

# ACT TWO

# FAMILY AND

# RELATIONSHIPS

Do parents always know best ?

## Objectives

To consider relationships between parents and children portrayed in Shakespeare's plays and their resonance to a modern audience. To expand and develop pupils' writing styles.

## Curriculum links

English, Personal, Social and Health Education, Drama, Art and Design.

## Citizenship skills and outlooks

Communicating, collaborating, creative thinking, developing empathy.

## Resources required

Large open space for practical work, scrap paper, activity sheet with still images, large pieces of paper and pens, digital cameras, copies of text sheets and internet access.



## LEARNING FOCUS

Exploring family relationships in Shakespeare's plays. Writing in different styles and the use of soliloquies.

## INTRODUCTION

Relationships are an important theme in many of Shakespeare's plays, especially family relationships.

Discuss the kinds of relationships that feature in the play you are exploring. Are they parent-child relationships, friendships or romantic relationships? Are they working well or problematic? Which do you think are more interesting to explore as a writer and an audience?



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## WARM UP ACTIVITIES

- Invite pupils to move freely around an open space.
- Encourage them to make eye contact with other people as they move around the space, smiling at them and acknowledging them without speaking.
- Ask pupils to develop this by greeting people they pass as if they are:
  - really old friends.
  - siblings who dislike each other.
  - a family friend or neighbour.

This can be a good way to introduce the idea of different relationships and how they can be conveyed physically. These different options could be extended or adapted depending on the particular text you are using. For instance, in **Hamlet** you might introduce the idea of mother and son, or with **King Lear** – a dutiful daughter.

Encourage them to then use **Imaging** to create still images in pairs to portray the following relationships:

- A father threatening his daughter for wanting to marry a man he disapproves of.
- Two lovers meeting in secret.
- Someone defending a friend in a fight.
- A father banishing his daughter because he claims she does not love him enough.
- A couple arguing over whether one has cheated.

Invite students to look at some of the images, particularly if there are common themes or similarities between one group's interpretation and another's.

Discuss what happens when there are disagreements between characters? How does this affect their relationship?

This activity can also be extended by asking pupils to create a freeze frame – or photograph – of a group of characters. As they create their image ask them to consider where each character is positioned and how they can demonstrate their relationships in the play. If you want to look at relationships within a particular family or group, provide pupils with the relevant character profiles.

## EXPLORING CITIZENSHIP THEMES, SKILLS AND VALUES

### ? KEY QUESTION

**What kind of relationships can you identify in your life?**

Ask your pupils to draw a mind map showing all the relationships in their lives – starting with family and then including friends, other pupils, neighbours, teachers and so forth. Discuss these maps as a class – which relationships do your pupils think are the most important to them?

What are some of the challenges in these important relationships? Do you ever have any disagreements or conflicts with the key people involved? How do you resolve them?

Share the exploratory question 'Do parents always know best?' with your pupils. Ask them to imagine that the room is a spectrum and to move to the left of the room if they agree with the question and to the right if they disagree. Ask one or two of the pupils to explain their positioning.

You might want to develop their discussion by considering why it might be important for children to listen to adults. Can they think of examples when children want to do things differently from their parents' wishes? Who is right?

You can develop these discussions further by asking the group to discuss the following questions:

- How do you resolve conflicts when you have disagreements?
- How can effective communication help to sort out difficulties and problems in family relationships?

Be aware that discussions of this kind may be potentially sensitive for some of the pupils in your class.



### EXPLORING CHARACTER RELATIONSHIPS

**For ways to explore characters and their relationships you can use *Sculpting* – creating images with body shapes. You can see an example of how this might work with *Julius Caesar* on page 58, but it can be used with any text.**



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# IN DEPTH ANALYSIS – RELATIONSHIPS AND SOLILOQUIES

## ? KEY QUESTION

**How does Shakespeare convey a character's thoughts about their relationships and emotions in his plays?**

Conflict between parents and children is a recurrent theme across many of Shakespeare's plays. The way that characters communicate with each other is very important to how their relationships develop and how they understand one another.

