

Paper 1: Shakespeare and the 19th-Century Novel

Paper 1 assesses your knowledge of one Shakespeare play and one 19th-century novel. Your teacher will select the texts that you are studying from the following:

Shakespeare Plays

'Julius Caesar'
'Macbeth'
'Much Ado About Nothing'
'Romeo and Juliet'
'The Merchant of Venice'
'The Tempest'

19th-Century Novels

'A Christmas Carol' by Charles Dickens
'Frankenstein' by Mary Shelley
'Great Expectations' by Charles Dickens
'Jane Eyre' by Charlotte Brontë
'Pride and Prejudice' by Jane Austen
'The Sign of Four' by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
'The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde' by Robert Louis Stevenson

The exam length is 1 hour, 45 minutes, and the paper is marked out of 64:

- 30 marks are available for Section A.
- 4 extra marks are available for your spelling, punctuation and grammar in Section A.
- 30 marks are available for Section B.

You should spend around 50 minutes on each section and an additional 5 minutes checking Section A for technical accuracy.

This is a closed book examination, which means that you are not allowed to take copies of your exam texts into the exam. There will, however, be extracts provided in the exam for you to analyse.

The paper 1 extracts will typically be around 10-20 lines in length and will be printed in the question paper. You will be asked to answer a question with reference to the extract and wider text.

Let's look at an example, with a question on *Romeo and Juliet*:

Read the following extract from Act 1, Scene 5 of *Romeo and Juliet* and then answer the question.

At this point in the play, Romeo and Juliet have just met.

ROMEO

If I profane with my unworhiest hand,
This holy shrine; the gentle fine is this;
My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand
To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.

JULIET

Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much,
Which mannerly devotion shows in this;
For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch,
And palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss.

ROMEO

Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too?

JULIET

Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer.

ROMEO

O, then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do;
They pray, grant thou, lest faith turn to despair.

JULIET

Saints do not move, though grant for prayers' sake.

ROMEO

Then move not, while my prayer's effect I take.

Starting with this moment in the play, explore how Shakespeare presents relationships in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Write about:

- How Shakespeare presents relationships in this extract
- How Shakespeare presents relationships in the play as a whole.

[30 marks]

A04 [4 marks]

Firstly, remember the need for a **conceptualised response**. You could write an answer here that is made up of valid but random points:

- In the extract, relationships are presented as holy, through Shakespeare's use of religious language.
- Earlier in the play, when Romeo is talking about Rosaline, relationships are presented as sexual.
- In Act 3, Scene 5, parent child relationships are presented as difficult.

Now these could all be brilliant analytical paragraphs, but there would be no sense of cohesion to the answer – no concept or line of argument. It would just be made up of random ideas. What we want is a concept.

NOTE: There isn't a specific required format for addressing the questions. However, top-mark answers often start by addressing the question in terms of the entire text, and then move between the extract and wider text throughout their answer. So let's think about the question in terms of the entire text. Or in other words: how does Shakespeare present relationships in the whole play?

Well this is a very broad topic – there are so many relationships to consider. There's the romantic relationship between Romeo and Juliet; the parent-child relationship between Juliet and Lord and Lady Capulet; the surrogate parent relationship between Romeo and Friar Lawrence, or Juliet and the nurse; the friendship relationship between Romeo and Benvolio, and on it goes. But when given a little thought, what's clear about so many relationships in the play is the way they are a complex mix of positive and negative.

For example, Romeo and Juliet find perfect love with each other, but it ends in their deaths; Lord Capulet seems countercultural and, for the time the play was set, progressive in Act 1, Scene 2, when he tells Paris that he has to woo Juliet for himself, but then he's controlling and bullying when he threatens to drag Juliet to the church on a hurdle in Act 3, Scene 5.

Juliet confides in and jokes with her nurse, but by the end has outgrown her and calls her 'o most wicked fiend'. And on it goes. It seems very difficult to find a relationship that is wholly positive or wholly negative.

