answer to the question:

How does Shakespeare make the audience laugh in Act 2 Scene 2 and Act 3 Scene 2 of *The Tempest*?

level
6

Shakespeare uses all sorts of skills in these scenes to make the audience laugh. His characters are amusing, the language they use is funny, and there is a lot of slapstick and misunderstanding.

At the beginning of the first extract Caliban thinks that Trinculo is a spirit sent by Prospero to torment him. This is deliberately funny, as Trinculo is only a jester. Shakespeare could have cleared the misunderstanding up very quickly by making Caliban realise that Trinculo is not a spirit, but he keeps the idea going for a long time. When Stephano sings his song, Caliban yells 'Do not torment me: O!' and he repeats this after Stephano's next speech. Each time Caliban makes this mistake, the audience will roar with laughter.

Introduction:

- Refers to the key words in the question ('make the audience laugh').
- Refers to the context ('these scenes').
- Gives a summary of the key points, which will be developed in the answer.

Reference to the extract without using a quotation, but still with a comment.

Point – misunderstanding is kept going.
Evidence – 'Do not torment me: O!'
Comment – why it is effective.

Answer is well organised (one paragraph for the first main point), clear and well written.



Stephano forces Caliban to drink while Trinculo hides under the covers (from Act 2 Scene 2, *The Tempest*). This photograph is from a modern interpretation performed by the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Spot Check

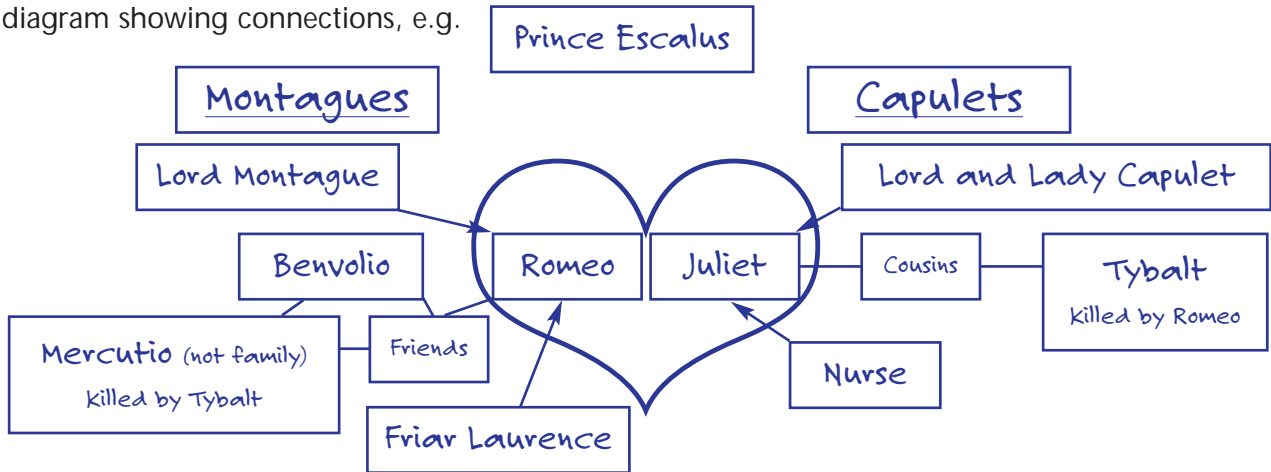
- 1 Give two things that an introduction should do.
- 2 Why should you quote directly from the extracts?
- 3 What does 'Point – Evidence – Comment' help you to remember?
- 4 What are these connectives useful for?
in the same way, similarly, too, also

Answering questions on characters

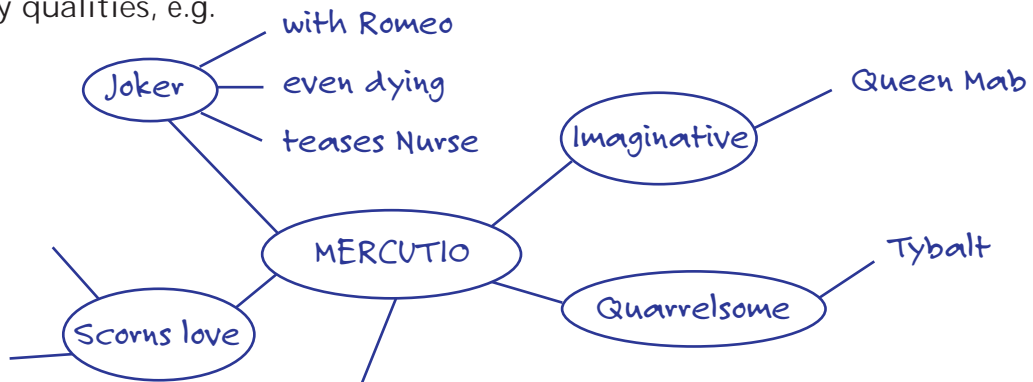
Revising for questions on characters

You may be asked to describe how a character behaves in the set scenes, or what is going on in a relationship. In order to prepare for a question like this:

- Draw up a character log for the characters in your play, with brief descriptions of who they are. Some of this could be in the form of a diagram showing connections, e.g.



