

## Reading a Character Through Their Performance

The filmed performance helps students understand many different aspects of the play. One way to introduce students to the play, is to introduce them to several actors by having students explain — on the basis of how they behave as actors — what “sort of a person” a character is. Below are seven characters, and a cue to a moment in the play. Either using the clues or not, ask students to assess a character by their performance.

As a longer exercise, you can ask students to choose (towards the end of the play, when they are familiar with all) one character they love, and one they hate, and explain why, and provide a act, scene, page, and line to back up their position.

### **Romeo**

**Act 2, Scene 2 Page 66**

This is part of the famous balcony scene. From the acting and behavior you see, which of these would you characterize Romeo as being:

- A. A level headed young man, experienced in love
- B. An angry aggressive young man, who wishes to exploit Juliet’s love
- C. A slightly goofy, confused young man, who thinks he is in love

### **Juliet**

**Act 2, Scene 2 Page 71**

This is also from the famous balcony scene, but a little bit further into the scene. As you see Juliet on this page, how would you characterize her behavior

- A. A timid and passive female in the “medieval” ideal of womanhood
- B. A cold, distant long lady who strings the young Romeo along
- C. An opinionated, strong-willed young lady, who is both playful, yet aggressive in getting what she wants.

### **Lord Capulet**

**Act 1 Scene 5, P 50 and 51**

This moment takes place at Lord Capulet’s masked ball, when he intercepts Tybalt before Tybalt can start a fight with Romeo. We see here two very different sides of Lord Capulet’s personality.

- A. He is obsessed with making a good impression, so initially is boastful, and then very timid
- B. He is a great admirer of Tybalt, so is encouraging of the young man, but then regretful
- C. He is trying to make the party go well, so he is restrained and reasonable, but then becomes furious and overbearing

### **Friar Lawrence**

**Act 2 Scene 3 Page 76**

This is our first encounter with Friar Lawrence, often described as a more caring father figure for Romeo than his own Father Lord Montague. What can we fathom about his character from these 22 lines?

- A. Friar Lawrence is a proud religious figure, who cares deeply about his status, and wealth
- B. Friar Lawrence likes to joke around, and takes very little seriously
- C. Friar Lawrence is gentle, thoughtful, and sees connections between nature and human behavior

**Mercutio**

Act 3 Scene 1, Page 104-106

When you “read” Mercutio in these three pages which of these attributes does he display?

- A. He’s restless, irritable, and loves to provoke people by using spoken and body language
- B. He’s a little like The Prince of Verona — noble, thoughtful, and regal - a stately man
- C. He’s a man who likes to listen more than he talks, and is physically timid

**Tybalt**

Act 1 Scene 5 Page 50 and 51

This is the same moment we have chosen for Lord Capulet. Examine the interaction between Tybalt and Lord Capulet, and asses from his performance what kind of a person Tybalt is.

- A. He’s an cocky, aggressive, and persistent young man, who likes to get his way
- B. He’s an aggressive young man, but he quickly falls into line when asked to do so
- C. He’s a gentle young man, who would rather be dancing at the ball than worrying about Romeo

**Benvolio**

Act 1 Scene 1, Page 14

This is at the very start of the play, and the opening fight scene. Quite simply, is Benvolio

- A. A peace maker
- B. A trouble maker
- C. A coward

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL [wordplayshakespeare.com/#!/play/romeo&juliet/pages/3/1/3](http://wordplayshakespeare.com/#!/play/romeo&juliet/pages/3/1/3). The page content includes:

- Navigation:** 'Bug Report', 'Plays', 'Logout' buttons at the top right.
- Text Column (Left):**
  - TYBALT:** Follow me close, for I will speak to them. Gentlemen, good e'en. A word with one of you.
  - MERCUTIO:** And but one word with one of us? Couple it with something, make it a word and a blow.
  - TYBALT:** You shall find me apt enough to that, sir, and you will give me occasion.
  - MERCUTIO:** Could you not take some occasion without giving?
  - TYBALT:** Mercutio, thou consortest with Romeo—
  - MERCUTIO:** Consort! What, dost thou make us minstrels? And thou make minstrels of us, look to hear nothing but discords. Here's my fiddlestick, here's that shall make you dance. 'Zounds, consort!
  - BENVOLIO:** We talk here in the public haunt of men. Either withdraw unto some private place, Or reason coldly of your grievances, Or else depart; here all eyes gaze on us.
- Video Player (Center):** A video player showing a man in a dark shirt and jeans. A 'Word Play' button is overlaid on the video.
- Scene Navigator (Bottom):** A row of buttons labeled A1 S2, A1 S3, A1 S4, A1 S5, A2 Chorus, A2 S1, A2 S2, A2 S3, A2 S4, A2 S5, A2 S6, A3 S1, A3 S2. The 'A3 S1' button is highlighted in red.

Contact us at: [info@thenewbookpress.com](mailto:info@thenewbookpress.com)