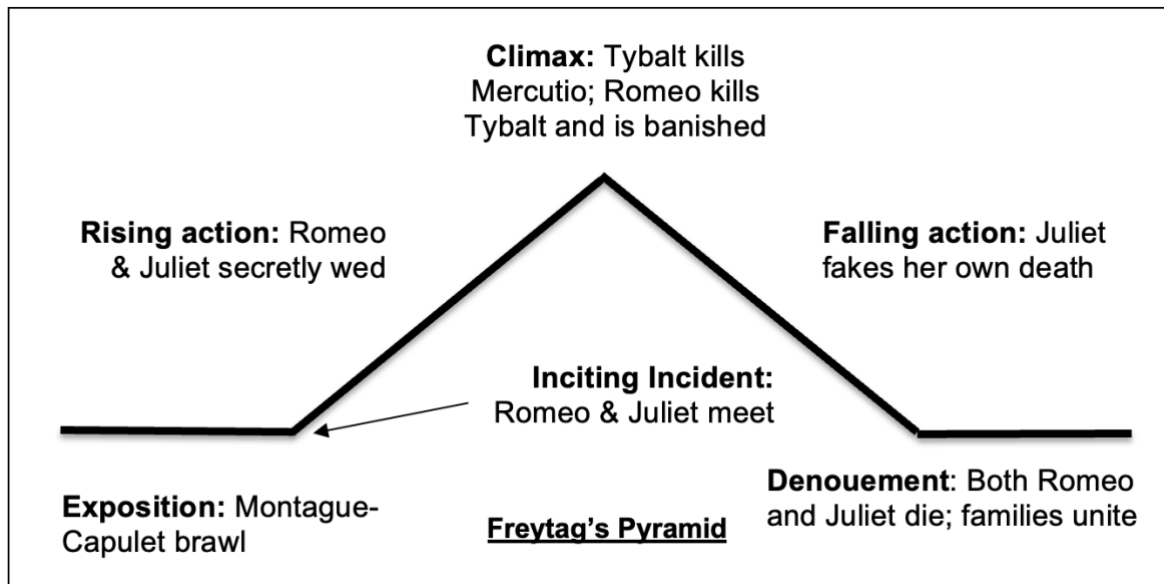
So with all that in mind, I'm going to come up with my thesis statement for the answer:

Shakespeare presents relationships as being a mixture of both harmony and conflict, suggesting that true love always demands sacrifice.

And here we have a concept – in this case a two-part line of argument. I'm going to perhaps spend the first half of my answer looking at the harmony in relationships, and the second half looking at the conflict. Everything in my answer then becomes part of the theory I am exploring.

Having established our understanding of relationships in the play, let's shift our focus to address AO2 specifically. The extended religious imagery would be an example of Shakespeare's use of language for effect. Two people have met and are flirting at a party, so why are they using the words 'prayer', 'pilgrim', 'saints' and 'holy'? Perhaps to symbolise that the relationship is pure and holy, as if ordained by God.

As this is an extract based question, we should think about where the extract comes from in the wider text. Let's look at Freytag's pyramid as it applies to *Romeo and Juliet*.



Now how can we use this knowledge in the exam? Well, the moment Romeo and Juliet meet is the inciting incident of the tragedy – the trigger, the catalyst that leads to their eventual deaths. And that adds a new element to our answer – perhaps how relationships are filled with conflict as well as harmony.

So thinking about where the extract comes from in the wider text is one way to think about structure.

As I've already explained, you don't have to do that through learning structural theories like Freytag – you might just want to think about what happens before and after the extract. Again, if we look at our extract here from Act 1, Scene 5, we might think about how only minutes before, in the play's opening scene, Romeo was pining over Rosaline. And that quick switch from Rosaline to Juliet might prove important to our answer about relationships.

Another way to look at structure is structure within the extract itself. This is similar to the kinds of things you're looking at in paper 1 question 3 for English Language. So looking again at *Romeo and Juliet*, we can see how Juliet mirrors Romeo's words.

- Romeo mentions 'pilgrim', 'hand', 'kiss', and Juliet's reply includes the same words.
- Romeo mentions 'lips', and Juliet replies with the same word.
- Romeo mentions 'saints' and 'prayer', and Juliet replies with the same words.

But as always, **we only want to write about this if we can make it relevant to the question**. There's no benefit to showing off your knowledge of structure or any other method to the examiner unless it's relevant to your answer. Perhaps the mirroring of language here indicates the harmonious nature of the relationship, as their words are almost synchronised. It's as if the two are a mirror image of each other.

Form can also be important within a text, although this is rare. The most obvious example is that *Romeo and Juliet* contains a number of sonnets. Sonnets are love poems that follow a strict structure: 14 lines, iambic pentameter, and a specific rhyme scheme. In *Romeo and Juliet* both of the prologues are sonnets, but so is this extract in the question: when we put the words of Romeo and Juliet together they form a perfect sonnet. It's very clever from Shakespeare, and again presents the harmonious element of their relationship, that when their words are joined together they form the perfect sonnet – the perfect love poem.

Now let's put all of that together in a full answer to the *Romeo and Juliet* question. Remember, we are looking for a **conceptualised response** which analyses relevant methods. We also want everything we write to be focused on the question:

SAMPLE ANSWER:

Shakespeare presents relationships as being a combination of both harmony and conflict, suggesting that love always demands sacrifice.

