

Worksheet 2

Romeo and Juliet

Arranged Marriages

*Now Juliet's father, who, of course, had no idea that she was married, had other plans for her.
He wished her to marry a fine young count name Paris. Paris already loved Juliet,
and he was a wonderful match for her in wealth and kindness.
When old Capulet ordered Juliet to accept Paris, and she refused, he was livid with rage.
In those days, aristocratic girls had to marry at their parents' command.*

In the middle ages, it was quite common for royal and aristocratic families (such as the fictional Capulets in *Romeo and Juliet*) to enter into **arranged marriages**. This meant that the parents selected a suitable person to marry their daughter or son. Sometimes this decision was influenced by an older relative, family friend or respected community member. In *Romeo and Juliet* the enforcement of this custom, coupled with the conflict between two families unfortunately resulted in tragedy. Arranged marriages are still very common among people from certain geographic, social and religious backgrounds.

Task 1: Create an informative text about arranged marriages. Include the following details:

- ❖ the purpose of arranged marriages throughout history
- ❖ why some cultures believe an arranged marriage is superior to marriages based on romantic love
- ❖ the negative repercussions of arranged marriages
- ❖ the positive aspects of arranged marriages
- ❖ the factors considered by parents when matchmaking (e.g. religion, social status etc.)
- ❖ where arranged marriages are still practised today

Task 2: Now that you have read *Romeo and Juliet*, do you think Shakespeare himself was in favour of arranged marriages? Why do you think this?

Extension Activity:

- What do you think about arranged marriages? Compose an argument text in response to the topic: *An arranged marriage is the best way to find a lifelong partner*. Remember to use an argument text structure to plan your text by including: an introduction stating your opinion on the topic, the inclusion of evidence and facts to support your opinion and a concluding statement to reinforce what you have argued.