Essay Assignment: *Romeo and Juliet*

- Choose **ONE** of the topics below and write 500-600 words addressing it. Create your paragraphs logically; there should be at least four, but no more than six. Each paragraph should have a topic sentence, textual support /examples pertaining to that topic, and a concluding sentence (for a total of about 125 words per paragraph).

TOPICS:

A. How does the suicidal impulse that both Romeo and Juliet exhibit relate to the overall theme of young love? Does Shakespeare seem to consider it a self-destructive tendency inextricably connected with love, or is it a separate issue? Why do you think so? Explain the reasons for Romeo's and Juliet's suicides. Did they have another choice? Support your claims with evidence from the play.

B. Discuss the relationships between actual parents and children as well as parent-like figures (the Nurse and Friar Laurence) in Romeo and Juliet. How do Romeo and Juliet interact with these adults, and how do these adults either help or hinder the teens? Support your claims with evidence from the play.

C. Describe, provide examples of, and analyze the different types of love portrayed in the play: serious, frivolous, familial, romantic, friendly, etc.

D. Choose one major element of the play to compare and contrast with real events in your own life. This element could be a theme (suicide, love at first sight, mindless hate, loyalty); a character (lover, best friend, parental stand-in); or an occurrence (a feud, teen suicide, unreasonable parental demands). As a conclusion, explain what you learned from the play that you will apply to your own real life.

E. Romeo and Juliet are the most famous pair of lovers in Western literature, but is their love real, or is it just infatuation? Some people claim that Romeo and Juliet are just melodramatic teenagers. Others argue that the Romeo and Juliet's love is the kind of love everyone should aspire to find. What proof does the play provide that their love is "real love," not just infatuation?

F. Imagine what would have happened to Romeo and Juliet if they hadn't died. Is their relationship sustainable over time? Would they have anything to offer each other once the initial burst of passion calmed down? Would Romeo move on from Juliet as quickly as he moved on from Rosaline? Writing in regular prose form, describe the rest of Romeo and Juliet's life together, *providing reasons from the actual play to support your story* (for example, describing something Romeo says to Juliet in the play as a justification for his behavior in your version).

G. What responsibility should any of the adults bear for the play's tragic ending? The Prince announces that "some shall be pardoned and some punished." Which adults deserve punishment? The Friar? The Nurse? How about Lord Capulet? Who else, in your opinion, might bear some responsibility for the two lovers' deaths? Why? Support your claims with evidence from the play.

Use this as a Guide for Editing.

	4 **Exceeds Standard**	3 **Meets Standard**	2 **Working Towards Standard**	1 **Does Not Meet Standard**
Ideas & Content	• Exceptionally clear, original, focused, and engaging with relevant, strong supporting detail • Shows deep knowledge of and consideration of the subject matter	• Clear, focused, interesting ideas with appropriate detail • Shows mature knowledge of and consideration of the subject matter	• Purpose and main idea may be unclear and cluttered by irrelevant detail • Some support may be general or limited • Shows some knowledge of and consideration of the subject matter	• Lacks central idea; development is minimal or non-existent • Shows minimal or no knowledge of and consideration of the subject matter
Organization	• Strong, meaningful order and structure enhanced by thoughtful transitioning • Paragraphs have topic and concluding sentences with appropriate illustration and example in the body of each.	• Does not exceed or fall short of number of required paragraphs • Organization is appropriate, with needed transitional devices present. • Most paragraphs are properly constructed with topic and concluding sentences and appropriate support	• Exceeds or falls short of number of required paragraphs • Attempts at organization; may at times be a "list" of events. Transitions are often lacking. • Some paragraphs are properly constructed	• Exceeds or falls short of number of required paragraphs • Lack of coherence; confusing; hard to follow • Little or no identifiable structure to paragraphs or to the whole
Voice	• Expressive, engaging, sincere • Always appropriate to audience and purpose • Shows emotion: humor, honesty, suspense or life where appropriate	• Writing is clear but may lack originality or seem mechanical • Generally appropriate to audience and purpose	• Writing is sometimes verbose, wordy, and/or unnatural • Sometimes not appropriate to audience and purpose	• Writing is often verbose, wordy, and/or unnatural • Shows little or no sense of audience or purpose
Word Choice	• Language is always precise and appropriate • Uses strong, fresh images	• Descriptive, broad range of words • Word choice energizes writing	• Wording is correct but mundane • Sometimes monotonous or repetitious	• Wording is imprecise, vocabulary is often misused, and poor word choice impedes reader's comprehension
Sentence Fluency	• Sentences show a high degree of craftsmanship • Sentences patterns are varied and effective • Punctuation enhances meaning for the reader	• Sentence structure is always correct • Sentence patterns show some variety • Punctuation is always correct	• One or more sentences lack correct structure • Sentences are choppy or wandering • Sentence patterns show little variety • There are errors in punctuation	• Sentences often disjointed, confusing, and rambling • The writing is difficult to follow • There are several run-ons and/or fragments
Conventions	• Exceptionally strong control of conventions Errors are few and minor	• Control of most writing conventions • Occasional errors do not interfere with understanding	• Limited control of conventions; frequent errors detract from content	• Frequent significant errors may impede readability