

between the lines

A lesson written for every student in the room

FREE LESSON SAMPLER

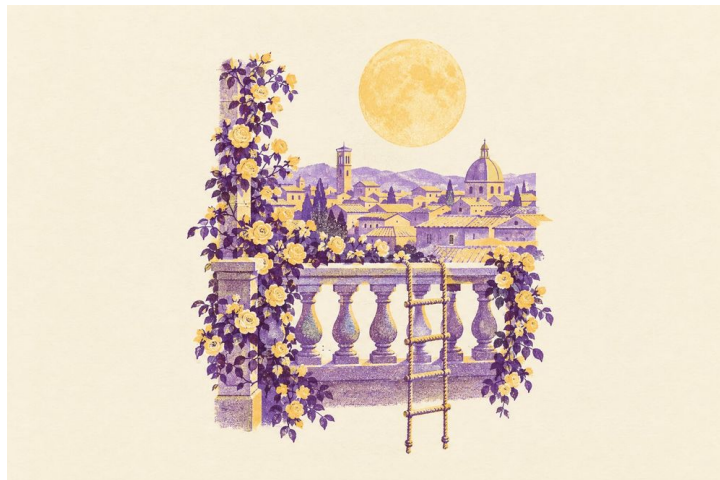
Romeo and Juliet: Do you bite your thumb at us

How does Shakespeare show that the feud has spread through all of Verona?

Lesson 3 of 33 from the scheme of learning

Teacher notes, slides and student pages at all three levels

Written for the AQA specification



What is in this sampler

This is one complete lesson from our Romeo and Juliet scheme for Literature Paper 1, Section A. It comes exactly as it appears in the full scheme, so you can teach it next week and see how our lessons work.

Teacher notes	Timings with slide numbers, Do Now answers, the exploded quotation, the hinge question and what each answer tells you, the task at three levels, a model paragraph and notes on misconceptions and adapting the lesson (next pages).
Slides	The editable PowerPoint deck for Lesson 3, with teacher notes on every slide (separate file).
Student pages	The lesson's pages from the Securing, Strengthening and Soaring student packs: one question, three levels of support (at the end of this document).

How every lesson works

Know	Do Now from memory, vocabulary, then the reading.
Apply	Explode one quotation together; a hinge question checks understanding.
Master	One shared question answered as a What-How-Why paragraph, with Securing, Strengthening and Soaring support; then a model paragraph and an exit ticket.

In the full scheme

- 33 lessons like this one, with editable slides and a teacher handbook
- Student packs at three levels for every lesson
- Six weeks of independent practice homework at three levels
- Four Feedback Loop progress checks with whole-class feedback sheets and improvement tasks
- An exam-style end-of-unit essay with level guidance and three annotated model answers

Lesson 3: Do you bite your thumb at us

SEQUENCE 1: CONTEXT AND ACT 1 • 60 MINUTES

How does Shakespeare show that the feud has spread through all of Verona?

By the end of the lesson, students can

- Explain how the quarrel spreads from two servants to the whole city in Act 1 Scene 1
- Analyse how Shakespeare contrasts Benvolio and Tybalt
- Write the Prince's proclamation, using exact detail and imagery from the scene

Lesson at a glance

Time	Phase	What happens	Slides
0–8	Know	Do Now: five quick questions on Lesson 1 and on Verona in the 1590s. Students self-mark from the answer slide.	2–3
8–20	Know	Pre-teach disgrace, quarrel, hinds and coward. Read the extract aloud with four students as Sampson, Gregory, Abram and Benvolio, and you as Tybalt, then ask: who wants a fight, and who tries to stop it? Then tell students what happens next: citizens with clubs and both old fathers join in, and the Prince stops the fight and threatens death to anyone who brawls again.	4–9
20–30	Apply	Explode the quotation together. Think aloud about why Tybalt hates a word, then students annotate their copy. Before you reveal any notes, students try the four empty boxes on the first explode slide, on their own or after you model one box.	10
30–35	Apply	Hinge question on mini-whiteboards. Use the answers to decide who starts on which level of support.	11–12
35–53	Master	Students write the Prince's proclamation, using the student pack at their level. Share the model proclamation in the last five minutes and ask two students to read theirs aloud as the Prince.	13–14
53–60	Master	Exit ticket. Collect and sort into three piles to plan the start of Lesson 4.	15