- Take two or three of the main characters and compile a spider diagram of their key qualities, e.g.



Describing a character

When describing what a character is like, refer to:

- what they say, e.g. *Caliban acts like a slave. He says, 'I will kiss thy foot.'*
- what they do, e.g. *Caliban shows Prospero 'all the qualities o' th' isle'.*
- what others say about them, e.g. *Trinculo calls him 'a most ridiculous monster'.*
- why they behave as they do (their motivation), e.g. *Caliban wanted to kill Prospero so that he could live on his island as a free man.*

Top Tip!

Whenever you make a point about a character, back it up with a quote from the extracts.

Remember that characters can change in the course of the play, e.g. Richard loses control of events the more that he plots and kills, in *Richard III*.

Writing in role

Occasionally you are asked to write as if you were one of the characters of the play. This means you have to:

- get under the skin of your character, by imagining what it feels like to be them in that situation.
- stay in role – refer to yourself throughout as 'I' and 'me' and keep that pretence going.
- explain what you are doing, thinking and feeling and why (your motivation).
- quote from the set scenes to back up what you say.



Did You Know?

The largest speaking part in all of Shakespeare's plays is Hamlet (nearly 1500 lines).

Example

This is the start of a level 7 answer to the question:

What impression do we get of Capulet in Act 1 Scene 2 and Act 3 Scene 5 of *Romeo and Juliet*?

Although Capulet gives the impression of being a strong character in both scenes, his attitude towards Juliet is very different.

In the first scene Capulet appears to be a concerned and loving father. When Paris asks if he can marry Juliet, Capulet says she is too young: 'My child is yet a stranger in the world'. When Paris argues that other girls marry younger, Capulet rejects this: 'And too soon marr'd are those so early made.' As his only child, 'She is the hopeful lady of my earth.'

Capulet, however, takes the traditional authoritarian role in the second scene. He cannot believe that she is refusing to obey him when he has found her a good husband. He is so angry that he threatens to throw her out:

An you be mine, I'll give you to my friend;
And you be not, hang, beg, starve, die in the streets.

This shows that he regards Juliet as his possession.

level
7

Good introduction: summarises the answer and uses the key word 'impression'.

Commenting on what Capulet does.

Commenting on what Capulet says.

Commenting on why he behaves as he does.

A new paragraph for the new point.

Quotations are well chosen and carefully included in the answer.

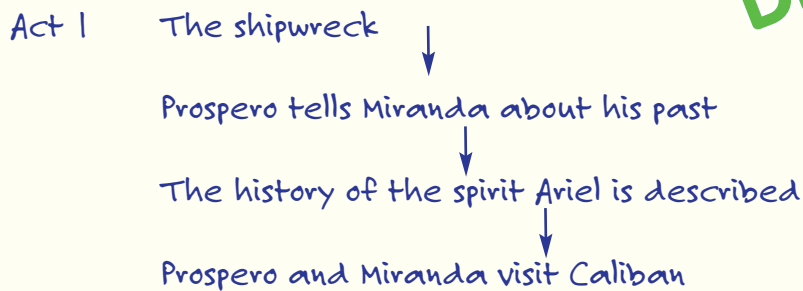
Spot Check

Choose two of the main characters in your play. Draw up a spider diagram for each one, to display their key features or qualities.

Answering questions on ideas and themes

Knowing the story

- You won't be asked to discuss the plot (the story of the whole play), but you do need to know about the key events to understand the play and how the extracts fit in to the whole.
- Draw up a storyline to remind yourself of the plot, like this one about *The Tempest*:



Did You Know?

William Shakespeare was the first person to refer to a coward as 'chicken'.

Top Tip!

If you are asked about a theme, relate it to the scenes provided. Remember to back up your ideas with quotes from the extracts.