Show a video clip from **Romeo and Juliet Act 3 Scene 5** to the class, or read the text in groups of three.

## ! CONTEXT

**During *Romeo and Juliet*, Juliet chooses to marry Romeo without her family's knowledge as they expect her to marry Paris.**

**In this scene her father is unaware that she has already married Romeo and expects Juliet to be pleased about the news of her impending marriage to the husband he has chosen for her.**

**Similarly, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Hermia wants to marry Lysander but her father wants her to marry Demetrius. Her father asks the Duke to make Hermia marry Demetrius, so Hermia runs away with Lysander.**

Some of the conflicts that appear in **Romeo and Juliet** and other plays are caused by characters wanting independence and freedom, and issues around communication – issues that seem very familiar to us. What advice would you give to the parents and children in the play you are studying?

Provide each pupil with a copy of **Activity Sheet 1** with photographs of scenes from productions of Shakespeare's plays featuring fathers and daughters. Ask your pupils to add speech and thought bubbles to the images, showing what the characters might be saying and thinking in each picture in their own words.

Organise pupils into small groups. Share the example soliloquies and context boxes from **Romeo and Juliet** and **Richard III**. Invite the group to choose one. Ask them to read through the text, discuss and jot down what they think the character is feeling and thinking and what actions they would like to take.

Use this to discuss as a class how Shakespeare uses the soliloquy device to reveal a character's thoughts, feelings and intended actions? You may also want to divide up the lines in the speech and invite pupils to create images for each of them. This can help to give pupils a sense of the imagery being used, and also the feeling and emotion beneath the text.

Challenge each group to work together to create a soliloquy in modern language where a father or child from a Shakespeare play displays their thoughts and feelings about their situation and reveals what they would like to say and do.

## SOLILOQUIES ARE OFTEN USED BY SHAKESPEARE TO SHOW A CHARACTER'S INNERMOST THOUGHTS

**A soliloquy is a speech delivered by a single character, not directed at another character on stage. Sometimes these speeches will be directed at the audience, at other times they can reveal a character's inner thoughts. Soliloquies can help the audience understand the intentions of the character but can also sometimes be used to mislead them. Perhaps the best-known opening line to a Shakespearean soliloquy is 'To be or not to be' from *Hamlet*.**

## Q EXPLORING SOLILOQUIES

**An activity that will help you to explore a soliloquy as part of a scene study is *Whispered Reading*. You can see an example of how this might work with *Julius Caesar* on page 59, but it can be used with any text.**

## APPLY YOUR LEARNING – CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Encourage your pupils to continue working in their groups and discuss how you could apply the family and relationship dilemmas in a play you are studying to a modern day setting. Discuss where and how this might take place and then ask them to rewrite the scene in the style of a modern soap opera script. Perhaps show a clip from a popular soap opera or other television programme as inspiration.

Remind them to set the relationship dilemmas in a modern family, include stage directions, and that this would be aired during family viewing times, so the language used would need to be appropriate for this audience. Finally, ask them to make sure that they conclude the scene with a dramatic cliff-hanger! Perform or film their scene to share with the rest of the class.

## AND FINALLY...

- Have their thoughts on the original provocative question changed? Do parents always know best?
- What skills and qualities can help to maintain good relationships with friends and families?
- Research the plots of other Shakespearean plays that feature characters having problematic relationships with their parents. Do they all end in tragedy?

## PARTNER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

- Upload the mind maps from the first exercise onto your shared space and compare with those created by your partner school. Discuss similarities and differences between them.
- Exchange soliloquies, soap opera scripts and performances with your partner school.



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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

# Romeo and Juliet Act 3 Scene 5

**Juliet** Good father, I beseech you on my knees,  
Hear me with patience but to speak a word.

**Capulet** Hang thee, young baggage, disobedient  
wretch!

I tell thee what: get thee to church o' Thursday,  
Or never after look me in the face.