Do Now answers

1	Complete the opening line of the Prologue: "Two households, both alike in _____".	dignity
2	What does "star-cross'd" mean?	Blocked by the stars, which many Elizabethans believed shaped a person's life
3	What is a grudge?	A long-held feeling of anger against someone for a past wrong
4	Whose poem did Shakespeare use for the story of Romeo and Juliet?	Arthur Brooke's, <i>The Tragicall Historie of Romeus and Juliet</i> (1562)
5	Why did a young man of good family in the 1590s carry a sword?	To defend his honour: an insult to his name or family was expected to be answered

Vocabulary

disgrace	shame; losing the respect of others
quarrel	an angry argument
hinds	servants; also female deer, so here an insult that makes them sound timid
coward	someone who runs away from danger

Reading

Act 1 Scene 1: the quarrel becomes a brawl

Sampson and Gregory are servants of the Capulets. In the street they meet Abram and Balthasar, servants of the Montagues. Benvolio is Romeo's cousin, a Montague; Tybalt is Juliet's cousin, a Capulet.

SAMPSON.

Nay, as they dare. I will bite my thumb at them, which is disgrace to them if they bear it.

ABRAM.

Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

SAMPSON.

I do bite my thumb, sir.

ABRAM.

Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

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Is the law of our side if I say ay?

GREGORY.

No.

SAMPSON.

No sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir; but I bite my thumb, sir.

GREGORY.

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ABRAM.

Quarrel, sir? No, sir.

SAMPSON.

But if you do, sir, I am for you. I serve as good a man as you.

ABRAM.

No better.

SAMPSON.

Well, sir.

Enter Benvolio.

GREGORY.

Say better; here comes one of my master's kinsmen.

SAMPSON.

Yes, better, sir.

ABRAM.

You lie.

SAMPSON.

Draw, if you be men. Gregory, remember thy washing blow.

[They fight.]

BENVOLIO.

Part, fools! put up your swords, you know not what you do.

[Beats down their swords.]

Enter Tybalt.

TYBALT.

What, art thou drawn among these heartless hinds?

Turn thee Benvolio, look upon thy death.

BENVOLIO.

I do but keep the peace, put up thy sword,

Or manage it to part these men with me.

TYBALT.

What, drawn, and talk of peace? I hate the word

As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee:

Have at thee, coward.

William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet* (1597), Act 1 Scene 1

Word help **bear it:** put up with it • **washing blow:** a slashing sword stroke • **heartless hinds:** cowardly servants • **Have at thee:** on guard; I am coming for you

Explode the quotation

Method

A simile and a list. Tybalt compares his hatred of peace to his hatred of hell, then names everyone else he hates.

Zoom in

“the word” is peace. Tybalt hates the idea of peace itself, and his list narrows from a whole family, “all Montagues”, to one man, “thee”.

“I hate the word As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee”

Effect

The audience sees that Tybalt cannot be reasoned with. Benvolio has just said he only wants to keep the peace, and Tybalt answers with a sword.

Purpose

Shakespeare makes Tybalt a man whose honour depends on hatred. In a city where young men carried swords and answered insults, one such man is enough to start a war in the street.

Hinge question

Sampson will bite his thumb at the Montagues, “which is disgrace to them if they bear it”. What does this show about how the fight starts?

- A. The Montague servants start the fight by insulting Sampson first.
- B. Sampson is afraid and wants to avoid a fight with the Montagues.
- C. A small, rude gesture is enough to start a fight, because each side must answer an insult. (the right answer)**

What the answers tell you

A means the student has the order wrong: re-read the opening lines and ask who makes the first move. B shows the student has missed the tone of Sampson’s swagger: point out that Sampson wants the Montagues to react, then start these students on Securing.

Why the answer is right

Biting the thumb was a rude gesture, and to “bear it” without answering would be a disgrace, so honour forces the Montagues to react and a tiny insult becomes a brawl.

Master task: proclamation

Write the Prince’s proclamation, to be read aloud in the market place after the third brawl: what happened, who is to blame, and the new punishment for anyone who fights again.