Themes

Themes are the main ideas explored in a play:

The Tempest

- forgiveness – Prospero and his enemies, Caliban and Prospero
- civilisation – the 'savage' Caliban compared with the 'civilised' dukes
- master and servant – Caliban/Ariel and Prospero, Gonzalo and Alonso
- magic – Prospero a 'good' magician, Ariel a spirit
- love and marriage – Miranda and Ferdinand, tested by Prospero
- parenthood – Prospero and Miranda, Alonso and Ferdinand
- nature v. nurture – Prospero tries to civilise Caliban, but fails

Romeo and Juliet

- destiny – 'star-crossed lovers', Romeo's apprehension, undelivered letter
- love and marriage – Romeo and Juliet (and Rosaline), Paris
- hate – two families, Tybalt
- parenthood – Capulet and Juliet, Lady Capulet v. Nurse, Montague
- death – Mercutio, Tybalt, Romeo, Juliet, Paris, Capulet vault
- friendship – Romeo, Mercutio, Benvolio, also in a sense Friar and Romeo

Preparing for a question on theme

- Draw up a spider diagram for each theme of your play. Add detail as you study it, e.g.



Example

This is the start of a level 7 answer to the question:

What different ideas about love and marriage are explored in Act 3 Scene 4 and Act 3 Scene 5 of *Romeo and Juliet*?



level
7

In these scenes Shakespeare contrasts opposing ideas about love and marriage: the tradition of arranged marriage and the passion of love at first sight.

In the first scene Paris observes the rules of courtship, coming to woo Juliet and win her love. Her father had intended to ask her if she would like to marry Paris, but there has been 'no time to move our daughter'. Nonetheless, he now assumes that she will do what he tells her to do: 'I think she will be ruled in all respects by me'.

This is the traditional Elizabethan assumption - that a daughter obeyed her father. Capulet seems to want to get Juliet married off as soon as possible, as if it is a business arrangement:

'o' Thursday, tell her,
She shall be married to this noble earl.'

Paris is a good match and Capulet doesn't want to lose him. This practical attitude is compared with the romance of the second scene, in which the lovers cannot bear to part.

Good introduction: summarises the answer and uses the key words 'ideas about love and marriage'.

'In the first scene' and 'Nonetheless' help to organise and 'signpost' the answer.

Quotations are well chosen and carefully included in the answer.

Note Point - Evidence - Comment.

Throughout the focus is on ideas about love and marriage in the two scenes given.

Spot Check

Choose two of the main themes of your play. Draw up a spider diagram for each one, showing how the theme is explored in different scenes and by different characters.

Answering questions on language

Questions on language

- You may be asked to focus on the language.
For example:

How does Caliban's language show that he is fearful ...?

How do the characters use language to battle with each other ...?

How does Shakespeare build up a mood of tension ...?

- You need to explain what the language shows, and what effect it has.

What the language shows

- Think about what the language is actually saying. Each sentence will have a purpose, which could include:
 - to persuade
 - to flatter
 - to deceive
 - to hurt
 - to fill in the background for the audience.
- When commenting on a sentence, explain what its purpose is, e.g.
 - *Capulet shows that he is over-confident about how well he knows Juliet when he says 'I think she will be ruled in all respects by me.'*
 - *Ariel asks, 'Was't well done?' because he is trying to gain Prospero's favour so that he can be freed.*

What effect the language has

- You also need to comment on how well the language performs its purpose. Focus on Shakespeare's expressive language:
 - imagery, e.g. *Romeo's comparison of Juliet with 'a snowy dove trooping with crows' is appropriate because he sees her as pure and far more beautiful than other girls.*
 - powerful words, e.g. *Mercutio shows his disgust with Romeo's refusal to fight Tybalt by piling up adjectives: 'O calm, dishonourable, vile submission!'*
 - sound effects, e.g. *Caliban almost spits his curse on Prospero (note the repeated 's' sounds): 'all the infections that the sun sucks up'.*
 - word play, e.g. *Romeo and Mercutio show their friendship through playful sparring: When Mercutio says that 'dreamers often lie,' Romeo counters with 'In bed asleep, while they do dream things true'.*

Top Tip!

Annotate a copy of the extract to show:

- what the language is actually saying
- the effect of language features.

Pages 78–9.

Example

This is the start of a level 7 answer to the question:

Comment on the purpose and effect of these lines from Act 4 Scene 3 of *Romeo and Juliet*.

