**Drama – Fate**

**This unit, the fourth of six units, uses two classic tragedies to address a new literary form for the grade level: the drama.**

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**Overview**

* + Students read *Antigone* or *Oedipus the King*, learning about the classic Greek tragedy form*.* Students examine Aristotle’s *Poetics* and his definitions of comedy and tragedy to deepen their understanding of tragedy. They read Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* and compare and contrast the ways in which the plays treat the related theme of “fate versus free will.” Building on the poetry unit, students will also consider Shakespeare’s use of rhythm, punctuation, and imagery and the ways in which they help convey the motives, thoughts, and feelings of the characters. This unit will confirm students’ shared understanding of the elements of drama, preparing them for the study of other dramatic works throughout high school.
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**Focus Standards**

* + These Focus Standards have been selected for the unit from the Common Core State Standards.
    - **RL.9-10.3:** Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
    - **RL.9-10.5:** Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.
    - **RL.9-10.9:** Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work (e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare).
    - **RI.9-10.1:** Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
    - **W.9-10.2:** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
    - **SL.9-10.1:** Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
    - **L.9-10.6:** Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

[Common Core State Standards, ELA](http://commoncore.org/free/resources/CCSSI_ELA_Standards.pdf) (1.5 MB)

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**Suggested Student Objectives**

* + - Identify and explain the elements of drama in general and Greek drama in particular (see terminology).
    - Explain the structure of the plot(s) and describe the dramatic techniques the playwright uses to advance them.
    - Trace the development of major and minor characters and explain how characterization advances the plot or theme.
    - Understand Aristotle’s definitions of comedy and tragedy and explain how the other works studied exemplify the term “tragedy.”
    - Analyze the playwright’s use of irony.
    - Identify the poetic devices used in *Romeo and Juliet* and explain their effect.
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**Suggested Works**

* + (E) indicates a CCSS exemplar text; (EA) indicates a text from a writer with other works identified as exemplars.

**Literary Texts**

**Plays**

* + - *Romeo and Juliet* (William Shakespeare) (E)
    - *Antigone* (Sophocles) (E)
    - *Oedipus the King* (Sophocles)

**Informational Texts**

**Informational Text**

* + - Excerpt on comedy and tragedy from *Poetics* (Aristotle)

**Art, Music, and Media**

**Prompt:  What similarities exist between how playwrights and painters depict tragedy?**

**Art**

* + - Pablo Picasso, *The Tragedy* (1903)
    - Caravaggio,[*The Death of the Virgin*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:GENTILESCHI_Judith.jpg)(1604-1606)
    - Artemesia Gentileschi, [*Judith and Her Maidservant with the Head of Holofernes*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:GENTILESCHI_Judith.jpg) (1625)
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**Sample Activities and Assessments**

* + ***Teachers Note:*** *Page and word counts for essays are not provided, but attention should be paid to the requirements regarding the use of evidence, for example, to determine the likely length of good essays. In future iterations of these maps, links to samples of student work will be provided.*

**Essay**

Write an essay that compares and contrasts aspects of tragic illumination in the tragedies of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Antigone* (or *Oedipus the King*). State thesis clearly and include at least three pieces of evidence to support the thesis. (RL.9-10.2, RL.9-10.3, W.9-10.2)

**Essay**

Write an essay in which you discuss the extent to which one of the dramas studied adheres to Aristotle’s definition of tragedy. State thesis clearly and include at least three pieces of evidence to support the thesis. (RL.9-10.2, RL.9-10.3, W.9-10.2)

**Speech**

Select a one-minute passage from one play and recite it from memory. Include an introduction that states:

* + - What the excerpt is (i.e., cite play and place the passage in context).
    - Why the passage is significant.
    - How the passage exemplifies one of the play’s themes. (RL.9-10.2, SL.9-10.4, 6)

**Seminar Question**

How does free will play a part in Romeo and Juliet's destiny? The seminar question may also be used as an essay topic. (RL.9-10.1, RL.9-10.4, SL.9-10.1)

**Oral Presentation**

Compare the rendering of Carravagio’s *The Death of the Virgin* to Act V, scene iii of *Romeo and Juliet.* How do the artist and the playwright create dramatic effects?  Describe and explain the significance of at least three examples. (RL.9-10.7)

[Scoring Rubric](http://commoncore.org/free/resources/Socratic_Seminar_Rubric_SP.doc)

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**Additional Resources**

* + [Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*: “You Kiss by the Book”](http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=303) (National Endowment for the Humanities) (RL.9-10.4, RL.9-10)

This lesson plan complements the study of plot and characterization in *Romeo and Juliet* and the play’s focus on lyrical form and convention, which heighten the impact of the action on the stage. Students look first at the sonnet in which Romeo and Juliet meet, analyzing the imagery to gain insight into the way Shakespeare’s use of love sonnet conventions characterizes the moment and the relationship between the lovers. Then students act out the passage, to note Shakespeare's stage managing of this moment and to consider what perspective his making the lovers almost literally “kiss by the book” lends to our perception of their characters. Finally, students enact the scene in order to notice how Shakespeare's juxtaposition of poetic forms, ranging from the almost-prose of Capulet and the Nurse to the melodramatic style of Tybalt, further highlights the sonnet of the lovers. To conclude, students work in groups to find and examine similar moments in the play (e.g., the balcony scene or the tomb scene) where Shakespeare spotlights the action through lyric form and at the same time invites us to explore and question the idealization of lyric conventions by having the characters act out these conceits on stage.

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**Terminology**

* + - aside
    - blank verse
    - classical allusions
    - comedy
    - dialogue
    - dramatic irony
    - foil
    - Greek chorus
    - heroic couplet
    - iambic pentameter
    - irony: dramatic, situational, verbal
    - monologue
    - protagonist
    - soliloquy
    - tragedy
    - tragic hero
    - tragic flaw
    - tragic illumination

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