Shakespeare presents the theme of harmony and love within relationships through his use of form and language in the opening prologue. In terms of form, the prologue is a Shakespearean sonnet – a form of love poetry consisting of fourteen lines of iambic pentameter with the rhyme scheme ABAB CDCD EFEF GG. Shakespeare's use of form, then, reflects the loving relationship Romeo and Juliet will develop. However, the prologue is also filled with the language of conflict, such as 'mutiny', 'grudge', 'death' and 'strife'. This combination of the form of a love poem with the language of conflict foreshadows how the relationships depicted in the play will be complex, made up of both harmony and conflict. Shakespeare's structural decision to start the play this way symbolises how it is a key theme for the playwright: in all the relationships that follow, there will be elements of both harmony and conflict. One of the earliest examples of this is found within the relationship between Juliet and her nurse.

In Act 1, Scene 3, Shakespeare presents the harmonious relationship between Juliet and her nurse through the use of blank verse in the nurse's dialogue. This literary device, made up of lines of unrhymed iambic pentameter, is typically reserved for upper class and noble characters in Shakespeare's works. When Nurse explains how 'Faith, I can tell her age unto an hour', Shakespeare's use of blank verse is unexpected as Juliet's former wet nurse would have been working class, and Shakespeare's choice to use blank verse for her dialogue makes her unique amongst all of the servants and lower-class characters in the play. Shakespeare's use of blank verse in this scene means that Nurse's dialogue matches Juliet's (who also speaks in blank verse in Act 1, Scene 3) and this presents the relationship between the two as harmonious, due to the fact that they are both speaking in the same way. The harmony in the relationship between Juliet and her nurse is therefore presented through the mirroring of their dialogue.

Similarly, Shakespeare also uses mirroring to present the harmonious nature of the relationship between Romeo and Juliet the first time they meet in Act 1, Scene 5, when Juliet mirrors Romeo's words. Romeo mentions 'pilgrim', 'hand', 'kiss', and Juliet's reply includes the same words. Romeo mentions 'lips', and Juliet replies with the same word. Romeo mentions 'saints' and 'prayer', and Juliet replies with the same words. These

repetitions and mirroring present the relationship between the two as harmonious, as they are both saying the same things. Shakespeare's use of form also achieves the same effect.

When put together, Romeo and Juliet's words in the extract form another Shakespearean sonnet, like that of the prologue. Only when viewed together do their words create a sonnet, symbolising how their relationship is harmonious. However, whilst the unity between Romeo and Juliet is seen through the manner in which their words unite to form a sonnet, relationships are not wholly harmonious in the play, but also consist of an element of conflict, foreshadowed in the extract through Shakespeare's use of structure.

Despite the fact that this is the moment when Romeo and Juliet meet and fall in love, this scene is also the inciting incident in the tragedy – the catalyst or trigger which leads to the deaths of both Romeo and Juliet, as well as others. That the moment two characters meet and fall in love functions as the inciting incident in a tragedy is one way in which Shakespeare shows that relationships are never wholly good or bad – they are always a complex mix of harmony and conflict. The relationship between Romeo and Juliet will bring the positive of harmony between the two, but will also bring the negative of conflict with the characters' deaths in the final Act. This conflict exists not only in the relationship between Romeo and Juliet, but most characters – including that of Juliet and her nurse.

As the play develops, it becomes clear that the progression of the harmonious relationship between Romeo and Juliet can actually be seen as causing, or at least exacerbating conflict in other relationships.

As her relationship with Romeo progresses, Juliet's relationship with the nurse becomes more distant and filled with conflict. In Act 3, Scene 5, Nurse suggests that Juliet should marry Paris and forget Romeo, leading Juliet to label the nurse as 'most wicked fiend'. Juliet is angry because her loyalty to Romeo is dismissed by her nurse. Her love for Romeo causes conflict in Juliet's relationship with her nurse. Shakespeare is suggesting that relationships can cause conflict as well as harmony. The audience sees a similar conflict in Act 3, Scene 1, when Tybalt kills Mercutio. At this point, Romeo blames Juliet, complaining 'Thy beauty hath made me effeminate'. The harmonious, loving relationship between Romeo and Juliet is seen, by Romeo at least, as the cause of conflict in other relationships – Mercutio only fought with Tybalt because Romeo himself refused, and Romeo only refused because he had married Juliet, Tybalt's cousin. Romeo blames Juliet – he feels that his love for her has caused his friend's death: the harmony of one relationship resulting in conflict in another. This idea is reinforced when the audience considers that Romeo never took part in the brawl in Act 1, Scene 1. It is only since falling in love with Juliet that he has been drawn into the conflict between the two families. Shakespeare shows how developing harmony in one relationship can lead to conflict in others.

In 'Romeo and Juliet', Shakespeare shows that while love can bring people together, it can also cause problems. Love can both connect and break relationships.