*Alack, alack, is it not like that I,
So early waking, what with loathsome smells,
And shrieks like mandrakes' torn out of the earth,
That living mortals, hearing them, run mad:-
O, if I wake, shall I not be distraught,
Environed with all these hideous fears?
And madly play with my forefather's joints?
And pluck the mangled Tybalt from his shroud?
And, in this rage, with some great kinsman's bone,
As with a club, dash out my desperate brains?*

Did You Know?

Some of Shakespeare's plays are written completely in verse, such as *King John*, *Richard II* and *Henry VI Part 1*.

level
7

In this speech Juliet reveals her fears about taking the sleeping potion given to her by Friar Laurence. She does this vividly, asking herself questions that build to the climax of her taking her own life. The questions show her uncertainty, while her unfinished sentence ('... run mad -') indicates that her intense anxiety prevents her from following a complete train of thought.

These lines effectively show Juliet's fears about waking alone surrounded by dead bodies. They build up an intense picture of her fears - the 'loathsome smells', the 'shrieks like mandrakes', and how they might overwhelm her, making her so 'distraught' that she madly dashes out her 'desperate brains' with a bone. The word 'loathsome' is powerful and the comparison with mandrakes (supposed to shriek when uprooted) suggests something sinister. These ideas are especially vivid because they appeal to the senses of smell and hearing. The idea that she should 'madly play', like a child, with her 'forefather's joints', is shocking.

The repetition of 'Alack, alack' shows Juliet's distress and sense of helplessness. This is reinforced by the hard 'k' sounds in 'waking', 'shrieks' and 'mandrakes', suggesting the harshness of her situation. The near repetition of 'waking' and 'wake' emphasises her anxiety about the moment of waking.

the purpose of the language

effective use of quotation throughout

the effect of the language - commenting on what makes it powerful

the effect of the language - commenting on how its sound reflects its meaning

Answering questions on performance

In the director's chair

The question may ask you to imagine that you are directing the set scenes, e.g.

What advice would you give to the actor playing Prospero?

How would you direct the scene to bring out the feeling between Romeo and Juliet?

How would you build up tension in these scenes?

- As a director, you need to think about these aspects of the performance:
 - most importantly, the acting – how the actors say their lines, move about the stage and relate to other characters
 - the set and costume design, lighting and sound.



Answering the question

As you are the director, the ideas are up to you. However:

- You must explain why you are directing in a particular way. That means understanding what the characters are doing and why, e.g. *He should sink to the ground at this point.* ❌
He is in complete despair, so he should sink to the ground at this point. ✓
- You must link your ideas with the text by quoting, e.g. *When Romeo says 'I do protest, I never injured thee' he should make an open-handed gesture towards Tybalt to show that he bears him no ill will.*

Top Tip!

Remember that Shakespeare wrote his plays to be performed, not to be read. Imagine the actors on stage as they say their lines – how could they best bring out the meaning of their words?

Focus on character, mood and development

- Bring out the feelings or key features of the character in your direction, e.g. *To show that his anger with Juliet makes him want to hit her, Capulet should raise his hand threateningly on his words 'My fingers itch'.*
- Emphasise a particular mood by varying the voice, or pace, or adding pauses, e.g. *Balthasar should pause after 'Then ...', and then sound almost pleading on '... she is well, and nothing can be ill'.*
- Show that a character or mood can develop or change through a scene, e.g. *Only when Ferdinand kneels before his father can Alonso believe that it is really him. His voice should show this by ...*

Example

Here is part of a level 7 answer to the question:

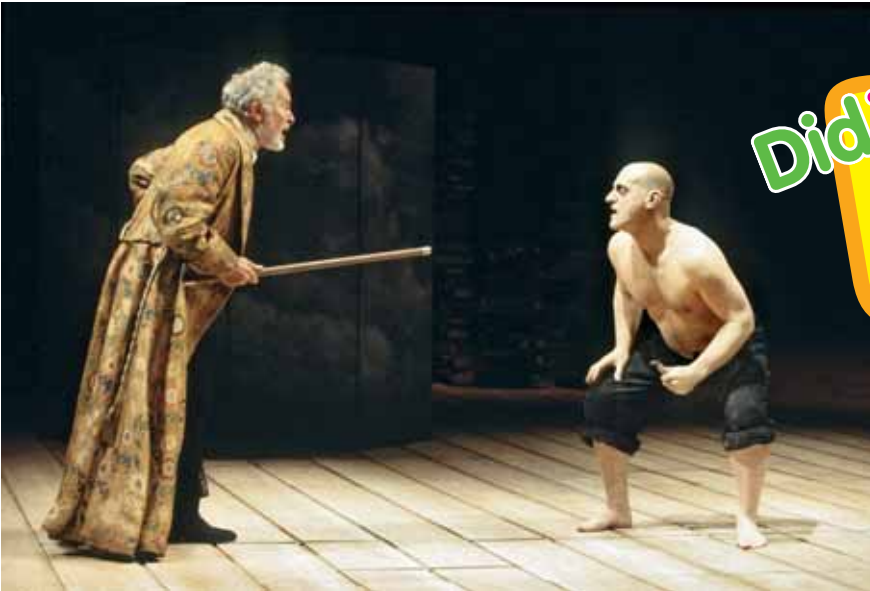
How would you direct Caliban in *The Tempest* Act 1 Scene 2 to bring out his relationship with Prospero?

