



The activity addresses PA Academic Standards 9.1.12.B, 9.1.12.C, 9.1.12.F, 9.2.12.D, 9.2.12.F and National Core Arts Standards MU:Cr3.1.8a, MU:Cr3.1.8b, MU:Pr4.2.8c

ROMEO AND JULIET

The Sound of Shakespeare

Composition Activity

Part 1: Read the Prologue

Read the prologue from Romeo and Juliet. As you read, annotate the text, then discuss the prompts below.

1. **Notice the language.** Circle or highlight words or phrases that stand out to you. Include any unfamiliar words you would like to define.
2. **Make a prediction.** Based on the language in the prologue, what do you think Romeo and Juliet will be about?
3. **Analyze the conflict.** What is the relationship between the two households? Underline the lines that reveal the nature of their relationship.
4. **Identify foreshadowing.** What does the prologue reveal about the “star-crossed lovers”? Put a star next to the lines that give away the ending of the play.
5. **Consider the families’ role.** How do Romeo and Juliet’s parents influence their relationship?
6. **Trace the resolution.** Draw a box around the lines that explain how the feud between the two families finally ends.
7. **Reflect.** Why do you think Shakespeare begins the play by revealing the entire plot? How does knowing the ending affect the way an audience experiences the story?

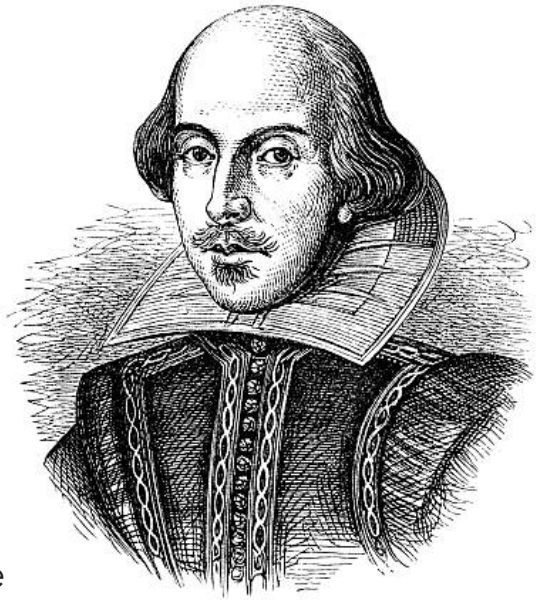
***Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare**

THE PROLOGUE

Enter Chorus.

Two households, both alike in dignity
(In fair Verona, where we lay our scene),
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life;
Whose misadventured piteous overthrows
Doth with their death bury their parents' strife.
The fearful passage of their death-marked love
And the continuance of their parents' rage,
Which, but their children's end, naught could remove,
Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage;
The which, if you with patient ears attend,
What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.

Chorus exits.