Securing aiming for a 4

A frame for each part of the proclamation, quotations to choose from and a word bank.

“Three civil brawls, bred of an airy word”
 “With purple fountains issuing from your veins”
 “Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace”

Strengthening aiming for grades 5 to 6

Prompts for each part of the proclamation and a success checklist.
 Open with a command to the people to listen
 Say what happened today, in order, using exact detail from the scene
 Name who is to blame and why, including the two old fathers
 Use one image of blood or beasts, as the Prince does
 End with the new punishment and the Prince’s authority

Soaring aiming for grades 7 to 9

Write the proclamation so that it speaks in turn to the two old fathers, to the young men with swords, and to the citizens with clubs. Make the Prince’s anger clear while he keeps his control.

Model proclamation

Hear this, citizens of Verona, and let every house that keeps a sword listen.

This morning, in the public place, a servant of the house of Capulet bit his thumb at two servants of the house of Montague. From that single insult came a brawl. Benvolio drew to part them; Tybalt drew to kill. Within minutes our citizens were in the street with clubs, and the old lords Capulet and Montague were calling for their swords.

This is the third time. “Three civil brawls, bred of an airy word” have broken the quiet of our streets, and three times our oldest citizens have taken up old weapons to part the young. I blame the servants who began it and the kinsmen who carried it on. Most of all I blame Capulet and Montague, whose hatred their households serve.

Therefore hear my sentence. If any man disturbs our streets again, “Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace”. Montague and Capulet: you will answer for every man who wears your colours.

By order of Escalus, Prince of Verona.

What makes it work

- Opens with a command to listen and closes with the Prince’s name, so it sounds official
- Uses exact detail from the scene in the order it happened: the thumb, Benvolio, Tybalt, the clubs, the old men
- Builds two of the Prince’s own lines into his sentences, and names the fathers as the people most to blame

Exit ticket

The feud has spread through all of Verona because...

Teacher notes

Subject knowledge

Biting the thumb was an insulting gesture. Sampson does it so that the Montagues must answer or be disgraced, though he first checks that the law is on his side. The quarrel grows in steps: servants, then Benvolio (whose name suggests good will) and Tybalt, then citizens with clubs, then the two old men calling for swords while their wives hold them back. The Prince arrives and calls the fighters “beasts” who quench their rage “With purple fountains issuing from your veins”. The brawls are “bred of an airy word”: the feud has no cause anyone can name.

Common misconceptions

- Thinking the play tells us how the feud began. The Prologue calls it an “ancient grudge” and no one on stage gives its cause.
- Treating the servants’ jokes as filler. Their boasting about violence against Montague men and women shows how the feud gives ordinary men permission to threaten.
- Seeing Benvolio and Tybalt as equally to blame because both draw swords. Benvolio draws to part the fighters; Tybalt draws because he hates peace.
- Writing the proclamation as a story. A proclamation is an order to the public: it names blame and sets a punishment.

Adapting the lesson

Everyone writes the same task. Students who chose A or B in the hinge question start on Securing, with the frame. Anyone who finishes moves up a level and adds what that level asks for. The task practises

formal, persuasive writing of the kind in Language Paper 2, Question 5: check that every quotation is exact and built into the Prince's own sentences.

Inclusion

Pre-teach	Pre-teach "hinds" (servants, and female deer, so an insult) and the idea of honour: a man who let an insult pass was disgraced. Show the thumb-biting gesture so the opening makes sense.
SEND	Give the extract with each new arrival marked in the margin (the servants, Benvolio, Tybalt) so students can track how the fight grows. Students say each line of their proclamation to a partner before writing it.
EAL	The repeated "sir" sounds polite and is meant as an insult: model the tone aloud. Add "quarrel" and "coward" to the vocabulary list for translation, and give the five-line proclamation frame from the Securing level.
Pupil premium	Explain who carried swords and why: young gentlemen wore rapiers, and servants fought for their masters' honour. Ask a student who seldom speaks first to name who starts the fight; the answer is in the extract.

Do you bite your thumb at us

How does Shakespeare show that the feud has spread through all of Verona?

