

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

Romeo and Juliet

Prologue

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
Do 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.

1. What is the setting of the play?
2. What is the relationship between the two households?
3. What does Shakespeare mean by "star-crossed lovers"?
4. What happens to the lovers? How does it affect the two households?
5. What will the "two hours' traffic" of this stage be about?
6. What does the chorus ask of the audience in the last two lines? Why?
7. What is the name of the poetic form which Shakespeare uses for the Prologue?
How many lines are there? Mark the rhyming pattern.

Working with a partner, write a modern language translation of this famous prologue.

PROLOGUE

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A **prologue** (Greek πρόλογος *prologos*, from the word *pro* (*before*) and *lógos*, *word*) is an opening to a story that establishes the setting and gives background details, often some earlier story that ties into the main one, and other miscellaneous information. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prologue>)