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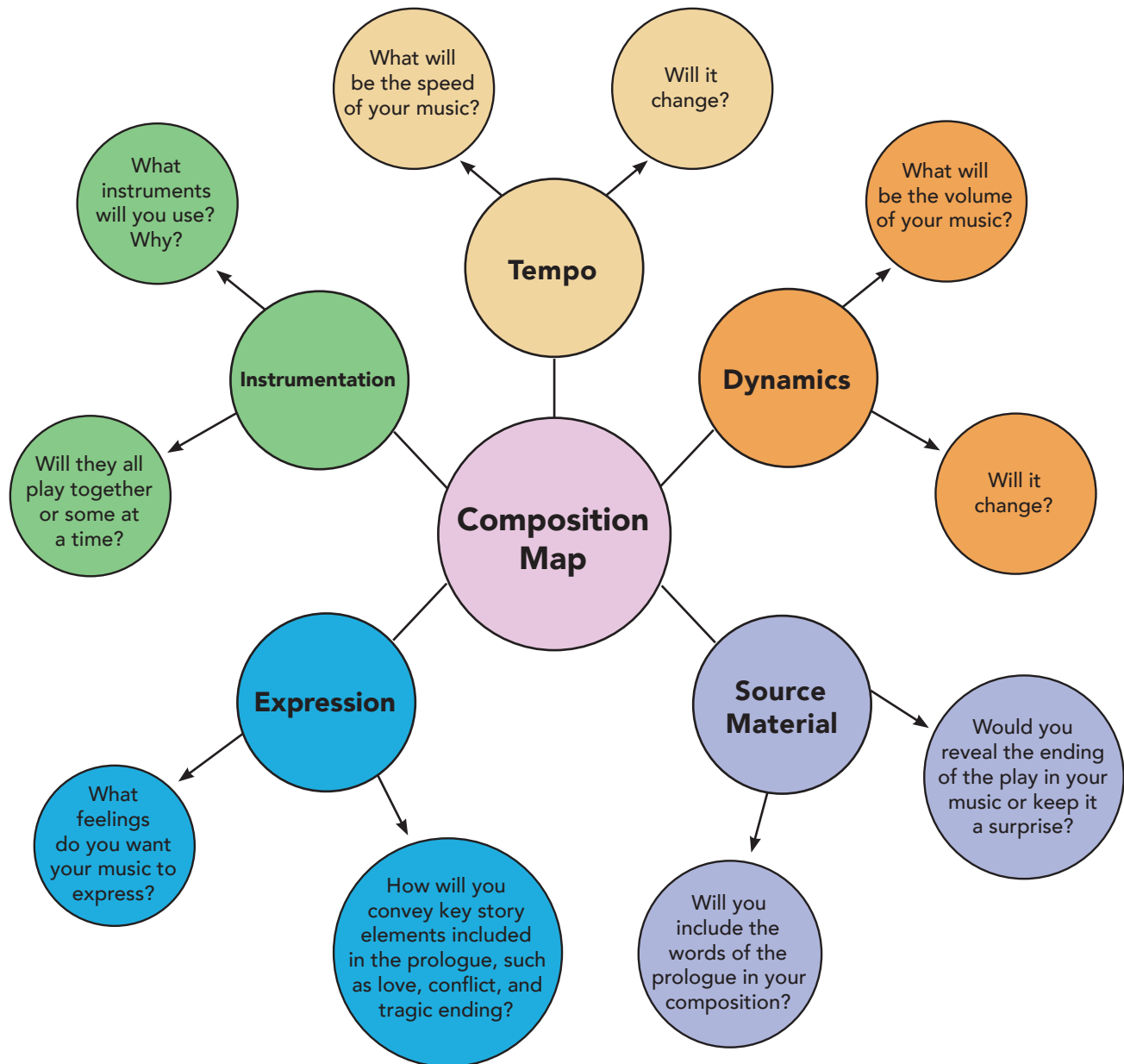
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Part 2: Bring the Prologue to Life Through Music

Imagine you are a composer. It is your job to create an original composition that conveys the prologue of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Use the composition map below to plan the elements of your composition.

For inspiration, you can listen to Sergei Prokofiev's musical interpretation of the prologue of *Romeo and Juliet*. Listen [here](#).



Optional Extension: Compare Interpretations

Watch at least two different interpretations of the prologue:

- **OPERA** - [Gounod: Romeo and Juliet](#) 3:23-6:15
- **FILM** - [Film Adaptations](#) (1968, 1996, 2013)
- **BALLET** - [Prokofiev: Romeo and Juliet](#) 7:30-10:00
- **THEATRE** - [Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet](#) (Shakespeare's Globe)

As you watch, consider:

- What artistic choices make each interpretation unique?
- Which parts of the prologue do these interpretations keep or cut?
- How is the conflict between the households portrayed in these interpretations?
- How is the ending of the play foreshadowed in these interpretations?
- Which interpretation do you find most effective? Why?

Interpretation #1

Interpretation #2

After comparing these performances, revisit your own musical ideas. Would you change anything about how you would set the prologue to music? Explain your reasoning.