Securing

aiming for a 4

Do Now: five quick questions

- 1 Complete the opening line of the Prologue: "Two households, both alike in _____".
- 2 What does "star-cross'd" mean?
- 3 What is a grudge?
- 4 Whose poem did Shakespeare use for the story of Romeo and Juliet?
- 5 Why did a young man of good family in the 1590s carry a sword?

Vocabulary

disgrace	shame; losing the respect of others
quarrel	an angry argument
hinds	servants; also female deer, so here an insult that makes them sound timid
coward	someone who runs away from danger

Reading

Act 1 Scene 1: the quarrel becomes a brawl

Sampson and Gregory are servants of the Capulets. In the street they meet Abram and Balthasar, servants of the Montagues. Benvolio is Romeo's cousin, a Montague; Tybalt is Juliet's cousin, a Capulet.

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But if you do, sir, I am for you. I serve as good a man as you.

GREGORY.

Say better; here comes one of my master's kinsmen.

SAMPSON.

Yes, better, sir.

ABRAM.

You lie.

SAMPSON.

Draw, if you be men. Gregory, remember thy washing blow.
[They fight.]

BENVOLIO.

Part, fools! put up your swords, you know not what you do.
[Beats down their swords.]
Enter Tybalt.

TYBALT.

What, art thou drawn among these heartless hinds?
Turn thee Benvolio, look upon thy death.

BENVOLIO.

I do but keep the peace, put up thy sword,
Or manage it to part these men with me.

TYBALT.

What, drawn, and talk of peace? I hate the word
As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee:

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No better.

SAMPSON.

Well, sir.

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Have at thee, coward.

William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet* (1597), Act 1 Scene 1

Word help **bear it:** put up with it · **washing blow:** a slashing sword stroke · **heartless hinds:** cowardly servants · **Have at thee:** on guard; I am coming for you

Explode the quotation

Try each box on your own first. Then add to it as your teacher explodes the quotation.

Method	Zoom in
“I hate the word As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee”	
Effect	Purpose

Your task

Write the Prince’s proclamation, to be read aloud in the market place after the third brawl: what happened, who is to blame, and the new punishment for anyone who fights again.

Word bank

proclamation	an official announcement read out in public
decree	an order from a ruler
forfeit	something you lose as a punishment
citizen	a person who lives in a town or city

Quotations to use

- “Three civil brawls, bred of an airy word”
- “With purple fountains issuing from your veins”
- “Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace”

Example opening

Hear this, people of Verona: for the third time, our streets have run red because of one careless word.

Write your proclamation

Write the Prince's proclamation, to be read aloud in the market place after the third brawl: what happened, who is to blame, and the new punishment for anyone who fights again.

Use these to start each part:

Hear this, citizens of Verona: today ____.

It began when _____, and soon _____.

I blame _____ and _____, because _____.

From this day, anyone who fights in our streets will ____.

By order of _____, Prince of Verona.

Exit ticket

The feud has spread through all of Verona because...

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Strengthening

aiming for grades 5 to 6

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Say what happened today, in order, using exact detail from the scene	
Name who is to blame and why, including the two old fathers	
Use one image of blood or beasts, as the Prince does	
End with the new punishment and the Prince’s authority	

Write your proclamation

Write the Prince's proclamation, to be read aloud in the market place after the third brawl: what happened, who is to blame, and the new punishment for anyone who fights again.

Check your writing

- ☐ I speak as the Prince, to the whole city
- ☐ I use exact detail from Act 1 Scene 1, such as the thumb, the clubs or Tybalt's sword
- ☐ I use at least one quotation from the Prince's speech
- ☐ I use imperatives and a firm, formal tone
- ☐ I have checked the spelling of Verona, Capulet and Montague (AO4)

Exit ticket

The feud has spread through all of Verona because...

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How does Shakespeare show that the feud has spread through all of Verona?

Soaring

aiming for grades 7 to 9

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The challenge

Write the proclamation so that it speaks in turn to the two old fathers, to the young men with swords, and to the citizens with clubs. Make the Prince’s anger clear while he keeps his control.

Think about

- Why the Prince calls the fighters “You men, you beasts”
- How “Canker’d with peace, to part your canker’d hate” blames the feud for dragging old men into it
- Whether a punishment of death will stop the feud, or only hide it

Plan

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Exit ticket

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