Speak not, reply not, do not answer me:

My fingers **itch**. Wife, we scarce thought us blest  
That God had lent us but this only child,

But now I see this one is one too much,  
And that we have a curse in having her.

Out on her **hilding**!

You are to blame, my lord, to **rate** her so.

**Capulet** And why, my lady wisdom? Hold your tongue.

*To Nurse*

Good Prudence. **Smatter** with your gossips, go.

**Nurse** I speak no treason.

**Lord Capulet** O, **God-gi-good e'en**.

**Nurse** May not one speak?

**Lord Capulet** Peace, you mumbling fool!

Utter your **gravity** o'er a gossip's **bowl**,

For here we need it not.

**Lady Capulet** You are too hot.

**Lord Capulet** **God's bread**! It makes me mad!

Day, night; hour, tide, time, work, play,

Alone, in company, **still** my care hath been

To have her matched: and having now provided

A gentleman of noble parentage,

Of fair **demesnes**, youthful and nobly allied

Stuffed, as they say, with honourable **parts**,

Proportioned as one's thoughts would wish a man,

And then to have a wretched **puling** fool,

A whining **mammet in her fortune's tender**,

To answer 'I'll not wed, I cannot love,

I am too young, I pray you **pardon** me.'

But an you will not wed, I'll pardon you:

Graze where you will, you shall not house with me.

Look to't, think on't. I do not use to jest.

Thursday is near, lay hand on heart, **advise**:

An you be mine, I'll give you to my friend,

An you be not, hang, beg, starve, die in the streets,

For by my soul, I'll ne'er acknowledge thee,

Nor what is mine shall never do thee good.

Trust to't, bethink you. I'll not **be forsworn**. *Exit*



## OVERVIEW

In Act 3 Scene 5 of **Romeo and Juliet**, Juliet's father has just told her that she has to marry Paris that same week, but both she and the audience know that she is already married to Romeo.



## NOTES

**itch**: to beat you

**hilding**: immoral woman or girl

**rate**: berate, scold

**smatter**: chatter, talk ignorantly

**God... e'en**: go away (literally, good evening)

**gravity**: words of wisdom

**bowl**: cup to drink from

**God's bread**: an oath referring to the bread used in the Christian sacrament of Communion

**still**: always

**demesnes**: lands

**parts**: qualities

**puling**: whining

**mammet**: doll/very weak person

**in... tender**: when fortune makes her an offer

**pardon**: the sense now shifts from 'excuse, forgive' to 'give permission to leave'

**advise**: consider

**be forsworn**: break my word

# ACTIVITY SHEET 1



## RESOURCES

- Pencils
- Pens

Add thought and speech bubbles to show what you think these fathers and daughters might be thinking and saying.



## EXAMPLE SOLILOQUIES

# Romeo and Juliet Act 2 Scene 2

*(Enter Juliet above)*

**Romeo** But, soft, what light through yonder window breaks?

It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.

Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,

Who is already sick and pale with grief,

That thou her maid art far more fair than she:

Be not her **maid**, since she is envious:

Her **vestal livery** is but sick and green

And none but fools do wear it, cast it off.

It is my lady, O, it is my love!

O, that she knew she were!

She speaks yet she says nothing: what of that?

Her eye discourses: I will answer it.

I am too bold, 'tis not to me she speaks:

Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,

Having some business, do entreat her eyes

To twinkle in their **spheres** till they return.

What if her eyes were there, they in her head?

The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,

As daylight doth a lamp, her eyes in heaven

Would through the airy region stream so bright

That birds would sing and think it were not night.

See, how she leans her cheek upon her hand!

O, that I were a glove upon that hand,

That I might touch that cheek!

## ! OVERVIEW

In Act 2 Scene 2 of **Romeo and Juliet**, Romeo has broken into the Capulet house so that he can see Juliet again after meeting her for the first time at her father's ball that night. He spies her in the window.

