**Romeo & Juliet key themes – you need to learn these by heart and be able to explain how they link to the key quotations in your essays. You must include them as you write!**

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| Love | This links characters together, such as Romeo and Juliet, but also breaks them apart, such as Juliet and her father (Lord Capulet).  It is the central thread running throughout the play. It is supposed to be stronger than death – Romeo and Juliet’s love is supposed to be immortal and last forever, hence they die in each other’s arms |
| Death/hatred | The hatred between the families is as strong as the love between Romeo and Juliet.  It is only buried and fixed after multiple deaths on both sides – Mercutio realises this before he dies and so does the Prince at the end when he declares that “all are punished”. |
| Destiny/fate | The prologue summarises the entire play, including the ending, before it starts, so the destiny of the characters is set from the beginning. They both realise during the play that they cannot fight destiny and their lives are not in their hands. Romeo says he is “fortune’s fool” and that summarises how he feels victimised by fate and how his miserable destiny is already set and he can do nothing to change it. |
| Power/control of individuals/society | Juliet is controlled by her father towards end of the play, despite him initially promising to respect her wishes.  Romeo feels controlled by fate and his family name.  Friar Lawrence is trapped by what Romeo requests and what he knows is the ‘right’ thing to do.  Romeo and Juliet rebel against the control of their families by expressing their love for each other and resisting what was expected of them. |