



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
2005 Volume I: Stories around the World in Film and Literature

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## **Cultural Distinctions of the Central Themes in Romeo and Juliet**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 05.01.02  
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This unit is designed for the urban youth who needs a multiple skill and intelligence approach to the teaching of Shakespeare. It can, of course, be used in any classroom, including ESL, if modifications are made.

Using an interdisciplinary approach to investigate the "drama" of warring families and love, the students are asked to consider their own culturally diverse backgrounds as a backdrop to this play. Review of basic elements of literature in tandem with film language sets the foundation of the unit. Students are asked to hone computer skills in a creative and cooperative way so as to learn about the "real" Shakespeare. Building the Globe Theatre will conclude this section of the unit. They are asked to read scenes of the play both in "the language of Shakespeare" as well as a side-by-side version with a modern translation so that they will learn to enjoy Shakespeare for all that it is. Different film versions of the play are viewed to provide the visual representation that my students so desperately need. Using graphic organizers will help students to actively isolate, process, and reorganize key information at the same time allowing them to approach the themes cognitively. They will be able to see relationships as well contrasts as they apply to various activities. Finally, students are asked to write an original scene complete with stage direction and costumes, to help develop cooperation, communication, and perseverance.

(Recommended for English, grades 8-12.)

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