## 📖 NOTES

**maid**: devoted follower (of Diana, Roman goddess of the moon and chastity)

**vestal livery**: virginal clothing

**spheres**: orbits, stars and planets were thought to be contained within transparent concentric spheres that rotated around the Earth



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# Richard III Act 1 Scene 1

## King Richard III

Now is the winter of our discontent  
Made glorious summer by this **son of York**:  
And all the clouds that **loured** upon our house  
In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.  
Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths,  
Our bruised **arms** hung up **for** monuments,  
Our stern **alarums** changed to merry meetings,  
Our **dreadful** marches to delightful **measures**.  
Grim-visaged war hath smoothed his wrinkled **front**,  
And now, instead of mounting **barbed** steeds  
To fright the souls of **fearful** adversaries,  
He **capers** nimbly in a lady's chamber  
To the lascivious **pleasing** of a lute.  
But I, that am not shaped for **sportive** tricks,  
Nor made to **court an amorous looking-glass**:  
I, that am **rudely stamped**, and **want** love's majesty  
To strut before a **wanton ambling** nymph:  
I, that am **curtailed** of this fair proportion,  
Cheated of **feature** by **dissembling** nature,  
Deformed, unfinished, **sent before my time**  
Into this breathing world, scarce half **made up**,  
And that so lamely and **unfashionable**  
That dogs bark at me as I **halt** by them —  
Why, I, in this weak **piping** time of peace,  
Have no delight to pass away the time,  
Unless to see my shadow in the sun  
And **descant** on mine own deformity.  
And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover,  
To **entertain** these fair well-spoken days.  
I am **determined** to prove a villain  
And hate the idle pleasures of these days.  
Plots have I laid, **inductions** dangerous,  
By drunken prophecies, libels and dreams,  
To set my brother Clarence and the king  
In deadly hate the one against the other.  
And if King Edward be as true and just  
As I am **subtle**, false and treacherous,  
This day should Clarence closely be **mewed up**,  
**About** a prophecy, which says that '**G**'  
Of Edward's heirs the murderer shall be.  
Dive, thoughts, down to my soul: here Clarence  
comes.—



## OVERVIEW

**In this opening soliloquy, Richard describes how peace has come to England after civil war. His older brother Edward is king but he will not join the celebrations. He describes himself as 'rudely stamped', 'deformed' and 'unfinished'. He vows to become a villain and win the throne for himself, turning his family members against each other. To achieve this, Richard has started scheming against his brother Clarence, planting rumours to make Edward suspicious of Clarence.**



## NOTES

**son of York:** King Edward IV. His father was Duke of York

**loured:** frowned threateningly

**arms:** armour, weapons

**for:** as

**alarums:** calls to arms/sudden attacks

**dreadful:** fearsome, inspiring dread

**measures:** stately dances

**front:** forehead

**barbed:** armoured

**fearful:** frightened (or possibly 'frightening')

**capers:** dances with leaping movements

**pleasing:** attraction, delight

**sportive:** pleasurable/amorous

**court... looking-glass:** gaze lovingly at myself in a mirror

**rudely stamped:** crudely formed, roughly printed with an image

**want:** lack

**wanton:** flirtatious, lascivious

**ambling:** sauntering, walking with rolling gait

**curtailed:** deprived, cut short

**feature:** a pleasing shape

**dissembling:** cheating, deceitful

**sent... time:** i.e. born prematurely

**made up:** fully formed

**unfashionable:** odd-looking, inelegant/poorly shaped

**halt:** limp

**piping:** shrill, weak

**descant:** improvise variations on (musical term), i.e. ponder

**entertain:** pass enjoyably

**determined:** resolved/destined

**inductions:** initial steps, preparations

**subtle:** cunning, sly false dishonest, disloyal

**mewed up:** imprisoned, cooped up (like a caged bird of prey)

**about:** as a result of

**'G':** Clarence's first name is George

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Clips to watch can be found online at

<https://schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org/classroom-resources/list/shakespeare-lives>