

Literary Element (page 722)

Figurative Language

The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet, Act 2 WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Figurative language achieves fresh insights by revealing vivid points of similarity between basically unlike things.

- A **simile** makes a comparison using *like* or *as*. After meeting Romeo, the Nurse reports to Juliet that he was “gentle as a lamb.”
- A **metaphor** asserts a similarity more directly, without using *like* or *as*. Pacing outside the Capulet orchard, Romeo asks, “Can I go forward when my heart is here?” By identifying Juliet as his heart, Romeo makes a powerful statement of his love for her.
- A **personification** gives human qualities to something (an object, an animal, a force of nature, an idea or emotion) that is not human. In the opening line of Act 2, the Chorus observes, “Now old desire doth in his deathbed lie,” an announcement that Romeo’s former love for Rosaline has passed away like an old man.

ACTIVITY

Directions As you review the following quotations from Act 2, first identify the type of figurative language each is. Then in the space that follows, state the literal meaning of the expression.

1. Juliet tells Romeo, “’Tis but thy name that is my enemy.”

Type: _____

Meaning: _____

2. Romeo tells Juliet, “I have night’s cloak to hide me from their eyes.”

Type: _____

Meaning: _____

3. Juliet tells Romeo, “My bounty is as boundless as the sea, / My love as deep . . .”

Type: _____

Meaning: _____

4. Romeo tells the friar, “I have been feasting with mine enemy, / Where on a sudden one hath wounded me / That’s by me wounded.

Type: _____

Meaning: _____

5. Waiting for the nurse, Juliet complains, “But old folks, many feign as they were dead— / Unwieldy, slow, heavy and pale as lead.”

Type: _____

Meaning: _____

Reading Strategy (page 722)

Making Inferences About Characters

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In a drama, characters do not always directly explain the reasons for their words and actions. To understand a character's motivation, it is often necessary to make inferences, that is, to come to reasonable conclusions based on evidence in the text as well as on your own knowledge and experiences. If you have ever fallen in or out of love, or have been teased by friends, or scolded by an adult, or treated unfairly, these experiences will contribute to your understanding of why Juliet, Romeo, and others speak and act as they do in the play.

ACTIVITY

Directions Using the first row of the chart as a model, complete the chart. Use the Motivation column to note inferences about the reasons for characters' words and actions. In the Analysis column, write your opinion or evaluation of the motivations.

Detail	Motivation	Analysis
Mercutio and Benvolio search for Romeo and make teasing remarks about his love for Rosaline.	Mercutio and Benvolio want Romeo to "be himself," as he was before he fell in love with anyone.	The friends are still concerned about Romeo's infatuation with Rosaline and his emotional well-being.
Juliet warns Romeo that if he is found in the orchard, her people "will murder thee."	1.	At second meeting, Juliet is placing Romeo's well being ahead of the concerns of her family.
The friar agrees to help Romeo marry Juliet, noting that the marriage may turn their families' "rancor to pure love."	2.	The friar's double motive may prevent him from giving sensible advice to the young lovers.
In his "Prince of Cats" speech, Mercutio complains about Tybalt's style of sword fighting.	Mercutio dislikes everything about Tybalt. He is also aware that Tybalt has challenged Romeo to a duel.	3.
The Nurse acts as a go-between for Juliet and Romeo.	4.	5.

Active Reading Graphic Organizer

As you analyze the motives of characters in *Romeo and Juliet*, you may wish to continue to organize your inferences and evaluations by using a chart similar to the one above. Ask your teacher for a copy of the Three-Column Table Graphic Organizer.

Selection Vocabulary Practice (page 722)

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Vocabulary

adjacent *adj.* next to or close to; neighboring

retain *v.* to keep possession of

perverse *adj.* deliberately unreasonable or wrong; stubborn

rancor *n.* bitter resentment against someone; long-lasting spite

EXERCISE A Practice with Context Clues

From each pair of sentences below, identify the one that has better context clues to the meaning of the vocabulary word.

- _____ 1. **A.** I was shocked by Mary's **rancor**, not knowing that she was angry.
B. Todd has the ability to discuss issues with patience and without **rancor**.
- _____ 2. **A.** The village built a small dam to **retain** rainwater for use later in the dry season.
B. In spite of everything, Erica hoped to **retain** the engagement ring.
- _____ 3. **A.** Pouting and **perverse**, the hungry child refused to touch her food.
B. I hope the senator will drop his **perverse** objections to the highway bill.
- _____ 4. **A.** I found another dictionary in an **adjacent** classroom.
B. The stores were **adjacent**, so it was easy to shop at both.

EXERCISE B Applying Meanings

Write the best ending for each sentence below.

1. If you **retain** new information easily, you _____.
A. have a good memory **B.** should take notes **C.** should not gossip
2. Steve is moving to an **adjacent** street, so he _____.
A. won't see us again **B.** will need a map **C.** is within walking distance
3. A person who is talkative and **perverse** would probably be _____.
A. a good student **B.** a difficult partner **C.** an inspiring leader
4. A peace conference that ends in **rancor** would be regarded as _____.
A. a typical event **B.** an encouraging sign **C.** a failure

EXERCISE C Responding to the Selection

Using at least THREE vocabulary words, write a letter to the editor of the *Verona Daily News* to complain about the public disturbances caused by the Montagues and Capulets.