

Unit Guide

“Where We Lay Our Scene...”: Using Music to Understand Shakespeare’s *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*

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This five-lesson unit is part of a larger unit on Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* for students in 9th grade. Students will select a musical accompaniment for a scene from Shakespeare’s *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*, using Baz Luhrmann’s 1996 film adaptation. The purpose of this unit is to use arts integration to expose students to the aesthetic value of Shakespeare’s work while exploring our relationships with music. This is a post-reading project. After discussing and analyzing the play so that they have an understanding of the story and characters, students will learn elements of music appropriate for this project, including beat, tempo, rhythm, tone, timbre, dynamics, melody, and harmony. They will also examine several key instances of movie scores in order to understand the power of music as it is used in film. By the end of this unit, students should have an appreciation not only for Shakespeare’s work but also for the aesthetic decisions that are made across the arts.