Caliban should run onto the stage, hurling his curse at Prospero. Even after Prospero's response, which promises punishment, he should be defiant when he says 'This island's mine'. He should point accusingly at Prospero at 'Which thou takest from me'. This will underline how angry he feels with Prospero at losing his independence.

saying how Caliban should move

saying how Caliban should speak

point – evidence – comment, explaining the direction



Did You Know?

Shakespeare knew how to write for actors because he was an actor as well as a playwright.

Prospero and Caliban threaten and curse each other vehemently (Act 1 Scene 2, *The Tempest*).

Spot Check

True or false?

- 1 Shakespeare's plays were written to be read on the page.
- 2 When you are asked to be a director, you have to put on a performance.
- 3 You don't have to describe how the scenes would have been performed in Shakespeare's day.
- 4 You can include thoughts on the best lighting and sound.
- 5 You don't have to quote from the extracts in this kind of question.

To raise your level from level 6 to level 7, follow these guidelines.

Show your understanding

- Really think about how the characters' speech and actions relate to the main idea that you have to discuss. For example, if the question is about your impressions of Caliban, then think hard about how Caliban comes across in every detail.
- Focus on the effect of Shakespeare's language. Explain in detail how individual words and phrases show things about the character's feelings or thoughts, or about the wider ideas in the play, e.g.
The phrase 'great master' shows how much Ariel is a slave to Prospero.
- Cover all the main ideas that you can think of, across both extracts.
- Don't be afraid of including your own opinion, as long as you can back it up.
- Focus on the extracts given, but try to show through your comments that you understand how they fit into the play as a whole, e.g.
As we see later in the play ...

Structure your answer

- Plan your answer, so that it is well organised and clear.
- Begin with a short introduction that sets the scene and refers to the key words in the question.
- End with a conclusion that sums up your answer to the question.
- Use paragraphs and connectives to show how your ideas are organised and linked, e.g. *When we come to Act 3, however, ...*
- Quote from the extracts frequently, but only to back up your points. Short, embedded quotations are better than long quotations. Give a comment explaining why the quotation makes your point.

Top Tip!

Only tell the story of the scene (the plot) if it is relevant to the point you are making.



Example

Look at the beginning of this level 7 answer to the question:

What impression do we get of Friar Laurence in Act 2 Scene 3 and Act 4 Scene 2?

level
7

Both scenes give the impression that Friar Laurence is a wise, sympathetic and fatherly man. In the second, however, he also shows himself ready to take a desperate action.

In the first scene Friar Laurence is presented as a philosophical man who appreciates nature, especially the 'powerful grace' of herbs. But he is wise and knows that 'virtue itself turns vice, being misapplied', which makes him a good advisor to Romeo. He speaks in a friendly way when he says, 'Our Romeo hath not been in bed tonight', calls Romeo 'good son' when he says he has forgotten Rosaline, but 'chides' him for so quickly falling for Juliet.

Friar Laurence often delivers wise comments with the balanced neatness of proverbs: '... where care lodges, sleep will never lie.' He knows that for Romeo to be awake at dawn he must be troubled. Believing in straight talking, he tells Romeo, kindly but sternly, 'Riddling confession finds but riddling shrift.'

We see another side to Friar Laurence when he is prepared to give Juliet a desperate remedy: '... if thou darest, I'll give thee remedy'. He is also quite scheming:

Hold, then; go home, be merry, give consent
To marry Paris ...

He is deceiving Juliet's parents.

Good introduction – covers both extracts and refers to key words in question.

Good paragraph organisation – new point for each paragraph.

Tight focus throughout on impressions of Friar Laurence.

Notes the tone of the language.

Quotations are brief but relevant, and skilfully included in the sentences.

Shows an understanding of how different character aspects appear in each scene.

Did You Know?

William Shakespeare had eleven different ways of spelling his name.