

## LINE BY LINE THE PROLOGUE

### Make it Modern

In the space after each line of Shakespeare's Prologue, write a modern description of the line. See the first line as an example. What is Shakespeare saying with the Prologue?

Two households, both alike in dignity

*Two families, both of the same social standing.*

Doth with their death bury their parents' strife.

In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,

The fearful passage of their death-mark'd love

From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,

And the continuance of their parents' rage,

Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.

Which, but their children's end, naught could remove,

From forth the fatal loins of these two foes

Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage;

A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life,

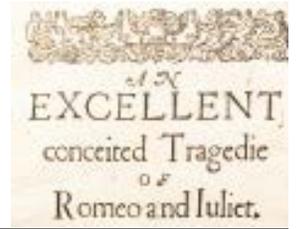
The which, if you with patient ears attend,

Whose misadventur'd piteous overthrows

What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.

Continued Over...

## LINE BY LINE THE PROLOGUE - ANSWER KEY



### Make it Modern

In the space after each line of Shakespeare's Prologue, write a modern description of the line. See the first line as an example. What is Shakespeare saying with the Prologue?

Two households, both alike in dignity,  
*Two families, both of the same social standing.*

In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,  
*The play takes place in Verona, Italy.*

From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,  
*The two families have an old grudge against each other. It leads to violence.*

Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.  
*They fight. It gets bloody.*

From forth the fatal loins of these two foes  
*These two enemies each had children.*

A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life,  
*Their children fall in love and commit suicide.*

Whose misadventur'd piteous overthrows  
*Their unlucky tragic actions*

Doth with their death bury their parents' strife.  
*End the families' feud through their deaths.*

The fearful passage of their death-mark'd love,  
*The events of the story leading to their death*

And the continuance of their parents' rage,  
*And their parents' ongoing feud*

Which, but their children's end, nought could remove,  
*Which would never end without the death of their children.*

Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage;  
*Is what you'll see over the course of this two hour play.*

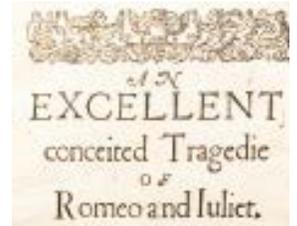
The which if you with patient ears attend,  
*And if you're patient*

What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.  
*What we've missed in the Prologue, you'll see in the play.*

Continued Next...

# LINE BY LINE THE PROLOGUE QUESTIONS & EXERCISES

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## Questions

1. The Prologue is written in the form of a sonnet which is usually used for Love poetry. Why did Shakespeare use the Sonnet form for the Prologue?
2. What is the purpose of the Prologue? Why did Shakespeare include it?
3. Why is it important to know that the play is a tragedy before seeing it?
4. Why is it important to know the end of the play before seeing it?
5. We know right at the beginning of the play that Romeo and Juliet are going to die. How does that affect your view of the play?
6. What does the image of civil blood mean to you?
7. How is love described in the Prologue?
8. How is hate described in the Prologue?
9. How is family described in the Prologue?
10. How is fate described in the Prologue?

## Exercises

- In groups, create a modern version of the Prologue. How would you sum up the story?
- Look up the following words used in the Prologue. Create tableaux that demonstrate visual understanding of these words.
  - Dignity
  - Star-crossed
  - Mutiny
  - Grudge
  - Strife
  - Death-marked
- Sonnets are about love, have a set number of lines, and a set rhyme scheme. Write a modern love poem using the sonnet format.