

Exploring the prologue

A prologue is an introduction, explaining to the audience what is going to happen in the play.

1. Read the prologue

Two households, both alike in dignity,
 In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,
 From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
 Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean,
 From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
 A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life;
 Whole misadventured piteous overthrows
 Do with their death bury their parents' strife.
 The fearful passage of their death-mark'd love,
 And the continuance of their parents' rage,
 Which, but their children's end, might have removed,
 Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage;
 The which if you with patient ears attend,
 What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.

2. Use a dictionary to look up any unfamiliar words and annotate the text.
3. Underline, or highlight using different colours, the lines talking about:
 - a) the families
 - b) love of the lovers
 - c) the argument
4. Explain the following lines in your own words:
 - a. "Two households, both alike in dignity"
 - b. "From ancient grudge breaks to new mutiny"
 - c. "A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life"
 - d. "With their death bury their parent's strife"
 - e. "Now the two hours' traffic of our stage"
5. List as many other incidents as you can remember which the prologue misses