

Pulling together your ideas for your essay on:

**Discuss the significance of Act 3, Scene 1 in *Romeo and Juliet* with particular reference to how violence is used for dramatic effect.**

You have been given some ideas about the type of information you need to include in your essay but now you need to think about how you can structure your writing and how you can ensure that you do not just re-tell the story of the play or that you do not tell the examiner irrelevant information.

Your introduction should be a summary of points such as: the plot of *Romeo and Juliet*; how this particular scene fits in to the whole play; the theme of violence throughout the play; a definition of the tragedy genre; relevant contextual information.

Look at the introductions below (they are not finished) and decide which you think is the best and which you think is the worst of the three:

1. *Romeo and Juliet*, by William Shakespeare, is a very violent play. Act 3, scene 1 is particularly violent because both Mercutio and Tybalt die. The play might be a tragedy because nothing can be done to prevent the deaths of the main characters and Romeo and Juliet seem to predict their deaths during the play. A Shakespearean audience might be less shocked than a modern day audience because society was often violent and they would have expected families to fight physically over honour.
2. *Romeo and Juliet* is a play about fighting and Romeo and Juliet die at the end. I am going to write about how Act 3 scene 1 fits into the play and why it is sad. Audiences back then would have enjoyed this play more than us because they were used to fighting. Shakespeare made the scene violent to keep the audience's interest and to make people want to see the rest of the play.
3. *Romeo and Juliet*, by William Shakespeare, is full of violence: the prologue refers to 'civil blood' and Act 1 Scene 1 opens with a street brawl. The audience can therefore see from the outset that violence, and its destructive nature, is a theme in the play. With the death of Mercutio and Tybalt Act 3 Scene 1 can be viewed as a pivotal moment in the play because the audience recognises at this moment that there can be no happy ending for Romeo and Juliet.

Now, find positive points in each of the three openings and discuss them with a partner.

Once you have drafted your own introduction make a list (or spider diagram) of all the information you are going to include in your essay. You should not just start writing, or copy out some information from class that sound impressive, but spend time thinking about the points you want to include in your essay.

It might help you to make your list or diagram using the following headings:

- Language
- Stagecraft
- Other dramatic devices
- Character / relationships
- Relevant themes
- The scene as a turning point
- Previous scenes which suggest this will happen
- Following scenes that reflect the disastrous outcome of events in this scene

Once you have made a list or diagram go through and number each of your points to try to create an order to your plan; there is no point just writing your essay in the order in which points came to mind as you might have thought of the most important point towards the end of your planning.

In the main body of your essay remember to:

PEAL: Point; Evidence; Analysis; Link to next point

or

PEEL: Point; Evidence; Explain; Link to next point

depending on which acronym you've been taught.

Look at the following example of a PEAL paragraph and identify the positive points about it:

The audience is aware from the outset of this scene that Benvolio is nervous about meeting the Capulets because he anticipates a fight in the oppressive heat, 'And if we meet, we shall not 'scape a brawl, / For now these hot days, / The mad blood stirring.' Shakespeare has Benvolio comment on the heat in order to show the audience what the weather is like and to imply that the fight is inevitable; the men are aggressive and irrational because of the heat. The audience is already aware of Tybalt's threat to gain revenge on Romeo so they are likely to feel the tension of the exchange just as much as the characters on stage, particularly as Mercutio seems determined to defy Benvolio's pleas.

When Tybalt does appear on stage, the contrast in the men's feelings is clearly shown when Benvolio says, 'By my head, here comes the Capulets,' and Shakespeare has Mercutio tauntingly echo some of his words, 'By my heel, I care not.' It suggests that Benvolio is thinking logically about the possible outcome of the fight whereas Mercutio is anticipating the immediate pleasure that fighting might bring him. The audience may recall Benvolio ...

Now look back at your plan for the essay and pick out three points. Write three PEAL (or PEEL) paragraphs about them and then swap with a partner. See if they can identify each part of your paragraph (the point, evidence etc). If they can not do it you will need to look at how you can improve your writing (this is called drafting and is a natural part of the writing process) before moving on to some more paragraphs.